

CHAPTER 10

This chapter is an ordination sermon, which our Lord Jesus preached, when he advanced his twelve disciples to the degree and dignity of apostles. In the close of the foregoing chapter, he had stirred up them and others to pray that God would send forth labourers, and here we have an immediate answer to that prayer: while they are yet speaking he hears and performs. What we pray for, according to Christ's direction, shall be given, Now here we have,

- I.** The general commission that was given them (v. 1).
- II.** The names of the persons to whom this commission was given (v. 2-4).
- III.** The instructions that were given them, which are very full and particular;
 - 1.** Concerning the services they were to do; their preaching; their working miracles; to whom they must apply themselves; how they must behave themselves; and in what method they must proceed (v. 5-15).
 - 2.** Concerning the sufferings they were to undergo. They are told what they should suffer, and from whom; counsels are given them what course to take when persecuted, and encouragements to bear up cheerfully under their sufferings (v. 16-42). These things, though primarily intended for direction to the apostles, are of use to all Christ's ministers, with whom, by his word, Christ, and will be always to end the world.

◀▶ MATTHEW 10:1-4

THE APOSTLES ORDAINED

Here we are told,

- I.** Who they were that Christ ordained to be his apostles or ambassadors; they were his disciples, v. 1. He had called them some time before to be disciples, his immediate followers and constant attendants, and he then told them that they should be made fishers of men, which promise he now

performed. Note, Christ commonly confers honours and graces by degrees; the light of both, like that of the morning, *shines more and more*. All this while Christ had kept these twelve,

1. In a state of probation. Though he knows what is in man, though he knew from the first what was in them (⁴⁶⁰John 6:70), yet he took this method to give an example to his church. Note, The ministry being a great trust, it is fit that men should be tried for a time, before they are entrusted with it. Let them *first be proved*, ⁵⁰⁰1 Timothy 3:10. Therefore, hands must not be laid suddenly on any man, but let him first be observed as a candidate and probationer, a proposant (that is the term the French churches use), because some men's sins go before, others follow, ⁵⁰²1 Timothy 5:22.

2. In a state of preparation. All this while he had been fitting them for this great work. Note, Those whom Christ intends for, and calls to, any work, he first prepares and qualifies, in some measure, for it. He prepared them,

(1.) By *taking them to be with him*. Note, The best preparative for the work of the ministry, is an acquaintance and communion with Jesus Christ. They that would *serve Christ*, must first be *with him* (⁴²⁵John 12:26). Paul had Christ revealed, not only *to him*, but *in him*, before he went to preach him among the Gentiles, ⁴¹⁶Galatians 1:16. By the lively acts of faith, and the frequent exercise of prayer and meditation, that fellowship with Christ must be maintained and kept up, which is a requisite qualification for the work of the ministry.

(2.) By *teaching them*; they were with him as scholars or pupils, and he taught them privately, besides the benefit they derived from his public preaching; he opened the scriptures to them, and opened their understandings to understand the scriptures: to them it was given to *know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, and to them they were *made plain*. Note, They that design to be teachers must first be learners; they must receive, that they may give; they must be *able to teach others*, ⁵¹²2 Timothy 2:2. Gospel truths must be first committed to them, before they be commissioned to be gospel ministers. To give men *authority* to teach others, that have not an *ability*, is but a mockery to God and the church; it is *sending a message by the hand of a fool*, ³⁰⁶Proverbs 26:6. Christ *taught his disciples* before he sent them forth (⁴⁰²Matthew 5:2), and afterwards, when he enlarged their commission, he gave them more ample instructions, ⁴⁰⁸Acts 1:3.

II. What the commission was that he gave them.

1. He *called them to him*, v. 1. He had called them to come *after* him before; now he calls them to come *to* him, admits them to a greater familiarity, and will not have them to keep at such a distance as they had hitherto observed. They that *humble themselves* shall thus be *exalted*. The priests under the law were said to *draw near* and *approach* unto God, nearer than the people; the same may be said of gospel ministers; they are called to draw near to Christ, which, as it is an honour, so should strike an awe upon them, remembering that Christ will be sanctified in those that *come nigh unto him*. It is observable, that when the disciples were to be *instructed*, they *came unto him* of their own accord, ⁽⁴⁸¹⁾ Matthew 5:1. But now they were to be *ordained*, he *called them*. Note, It well becomes the disciples of Christ to be more forward to learn than to teach. In the sense of our own ignorance, we must seek opportunities to be taught; and in the same sense we must *wait for a call*, a clear call, ere we take upon us to *teach others*; for *no man ought to take this honour to himself*.

2. He *gave them power*, *exousian*, *authority* in his name, to command men to obedience, and for the confirmation of that authority, to command devils too into a subjection. Note, All rightful authority is derived from Jesus Christ. All power is given to him without limitation, and the subordinate powers that be are ordained of him. Some of his honour he put on his ministers, as Moses put some of his on Joshua. Note, It is an undeniable proof of the fulness of power which Christ used as Mediator, that he could impart his power to those he employed, and enable them to work the same miracles that he wrought in his name. He gave them *power over unclean spirits*, and over *all manner of sickness*. Note, The design of the gospel was to *conquer the devil* and to *cure the world*. These preachers were sent out destitute of all external advantages to recommend them; they had no wealth, nor learning, nor titles of honour, and they made a very mean figure; it was therefore requisite that they should have some extraordinary power to advance them above the scribes.

(1.) He gave them power *against unclean spirits*, to *cast them out*. Note, The power that is committed to the ministers of Christ, is directly levelled against the devil and his kingdom. The devil, as an *unclean spirit*, is working both in doctrinal errors (⁽⁴⁸³⁾ Revelation 16:13), and in practical debauchery (⁽⁴⁸²⁾ 2 Peter 2:10); and in both these, ministers have a charge against him. Christ gave them power to cast him out of the bodies of

people; but that was to signify the destruction of his *spiritual kingdom*, and all the works of the devil; for which purpose the *Son of God* was *manifested*.

(2.) He gave them power to *heal all manner of sickness*. He authorized them to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, to prove that it was of God; and they were to work useful miracles for the illustration of it, to prove that it is not only faithful, but well *worthy of all acceptance*; that the design of the gospel is to heal and save. Moses's miracles were many of them for destruction; those Mahomet pretended to, were for ostentation; but the miracles Christ wrought, and appointed his apostles to work, were all for edification, and evince him to be, not only the great Teacher and Ruler, but the great Redeemer, of the world. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon the extent of their power to *all manner of sickness*, and *all manner of disease*, without the exception even of those that are reckoned incurable, and the reproach of physicians. Note, In the grace of the gospel there is a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady. There is no spiritual disease so malignant, so inveterate, but there is a sufficiency of power in Christ, for the cure of it. Let none therefore say there is no hope, or that the breach is wide as the sea, that cannot be healed.

III. The number and names of those that were commissioned; they are made apostles, that is, messengers. An angel, and an apostle, both signify the same thing — one *sent on an errand*, an ambassador. All faithful ministers are sent of Christ, but they that were first, and immediately, sent by him, are eminently called *apostles*, the prime ministers of state in his kingdom. Yet this was but the infancy of their office; it was when Christ *ascended on high* that he *gave some apostles*, ^(~~4011~~) Ephesians 4:11. Christ himself is called an apostle (^(~~5001~~) Hebrews 3:1), for he was *sent by the Father*, and so sent them, ^(~~4021~~) John 20:21. The prophets were called God's messengers.

1. Their number was twelve, referring to the number of the tribes of Israel, and the sons of Jacob that were the patriarchs of those tribes. The gospel church must be the Israel of God; the Jews must be first invited into it; the apostles must be spiritual fathers, to beget a seed to Christ. Israel after the flesh is to be rejected for their infidelity; these twelve, therefore, are appointed to be the fathers of another Israel. These twelve, by their doctrine, were to judge the twelve tribes of Israel, ^(~~4023~~) Luke 22:30. These were the twelve stars that made up the church's crown (^(~~4011~~) Revelation

12:1): the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem (~~612~~ Revelation 21:12, 14), typified by the twelve precious stones in Aaron's breast-plate, the twelve loaves on the table of show-bread, the twelve wells of water at Elim. This was that famous jury (and to make it a grand jury, Paul was added to it) that was impanelled to enquire between the King of kings, and the body of mankind; and, in this chapter, they have their charge given them, by him to whom *all judgment was committed*.

2. Their names are here left upon record, and it is their honour; yet in this they had more reason to rejoice, that their names were *written in heaven* (~~610~~ Luke 10:20), while the high and mighty names of the great ones of the earth are *buried in the dust*. Observe,

(1.) There are some of these twelve apostles, of whom we know no more, from the scripture, than their names; as Bartholomew, and Simon the Canaanite; and yet they were faithful servants to Christ and his church. Note, all the good ministers of Christ are not alike famous, nor their actions alike celebrated.

(2.) They are names by couples; for at first they were sent forth *two and two*, because *two are better than one*; they would be serviceable to each other, and the more serviceable jointly to Christ and souls; what one forgot the other would remember, and *out of the mouth of two witnesses every word would be established*. Three couple of them were brethren; Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the other James and Lebbeus. Note, Friendship and fellowship ought to be kept up among relations, and to be made serviceable to religion. It is an excellent thing, when brethren by nature are brethren by grace, and those two bonds strengthen each other.

(3.) Peter is named first, because he was first called; or because he was the most forward among them, and upon all occasions made himself the mouth of the rest, and because he was to be the apostle of the circumcision; but that gave him no power over the rest of the apostles, nor is there the least mark of any supremacy that was given to him, or ever claimed by him, in this sacred college.

(4.) Matthew, the penman of this gospel, is here joined with Thomas (v. 3), but in two things there is a variation from the accounts of Mark and Luke, ~~618~~ Mark 3:18; ~~615~~ Luke 6:15. There, Matthew is put first; in that order it appears he was ordained before Thomas; but here, in his own catalogue, Thomas is put first. Note, It well becomes the disciples of

Christ in honour to prefer one another. There, he is only called Matthew, here Matthew the publican, the toll-gatherer or collector of the customs, who was called from that infamous employment to be an apostle. Note, It is good for those who are advanced to honour with Christ, to look *unto the rock whence they were hewn*; often to remember what they were before Christ called them, that thereby they may be kept humble, and divine grace may be the more glorified. Matthew the apostle was Matthew the publican.

(5.) Simon is called the Canaanite, or rather the Canite, from Cana of Galilee, where probably he was born; or Simon the Zealot, which some make to be the signification of *Kananites*.

(6.) Judas Iscariot is always named last, and with that black brand upon his name, *who also betrayed him*; which intimates that from the first, Christ knew what a wretch he was, that he had a devil, and would prove a traitor; yet Christ took him among the apostles, that it might not be a surprise and discouragement to his church, if, at any time, the vilest scandals should break out in the best societies. Such spots there have been in our feasts of charity; tares among the wheat, wolves among the sheep; but there is a day of discovery and separation coming, where hypocrites shall be unmasked and discarded. Neither the apostleship, nor the rest of the apostles, were ever the worse for Judas's being one of the twelve, while his wickedness was concealed and did not break out.

405 MATTHEW 10:5-15

THE APOSTLES SENT FORTH

We have here the instructions that Christ gave to his disciples, when he gave them their commission. Whether this charge was given them in a continued discourse, or the several articles of it hinted to them at several times, is not material; in this he *commanded them*. Jacob's blessing his sons, is called his *commanding* them, and with these commands Christ commanded a blessing. Observe,

I. The people to whom he sent them. These ambassadors are directed what places to go to.

1. Not to the Gentiles nor the Samaritans. They must not *go into the way of the Gentiles*, nor into any road out of the land of Israel, whatever temptations they might have. The Gentiles must not have the gospel brought them, till the Jews have first refused it. As to the Samaritans, who were the posterity of the mongrel people that the king of Assyria planted about Samaria, their country lay between Judea and Galilee, so that they could not avoid *going into the way* of the Samaritans, but they must *not enter into any of their cities*. Christ had declined manifesting himself to the Gentiles or Samaritans, and therefore the apostles must not preach to them. If the gospel be hid from any place, Christ thereby hides himself from that place. This restraint was upon them only in their first mission, afterwards they were appointed to go *into all the world*, and teach *all nations*.

2. But *to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*. To them Christ appropriated his own ministry (⁴⁶²⁴Matthew 15:24), for he was a *minister of the circumcision* (⁴⁶³⁸Romans 15:8): and, therefore, to them the apostles, who were but his attendants and agents, must be confined. The first offer of salvation must be made to the Jews, ⁴⁴⁸⁶Acts 3:26. Note, Christ had a particular and very tender concern for the *house of Israel*; they were *beloved for the fathers' sakes*, ⁴⁵¹⁸Romans 11:28. He looked with compassion upon them as *lost sheep*, whom he, as a shepherd, was to gather out of the by-paths of sin and error, into which they were gone astray, and in which, if not brought back, they would wander endlessly; see ²⁴⁸⁶Jeremiah 2:6. The Gentiles also had been as lost sheep, ⁴⁰²⁵1 Peter 2:25. Christ gives this description of those to whom they were sent, to quicken them to diligence in their work, they were sent to the house of Israel (of which number they themselves lately were), whom they could not but pity, and be desirous to help.

II. The preaching work which he appointed them. He did not send them forth without an errand; no, *As ye go, preach*, v. 7. They were to be itinerant preachers: wherever they come they must proclaim the beginning of the gospel, saying, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Not that they must say nothing else, but this must be their text; on this subject they must enlarge: let people know, that the kingdom of the Messiah, who is the Lord from heaven, is now to be set up according to the scriptures; from whence it follows, that men must *repent* of their sins and forsake them, that they might be admitted to the privileges of that kingdom. It is said (⁴⁰⁸²Mark 6:12), *they went out, and preached that men should repent*;

which was the proper use and application of this doctrine, concerning the approach of the *kingdom of heaven*. They must, therefore, expect to hear more of this long-looked-for Messiah shortly, and must be ready to receive his doctrine, to believe in him, and to submit to his yoke. The preaching of this was like the morning light, to give notice of the approach of the rising sun. How unlike was this to the preaching of Jonah, which proclaimed ruin at hand! ^{<3004>}Jonah 3:4. This proclaims salvation at hand, *nigh them that fear God; mercy and truth meet together* (^{<3809>}Psalm 85:9, 10), that is, *the kingdom of heaven at hand*: not so much the personal presence of the king; that must not be doated upon; but a spiritual kingdom which is to be set up, when his bodily presence is removed, in the hearts of men.

Now this was the same that John the Baptist and Christ had preached before. Note, People need to have good truths pressed again and again upon them, and if they be preached and heard with new affections, they are as if they were fresh to us. Christ, in the gospel, is *the same yesterday, today, and for ever*, ^{<3308>}Hebrews 13:8. Afterwards, indeed, when the Spirit was poured out, and the Christian church was formed, this *kingdom of heaven came*, which was now spoken of as *at hand*; but the *kingdom of heaven* must still be the subject of our preaching: now it is come, we must tell people it is come to them, and must lay before them the precepts and privileges of it; and there is a kingdom of glory yet to come, which we must speak of as at hand, and quicken people to diligence from the consideration of that.

III. The power he gave them to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine, v. 8. When he sent them to preach the same doctrine that he had preached, he empowered them to confirm it, by the same divine seals, which could never be set to a lie. This is not necessary now the kingdom of God is come; to call for miracles now is to lay again the foundation when the building is reared. The point being settled, and the doctrine of Christ sufficiently attested, by the miracles which Christ and his apostles wrought, it is tempting God to ask for more signs. They are directed here,

1. To use their power in doing good: not “Go and remove mountains,” or “fetch fire from heaven,” but, *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers*. They are sent abroad as public blessings, to intimate to the world, that love and goodness were the spirit and genius of that gospel which they came to preach, and of that kingdom which they were employed to set up. By this it would appear, that they were the servants of that God who is good and

does good, and whose mercy is *over all his works*; and that the intention of the doctrine they preached, was to heal sick souls, and to *raise* those that were *dead in sin*; and therefore, perhaps, that of *raising the dead* is mentioned; for though we read not of their raising any to life before the *resurrection of Christ*, yet they were instrumental to raise many to *spiritual life*.

2. In *doing good freely*; *Freely ye have received, freely give*. Those that had power to heal all diseases, had an opportunity to enrich themselves; who would not purchase such easy certain cures at any rate? Therefore they are cautioned not to make a gain of the power they had to work miracles: they must cure *gratis*, further to exemplify the nature and complexion of the gospel kingdom, which is made up, not only of grace, but of free grace. *Gratia gratis data* (⁴⁰²⁴Romans 3:24), *freely by his grace*, *Buy medicines without money, and without price*, (⁴⁰²⁵Isaiah 55:1. And the reason is, because *freely you have received*. Their power to heal the sick cost them nothing, and, therefore, they must not make any secular advantage to themselves of it. Simon Magus would not have offered money for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, if he had not hoped to get money by them; (⁴⁰²⁶Acts 8:18. Note, The consideration of Christ's freeness in doing good to us, should make us free in doing good to others.

IV. The provision that must be made for them in this expedition; it is a thing to be considered in sending an ambassador, who must bear the charge of the embassy. As to that,

1. They must make no provision for it themselves, v. 9, 10. *Provide neither gold nor silver*. As, on the one hand, they shall not raise estates by their work, so, on the other hand, they shall not spend what little they have of their own upon it. This was confined to the present mission, and Christ would teach them,

(1.) To act *under the conduct of human prudence*. They were now to make but a short excursion, and were soon to return to their Master, and to their head-quarters again, and, therefore, why should they burthen themselves with that which they would have no occasion for?

(2.) To act in *dependence upon Divine Providence*. They must be taught to live, without *taking thought for life*, (⁴⁰²⁷Matthew 6:25, etc. Note, They who go upon Christ's errand, have, of all people, most reason to trust him for *food convenient*. Doubtless he will not be wanting to those that are

working for him. Those whom he employs, as they are taken under special protection, so they are entitled to special provisions. Christ's hired servants shall have *bread enough and to spare*; while we abide faithful to God and our duty, and are in care to do our work well, we may cast all our other care upon God; Jehovah-jireh, let the Lord provide for us and ours as he thinks fit.

2. They might expect that those to whom they were sent would *provide for them* what was necessary, v. 10. The *workman is worthy of his meat*. They must not expect to be fed by miracles, as Elijah was: but they might depend upon God to incline the hearts of those they went among, to be kind to them, and provide for them. Though they who *serve at the altar* may not expect to grow rich by the altar, yet they may expect to live, and to live comfortably upon it, ~~403~~ 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14. It is fit they should have their maintenance from their work. Ministers are, and must be, workmen, labourers, and they that are so are *worthy of their meat*, so as not to be forced to any other labour for the earning of it. Christ would have his disciples, as not to distrust their God, so not to distrust their countrymen, so far as to doubt of a comfortable subsistence among them. If you preach to them, and endeavour to do good among them, surely they will give you meat and drink enough for your necessities: and if they do, never desire dainties; God will pay you your wages hereafter, and it will be running on in the mean time.

V. The proceedings they were to observe in dealing with any place, v. 11-15. They went abroad they knew not whither, uninvited, unexpected, knowing none, and known of none; the land of their nativity was to them a strange land; what rule must they go by? what course must they take? Christ would not send them out without full instructions, and here they are.

1. They are here directed how to conduct themselves toward those that were *strangers to them*; How to do,

(1.) In *strange towns and cities*: when you come to a town, *enquire who in it is worthy*.

[1.] It is supposed that there were some such in every place, as were better disposed than others to receive the gospel, and the preachers of it; though it was a time of general corruption and apostasy. Note, In the worst of times and places, we may charitably hope that there are some who

distinguish themselves, and are better than their neighbours; some who swim against the stream, and are as wheat among the chaff. There were saints in Nero's household. Enquire who is worthy, who there are that have some fear of God before their eyes, and have made a good improvement of the light and knowledge they have. The best are far from meriting the favour of a gospel offer; but some would be more likely than others to give the apostles and their message a favourable entertainment, and would not trample these pearls under their feet. Note, Previous dispositions to that which is good, are both directions and encouragements to ministers, in dealing with people. There is most hope of the word being profitable to those who are already so well inclined, as that it is acceptable to them; and there is here and there one such.

[2.] They must enquire out such; not enquire for the best inns; public houses were no proper places for them that neither took money with them (v. 9), nor expected to receive any (v. 8); but they must look out for accommodations in private houses, with those that would entertain them well, and expect no other recompence for it but a prophet's reward, an apostle's reward, their praying and preaching. Note, They that entertain the gospel, must neither grudge the expense of it, nor promise themselves to get by it in this world. They must enquire, not who is rich, but who is worthy; not who is the best gentleman, but who is the best man. Note, Christ's disciples, wherever they come, should ask for the good people of the place, and be acquainted with them; when we took God for our God, we took his people for our people, and like will rejoice in its like. Paul in all his travels found out the brethren, if there were any, ~~434~~ Acts 28:14. It is implied, that if they did enquire who was worthy, they might discover them. They that were better than their neighbours would be taken notice of, and any one could tell them, there lives an honest, sober, good man; for this is a character which, like the ointment of the right hand, betrays itself and fills the house with its odours. Every body knew where the seer's house was, ~~998~~ 1 Samuel 9:18.

[3.] In the house of those they found worthy, they must continue; which intimates that they were to make so short a stay at each town, that they needed not change their lodging, but whatever house providence brought them to at first, there they must continue till they left that town. They are justly suspected, as having no good design, that are often changing their quarters. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to make the best of that

which is, to abide by it, and not be for shifting upon every dislike or inconvenience.

(2.) In strange houses. When they had found the house of one they thought worthy, they must at their entrance salute it. “In those common civilities, be beforehand with people, in token of your humility. Think it not a disparagement, to invite yourselves into a house, nor stand upon the *punctilio* of being invited. Salute the family,

[1.] To draw on further discourse, and so to introduce your message.”
(From matters of common conversation, we may insensibly pass into that communication which is good to the use of edifying.)

[2.] “To try whether you are welcome or not; you will take notice whether the salutation be received with shyness and coldness, or with a ready return. He that will not receive your salutation kindly, will not receive your message kindly; for he that is unskilful and unfaithful in a little, will also be in much, ^{<2130>}Luke 16:10.

[3.] To insinuate yourselves into their good opinion. *Salute the family*, that they may see that though you are serious, you are not morose.” Note, Religion teaches us to be courteous and civil, and obliging to all with whom we have to do. Though the apostles went out backed with the authority of the Son of God himself, yet their instructions were, when they came into a house, not to *command it*, but to *salute it*; for *love's sake rather to beseech*, is the evangelical way, ^{<5008>}Philemon 1:8, 9. Souls are first drawn to Christ with the *cords of a man*, and kept to him by the *bands of love*, ^{<3104>}Hosea 11:4. When Peter made the first offer of the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter was first saluted; see ^{<4425>}Acts 10:25, for the Gentiles courted that which the Jews were courted to.

When they had saluted the family after a godly sort, they must by the return, judge concerning the family, and proceed accordingly. Note, The eye of God is upon us, to observe what entertainment we give to good people and good ministers; if *the house be worthy, let your peace come and rest upon it; if not, let it return to you*, v. 13. It seems then, that after they had enquired for the *most worthy* (v. 11), it was possible they might light upon those that were unworthy. Note, Though it is wisdom to hearken to, yet it is folly to rely upon, common report and opinion; we ought to use a judgment of discretion, and to see with our own eyes. *The*

wisdom of the prudent is himself to understand his own way. Now this rule is intended,

First, For satisfaction to the apostles. The common salutation was, *Peace be unto you*; this, as they used it, was turned into gospel; it was the *peace of God*, the peace of the kingdom of heaven, that they wished. Now lest they should make a scruple of pronouncing this blessing upon all promiscuously, because many were utterly unworthy of it, this is to clear them of that scruple; Christ tells them that this gospel prayer (for so it was now become) should be put up for all, as the gospel proffer was made to all indefinitely, and that they should leave it to God who knows the heart, and every man's true character, to determine the issue of it. If the house be worthy, it will reap the benefit of your blessing; if now, there is no harm done, you will not lose the benefit of it; *it shall return to you*, as David's prayers for his ungrateful enemies did, ^{<95B>}Psalm 35:13. Note, It becomes us to judge charitably *of all*, to pray heartily *for all*, and to conduct ourselves courteously *to all*, for that is our part, and then to leave it with God to determine what effect it shall have upon them, for that is his part.

Secondly, For direction to them. "If, upon your salutation, it appear that they are indeed worthy, let them have more of your company, and so *let your peace come upon them*; preach the gospel to them, peace by Jesus Christ; but if otherwise, if they carry it rudely to you, and shut their doors against you, *let your peace*, as much as in you lies, *return to you*. Retract what you have said, and turn your backs upon them; by slighting this, they have made themselves unworthy of the rest of your favours, and cut themselves short of them." Note, Great blessings are often lost by a neglect seemingly small and inconsiderable, when men are in their probation and upon their behaviour. Thus Esau lost his birthright (^{<125A>}Genesis 25:34), and Saul his kingdom, ^{<91B>}1 Samuel 13:13, 14.

2. They are here directed how to carry it towards those that were refusers of them. The case is put (v. 14) of those that *would not receive them, nor hear their words*. The apostles might think, that now they had such a doctrine to preach, and such a power to work miracles for the confirmation of it, no doubt but they should be universally entertained and made welcome: they are, therefore, told before, that there would be those that would slight them, and put contempt on them and their message. Note, The best and most powerful preachers of the gospel must expect to meet with some, that will not so much as give them the hearing, nor show them

any token of respect. Many turn a *deaf ear*, even to the *joyful sound*, and will not *hearken to the voice of the charmers*, *charm they never so wisely*. Observe, “They will not *receive you*, and they will not *hear your words*.” Note, Contempt of the gospel, and contempt of gospel ministers, commonly go together, and they will either of them be construed into a contempt of Christ, and will be reckoned for accordingly.

Now in this case we have here,

(1.) The directions given to the apostles what to do. They must *depart out of that house or city*. Note, The gospel will not tarry long with those that put it away from them. At their departure they must *shake off the dust of their feet*,

[1.] In detestation of their wickedness; it was so abominable, that it did even pollute the ground they went upon, which must therefore be *shaken off* as a filthy thing. The apostles must have no fellowship nor communion with them; must not so much as carry away the dust of their city with them. *The work of them that turn aside shall not cleave to me*, ^{<PAB>}Psalm 101:3. The prophet was not to *eat or drink* in Bethel, ^{<HBB>}1 Kings 13:9.

[2.] As a denunciation of wrath against them. It was to signify, that they were base and vile as dust, and that God would *shake them off*. The dust of the apostles' feet, which they left behind them, would witness against them, and be brought in as evidence, that the gospel had been preached to them, ^{<HBB>}Mark 6:11. Compare ^{<SBB>}James 5:3. See this practised, ^{<HBB>}Acts 13:51, 18:6. Note, They who *despise* God and his gospel shall be *lightly esteemed*.

(2.) The *doom passed upon such wilful recusants*, v. 15. It shall be *more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for the land of Sodom*, as wicked a place as it was. Note,

[1.] There is a day of judgment coming, when all those that refused the gospel will certainly be called to account for it; however they now make a jest of it. They that would not hear the doctrine that would save them, shall be made to hear the sentence that will ruin them. Their judgment is respited till *that day*.

[2.] There are different degrees of punishment in that day. All the pains of hell will be *intolerable*; but some will be more so than others. Some sinners sink deeper into hell than others, and are beaten with more stripes.

[3.] The condemnation of those that reject the gospel, will in that day be severer and heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom is said to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, ^{<600>}Jude 1:7. But that *vengeance* will come with an aggravation upon those that despise the great salvation. Sodom and Gomorrah were exceedingly wicked (^{<013>}Genesis 13:13), and that which filled up the measure of their iniquity was, that they *received not* the angels that were sent to them, but abused them (^{<019>}Genesis 19:4, 5), and *hearkened not to their words*, v. 14. And yet it will be more tolerable for them than for those who receive not Christ's ministers and hearken not to their words. God's wrath against them will be more flaming, and their own reflections upon themselves more cutting. *Son, remember I* will sound most dreadfully in the ears of such as had a fair offer made them of *eternal life*, and chose death rather. The iniquity of Israel, when God sent them his servants the prophets, is represented as, upon that account, more heinous than the iniquity of Sodom (^{<268>}Ezekiel 16:48, 49), much more now he sent them his Son, the great Prophet.

^{<006>}MATTHEW 10:16-42

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APOSTLES

All these verses relate to the sufferings of Christ's ministers in their work, which they are here taught to expect, and prepare for; they are directed also how to bear them, and how to go on with their work in the midst of them. This part of the sermon looks further than to their present mission; for we find not that they met with any great hardships or persecutions while Christ was with them, nor were they well able to bear them; but they are here forewarned of the troubles they should meet with, when after Christ's resurrection, their commission should be *enlarged*, and the kingdom of heaven, which was not *at hand*, should be actually set up; they dreamed of nothing then, but outward pomp and power; but Christ tells them, they must expect greater sufferings than they were yet called to; that they should then be made prisoners, when they expected to be made princes. It is good to be told what troubles we may hereafter meet with, that we may provide accordingly, and may not boast, as if we had put off the harness, when we are yet but girding it on.

We have here intermixed, I. Predictions of trouble: and, II. Prescriptions of counsel and comfort, with reference to it.

I. We have here predictions of trouble; which the disciples should meet with in their work: Christ foresaw *their* sufferings as well as his own, and yet will have them go on, as he went on himself; and he foretold them, not only that the troubles might not be a surprise to them, and so a shock to their faith, but that, being the accomplishment of a prediction, they might be a confirmation to their faith.

He tells them what they should suffer, and from whom.

1. *What they should suffer:* hard things to be sure; for, *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves*, v. 16. And what may a flock of poor, helpless, unguarded sheep expect, in the midst of a herd of ravenous wolves, but to be worried and torn? Note, Wicked men are like wolves, in whose nature it is to devour and destroy. God's people, and especially his ministers, are like sheep among them, of a contrary nature and disposition, exposed to them, and commonly an easy prey to them. It looked unkind in Christ to expose them to so much danger, who had left all to follow him; but he knew that the glory reserved for his sheep, when in the great day they shall be set on his right hand, would be a recompence sufficient for sufferings as well as services. They are as *sheep among wolves*, that is frightful; but Christ sends them forth, that is comfortable; for he that sends them forth will protect them, and bear them out. But that they might know the worst, he tells them particularly what they must expect.

(1.) They must expect to be hated, v. 22. *Ye shall be hated for my name's sake:* that is the root of all the rest, and a bitter root it is. Note, Those whom Christ loves, the world hates; as whom the court blesses the country curses. *If the world hated Christ without a cause* (~~855~~ John 15:25), no marvel if it hated those that bore his image and served his interests. We hate what is nauseous, and they *are counted as the offscouring of all things*, ~~4013~~ 1 Corinthians 4:13. We hate what is noxious, and they are counted *the troublers of the land* (~~1187~~ 1 Kings 18:17), and the tormentors of their neighbours, ~~6110~~ Revelation 11:10. It is grievous to be *hated*, and to be the object of so much ill-will, but it is *for thy name's sake*; which, as it speaks the true reason of the hatred, whatever is pretended, so it speaks comfort to them who are thus hated; it is for a good cause, and they have a good friend that shares with them in it, and takes it to himself.

(2.) They must expect to be apprehended and arraigned as malefactors. Their restless malice is resistless malice, and they will not only attempt, but will prevail, to *deliver you up to the councils* (v. 17, 18), to the bench of aldermen or justices, that take care of the public peace. Note, A deal of mischief is often done to good men, under colour of law and justice. In *the place of judgment there is wickedness*, persecuting wickedness, ^{<2186>}Ecclesiastes 3:16. They must look for trouble, not only from inferior magistrates in the councils, but from governors and kings, the supreme magistrates. To be brought before them, under such black representations as were commonly made of Christ's disciples, was dreadful and dangerous; for *the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion*. We find this often fulfilled in the *acts of the apostles*.

(3.) They must expect to be put to death (v. 21); *They shall deliver them to death*, to death in state, with pomp and solemnity, when it shows itself most as *the king of terrors*. The malice of the enemies rages so high as to inflict this; it is *the blood of the saints* that they thirst after: the faith and patience of the saints stand so firm as to expect this; *Neither count I my life dear to myself*: the wisdom of Christ permits it, knowing how to make the blood of the martyrs *the seal of the truth*, and *the seed of the church*. By this noble army's not loving *their lives to the death*, Satan has been vanquished, and the kingdom of Christ and its interests greatly advanced, ^{<6111>}Revelation 11:11. They were put to death as criminals, so the enemies meant it, but really as sacrifices (^{<3817>}Philippians 2:17; ^{<5046>}2 Timothy 4:6); as burnt offerings, sacrifices of acknowledgement to the honour of God, and in his truth and cause.

(4.) They must expect, in the midst of these sufferings, to be branded with the most odious and ignominious names and characters that could be. Persecutors would be ashamed in this world, if they did not first dress up those in bear-skins whom they thus bait, and represent them in such colours as may serve to justify such cruelties. The blackest of all the ill characters they give them is here stated; they call them Beelzebub, the name of the prince of the devils, v. 25. They represent them as ringleaders of the interest of the kingdom of darkness, and since every one thinks he hates the devil, thus they endeavour to make them odious to all mankind. See, and be amazed to see, how this world is imposed upon:

[1.] Satan's sworn enemies are represented as his friends; the apostles, who pulled down the devil's kingdom, were called devils. Thus *men laid to*

their charge, not only things which they knew not, but things which they abhorred, and were directly contrary to, and the reverse of.

[2.] Satan's sworn servants would be thought to be his enemies, and they never more effectually do his work, than when they pretend to be fighting against him. Many times they who themselves are nearest akin to the devil, are most apt to father others upon him; and those that paint him on others' clothes have him reigning in their own hearts. It is well there is a day coming, when (as it follows here, v. 26) that which is hid will be brought to light.

(5.) These sufferings are here represented by a sword and division, v. 34, 35. *Think not that I am come to send peace*, temporal peace and outward prosperity; they thought Christ came to give all his followers wealth and power in the world; “no,” says Christ, “I did not come with a view to give them *peace*; *peace* in heaven they may be sure of, but not *peace* on earth.” Christ came to give us *peace* with God, *peace* in our consciences, *peace* with our brethren, but *in the world ye shall have tribulation*. Note, They mistake the design of the gospel, who think their profession of it will secure them from, for it will certainly expose them to, trouble in this world. If all the world would receive Christ, there would then follow a universal *peace*, but while there are and will be so many that reject him (and those not only *the children of this world, but the seed of the serpent*), the children of God, that are called out of the world, must expect to feel the fruits of their enmity.

[1.] Look not for *peace, but a sword*, Christ came to give *the sword of the word*, with which his disciples fight against the world, and *conquering* work this sword has made (~~664~~ Revelation 6:4; 19:21), and *the sword of persecution*, with which the world fights against the disciples, being *cut to the heart with the sword of the word* (~~4054~~ Acts 7:54), and tormented by the testimony of Christ's witnesses (~~6110~~ Revelation 11:10), and *cruel* work this sword made. Christ sent that gospel, which gives occasion for the drawing of this sword, and so may be said to send this sword; he orders his church into a suffering state for the trial and praise of his people's graces, and *the filling up of the measure of their enemies' sins*.

[2.] Look not for *peace, but division* (v. 35), *I am come to set men at variance*. This effect of the preaching of the gospel is not the fault of the gospel, but of those who do not receive it. When some *believe the things that are spoken, and others believe them not*, the faith of those that believe

condemns those that believe not, and, therefore, they have an enmity against them that believe. Note, the most violent and implacable feuds have ever been those that have arisen from difference in religion; no enmity like that of the persecutors, no resolution like that of the persecuted. Thus Christ tells his disciples what they should suffer, and these were hard sayings; if they could bear these, they could bear any thing. Note, 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.

2. They are here told from whom, and by whom, they should suffer these hard things. Surely hell itself must be let loose, and devils, those desperate and despairing spirits, that *have no part nor lot in the great salvation*, must become incarnate, ere such spiteful enemies could be found to a doctrine, the substance of which was *good will toward men*, and *the reconciling of the world to God*; no, would you think it? all this mischief arises to the preachers of the gospel, from those to whom they came to preach salvation. Thus *the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul* (^{<329>}Proverbs 29:10), and therefore heaven is so much opposed on earth, because earth is so much under the power of hell, ^{<330>}Ephesians 2:2.

These hard things Christ's disciples must suffer,

(1.) From men (v. 17). "*Beware of men*; you will have need to stand upon your guard, even against those who are of the same nature with you" — such is the depravity and degeneracy of that nature (*homo homini lupus, — man is a wolf to man*), crafty and politic as men, but cruel and barbarous as beasts, and wholly divested of the thing called humanity. Note, Persecuting rage and enmity turn men into brutes, into devils. Paul at Ephesus fought with beasts in the shape of men, ^{<331>}1 Corinthians 15:32. It is a sad pass that the world is come to, when the best friends it has, have need to *beware of men*. It aggravates the troubles of Christ's suffering servants, that they arise from those who *are bone of their bone*, made of the same blood. Persecutors are, in this respect, worse than beasts, that they prey upon those of their own kind: *Saevis inter se convenit ursis — Even savage bears agree among themselves*. It is very grievous to have *men rise up against us* (Psalm 124), from whom we might expect protection and sympathy; *men*, and no more: mere *men*; *men*, and not saints; *natural men* (^{<332>}1 Corinthians 2:14); *men of this world*, ^{<333>}Psalm 17:14. Saints are more than *men*, and are *redeemed from among men*, and

therefore are *hated by them*. The nature of man, if it be not sanctified, is the worst nature in the world next to that of devils. *They are men*, and therefore subordinate, dependent, dying creatures; *they are men*, but *they are but men* (~~410~~ Psalm 9:20), and *who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?* ~~2512~~ Isaiah 51:12. *Beware of the men*, so Dr. Hammond; those you are acquainted with, the men of the Jewish sanhedrim, which disallowed Christ, ~~4114~~ 1 Peter 2:4.

(2.) From professing men, men that *have a form of godliness*, and make a show of religion. *They will scourge you in their synagogues*, their places of meeting for the worship of God, and for the exercise of their church-discipline: so that they looked upon the scourging of Christ's ministers to be a branch of their religion. Paul was *five times scourged in the synagogues*, ~~41124~~ 2 Corinthians 11:24. The Jews, under colour of zeal for Moses, were the most bitter persecutors of Christ and Christianity, and placed those outrages to the score of their religion. Note, Christ's disciples have suffered much from conscientious persecutors, that *scourge them in their synagogues*, cast them out and kill them, and *think they do God good service* (~~4102~~ John 16:2), and say, *Let the Lord be glorified*, ~~2305~~ Isaiah 66:5; ~~3104~~ Zechariah 11:4, 5. But the synagogue will be so far from consecrating the persecution, that the persecution, doubtless, profanes and desecrates the synagogue.

(3.) From great men, and men in authority. The Jews did not only scourge them, which was the utmost their remaining power extended to, but when they could go no further themselves, they delivered them up to the Roman powers, as they did Christ, ~~4830~~ John 18:30. *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings* (v. 18), who, having more power, are in a capacity of doing the more mischief. *Governors and kings* receive their power from Christ (~~4105~~ Proverbs 8:15), and should be his servants, and his church's protectors and nursing-fathers, but they often use their power against him, and are rebels to Christ, and oppressors of his church. *The kings of the earth* set themselves against his kingdom, ~~5111~~ Psalm 2:1, 2; ~~4105~~ Acts 4:25, 26. Note, It has often been the lot of good men to have great men for their enemies.

(4.) From all men (v. 22). *Ye shall be hated of all men*, of all wicked men, and these are the generality of men, *for the whole world lies in wickedness*. So few are there that love, and own, and countenance Christ's righteous cause, that we may say, the friends of it are *hated of all men*;

they are all gone astray, and, therefore, *eat up my people*, ^{<94B>}Psalm 14:3. As far as the apostasy from God goes, so far the enmity against the saints goes; sometimes it appears more general than at other times, but there is something of this poison lurking in the hearts of all *the children of disobedience. The world hates you, for it wonders after the beast*, ^{<61B>}Revelation 13:3. *Every man is a liar*, and therefore a hater of truth.

(5.) From those of their own kindred. *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death*, v. 21. *A man shall be, upon this account, at variance with his own father*; nay, and those of the weaker and tenderer sex too shall become persecutors and persecuted; *the persecuting daughter will be against the believing mother*, where natural affection and filial duty, one would think, should prevent or soon extinguish the quarrel; and then, no marvel *if the daughter-in-law be against the mother-in-law*; where, too often, the coldness of love seeks occasion of contention, v. 35. In general, *a man's foes shall be they of his own household* (v. 36). They who should be his friends will be incensed against him for embracing Christianity, and especially for adhering to it when it comes to be persecuted, and will join with his persecutors against him. Note, The strongest bonds of relative love and duty have often been broken through, by an enmity against Christ and his doctrine. Such has been the power of prejudice against the true religion, and zeal for a false one, that all other regards, the most natural and sacred, the most engaging and endearing, have been sacrificed to these Molochs. They who *rage against the Lord, and his anointed ones, break even these bonds in sunder, and cast away even these cords from them*, ^{<91B>}Psalm 2:2, 3. Christ's spouse suffers hard things from the anger of *her own mother's children*, ^{<211B>}Song of Solomon 1:6. Sufferings from such are more grievous; nothing cuts more than this, *It was thou, a man, mine equal* (^{<152B>}Psalm 55:12, 13); and the enmity of such is commonly most implacable; *a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city*, ^{<119B>}Proverbs 18:19. The martyrologies, both ancient and modern, are full of instances of this. Upon the whole matter, it appears, that *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; and through many tribulations we must expect to enter into the kingdom of God*.

II. With these predictions of trouble, we have here prescriptions of counsels and comforts for a time of trial. He sends them out exposed to danger indeed, and expecting it, but well armed with instructions and encouragements, sufficient to bear them up, and bear them out, in all these trials. Let us gather up what he says,

1. By way of counsel and direction in several things.

(1.) *Be ye wise as serpents*, v. 16. “You may be so” (so some take it, only as a permission); “you may be as wary as you please, provided you be harmless as doves.” But it is rather to be taken as a precept, recommending to us that wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand his way, as useful at all times, but especially in suffering times.

“*Therefore*, because you are exposed, as sheep among wolves; *be ye wise as serpents*; not wise as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others; but as *serpents*, whose policy is only to defend themselves, and to shift for their own safety.” The disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as *serpents*, and their ruin is sought, and, therefore, they need the *serpent's* wisdom. Note, It is the will of Christ that his people and ministers, being so much exposed to troubles in this world, as they usually are, should not needlessly expose themselves, but use all fair and lawful means for their own preservation. Christ gave us an example of this wisdom, ^{<4024>}Matthew 21:24, 25; 22:17, 18, 19; ^{<4026>}John 7:6, 7; besides the many escapes he made out of the hands of his enemies, till his hour was come. See an instance of Paul's wisdom, ^{<4236>}Acts 23:6, 7. In the cause of Christ we must sit loose to life and all its comforts, but must not be prodigal of them. It is the wisdom of the *serpent* to secure his head, that it may not be broken, to *stop his ear to the voice of the charmer* (^{<4804>}Psalm 58:4, 5), and to *take shelter in the clefts of the rocks*; and herein we may *be wise as serpents*. We must *be wise*, not to pull trouble upon our own heads; *wise* to keep silence in an evil time, and not to give offence, if we can help it.

(2.) *Be ye harmless as doves*. “Be mild, and meek, and dispassionate; not only do nobody any hurt, but bear nobody any ill will; be without gall, as *doves* are; this must always go along with the former.” They are *sent forth among wolves*, therefore must *be as wise as serpents*, but they are *sent forth as sheep*, therefore must *be harmless as doves*. We must *be wise*, not to wrong ourselves, but rather so than wrong any one else; must use the harmlessness of the *dove* to bear twenty injuries, rather than the subtlety of the *serpent* to offer or to return one. Note, It must be the continual care of all Christ's disciples, to be innocent and inoffensive in word and deed, especially in consideration of the enemies they are in the midst of. We have need of a *dove-like* spirit, when we are beset with birds of prey, that we may neither provoke them nor be provoked by them: David coveted *the wings of a dove*, on which to fly away and be at rest, rather than the wings of a hawk. *The Spirit descended on Christ as a dove*, and all believers

partake of *the Spirit of Christ, a dove-like spirit, made for love, not for war.*

(3.) *Beware of men*, v. 17. “Be always upon your guard, and avoid dangerous company; take heed what you say and do, and presume not too far upon any man's fidelity; be jealous of the most plausible pretensions; *trust not in a friend, no, not in the wife of thy bosom,*” ^{<306>}Micah 7:5. Note, It becomes those who are gracious to be cautious, for we are taught to *cease from man*. Such a wretched world do we live in, that we know not whom to trust. Ever since our Master was betrayed with a kiss, by one of his own disciples, we have need to *beware of men, of false brethren*.

(4.) *Take no thought how or what ye shall speak*, v. 19. “When you are brought before magistrates, conduct yourselves decently, but afflict not yourselves with care how you shall come off. A prudent thought there must be, but not an anxious, perplexing, disquieting thought; let this *care be cast upon God*, as well as that — *what you shall eat and what you shall drink*. Do not study to make fine speeches, *ad captandam benevolentiam* — *to ingratiate yourselves*; affect not quaint expressions, flourishes of wit, and laboured periods, which only serve to gild a bad cause; the gold of a good one needs it not. It argues a diffidence of your cause, to be solicitous in this matter, as if it were not sufficient to speak for itself. You know upon what grounds you go, and then *verbaque praevisam rem non invita sequentur* — *suitable expressions will readily occur*.” Never any spoke better before governors and kings than those three champions, who took *no thought before, what they should speak: O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter,* ^{<206>}Daniel 3:16. See ^{<106>}Psalm 119:46. Note, The disciples of Christ must be more thoughtful how to *do* well than how to *speak* well; how to *keep* their integrity than how to *vindicate* it. *Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus* — *Our lives, not boasting words*, form the best apology.

(5.) *When they persecute you in this city, flee to another*, v. 23. “Thus reject them who reject you and your doctrine, and try whether others will not receive you and it. Thus shift for your own safety.” Note, In case of imminent peril, the disciples of Christ may and must secure themselves by flight, when God, in his providence, opens to *them a door of escape*. He that flies may fight again. It is no inglorious thing for Christ's soldiers to quit their ground, provided they do not quit their colours: they may go out of the way of *danger*, though they must not go out of the way of *duty*.

Observe Christ's care of his disciples, in providing places of retreat and shelter for them; ordering it so, that persecution rages not in all places at the same time; but *when one city* is made too hot for them, *another* is reserved for a cooler shade, and *a little sanctuary*; a favour to be used and not to be slighted; yet always with this proviso, that no sinful, unlawful means be used to make the escape; for then it is not a door of God's opening. We have many examples to this rule in the history both of Christ and his apostles, in the application of all which to particular cases *wisdom* and integrity are *profitable to direct*.

(6.) *Fear them not* (v. 26), because *they can but kill the body* (v. 28). Note, it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples, not to fear the greatest of their adversaries. They who truly fear God, need not fear man; and they who are afraid of the least sin, need not be afraid of the greatest trouble. *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 carefully watched, and striven, and prayed against. Be the times never so difficult, enemies never so outrageous, and events never so threatening, yet need we not fear, *yet will we not fear, though the earth be removed*, while we have so good a God, so good a cause, and so *good a hope through grace*.

Yes, this is soon said; but when it comes to the trial, racks and tortures, dungeons and galleys, axes and gibbets, fire and faggot, are terrible things, enough to make the stoutest heart to tremble, and to start back, especially when it is plain, that they may be avoided by a few declining steps; and therefore, to fortify us against this temptation, we have here,

[1.] A good reason against this fear, taken from the limited power of the enemies; they *kill the body*, that is the utmost their rage can extend to; hitherto they can go, if God permit them, but no further; *they are not able to kill the soul*, nor to do it any hurt, and the soul is the man. By this it appears, that the soul does not (as some dream) fall asleep at death, nor is deprived of thought and perception; for then the killing of the body would be the killing of the soul too. The soul is killed when it is separated from God and his love, which is its life, and is made a vessel of his wrath; now this is out of the reach of their power. *Tribulation, distress, and persecution* may separate us from all the world, but cannot part between us and God, cannot make us either not to love him, or not to be loved by him, Ⓜ Romans 8:35, 37. If, therefore, we were more concerned about our

souls, as our jewels, we should be less afraid of men, whose power cannot rob us of them; they can but *kill the body*, which would quickly die of itself, *not the soul*, which will enjoy itself and its God in spite of them. They can but crush the cabinet: a heathen set the tyrant at defiance with this, *Tunde capsam Anaxarchi, Anaxarchum nom laedis* — *you may abuse the case of Anaxarchus, you cannot injure Anaxarchus himself*. The pearl of price is untouched. Seneca undertakes to make it out, that you cannot hurt a wise and good man, because death itself is no real evil to him. *Si maximum illud ultra quod nihil habent iratae leges, aut saevissimi domini minantur, in quo imperium suum fortuna consumit, aequo placidoque animo accipimus, et scimus mortem malum non esse ob hoc, ne injuriam quidem* — *If with calmness and composure we meet that last extremity, beyond which injured laws and merciless tyrants have nothing to inflict, and in which fortune terminates her dominion, we know that death is not an evil, because it does not occasion the slightest injury*. Seneca *De Constantid.*

[2.] A good remedy against it, and that is, to fear God. *Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*. Note, First, *Hell* is the destruction both of *soul and body*; not of the *being* of either, but the *well-being* of both; it is the ruin of the whole man; if the soul be lost, the body is lost too. They sinned together; the body was the soul's tempter to sin, and its tool in sin, and they must eternally suffer together. Secondly, This destruction comes from the power of God: *he is able to destroy*; it is a destruction from his *glorious power* (^{<510>}2 Thessalonians 1:9); *he will in it make his power known*; not only his authority to sentence, but his ability to execute the sentence, ^{<512>}Romans 9:22. Thirdly, *God is therefore to be feared*, even by the best saints in this world. *Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men to stand in awe of him. If according to his fear so is his wrath, then according to his wrath so should his fear be*, especially because *none knows the power of his anger*, ^{<511>}Psalm 90:11. When Adam, in innocency, was awed by a threatening, let none of Christ's disciples think that they need not the restraint of a holy fear. *Happy is the man that fears always*. The *God of Abraham*, who was then dead, is called the *Fear of Isaac*, who was yet alive, ^{<534>}Genesis 31:42, 53. Fourthly, The fear of God, and of his power reigning in the soul, will be a sovereign antidote against the fear of man. It is better to fall under the frowns of all the world, than under God's frowns, and therefore, as it is most right in itself, so it is most safe for us, *to obey God rather than men*, ^{<443>}Acts 4:19. They who

are afraid of a man that shall die, forget the Lord their Maker, ^{<2512>}Isaiah 51:12, 13, ^{<4044>}Nehemiah 4:14.

(7.) *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light* (v. 27); “whatever hazards you run, go on with your work, publishing and proclaiming the everlasting gospel to all the world; that is your business, mind that. The design of the enemies is not merely to destroy *you*, but to suppress *that*, and, therefore, whatever be the consequence, publish *that*.” *What I tell you, that speak ye*. Note, That which the apostles have delivered to us is the same that *they received from Jesus Christ*, ^{<4008>}Hebrews 2:3. They spake what he told them — *that, all that, and nothing but that*. Those ambassadors received their instructions in private, *in darkness*, in the ear, in corners, in parables. *Many things Christ spake openly, and nothing in secret* varying from what he preached in public, ^{<4030>}John 18:20. But the particular instructions which he gave his disciples after his resurrection, concerning *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, were whispered in the ear (^{<4018>}Acts 1:3), for then *he never showed himself openly*. But they must deliver their embassy publicly, *in the light, and upon the house-tops*; for the doctrine of the gospel is what all are concerned in (^{<3000>}Proverbs 1:20, 21; 8:2, 3), therefore *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear*. The first indication of the reception of the Gentiles into the church, was *upon a house-top*, ^{<4009>}Acts 10:9. Note, There is no part of Christ's gospel that needs, upon any account, to be concealed; *the whole counsel of God must be revealed*, ^{<4027>}Acts 20:27. In never so mixed a multitude let it be plainly and fully delivered.

2. By way of comfort and encouragement. Here is very much said to that purpose, and all little enough, considering the many hardships they were to grapple with, throughout the course of their ministry, and their present weakness, which was such, as that, without some powerful support, they could scarcely bear even the prospect of such usage; Christ therefore shows them why they should be of good cheer.

(1.) Here is one word peculiar to their present mission, v. 23. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come*. They were to preach that *the kingdom of the Son of man*, the Messiah, was *at hand*; they were to pray, *Thy kingdom come*: now they should *not have gone over all the cities of Israel*, thus praying and thus preaching, before that kingdom should come, in the exaltation of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit. It was a comfort,

[1.] That what they said should be made good: they said *the Son of man* is coming, and *behold, he comes*. Christ will confirm the word of his messengers, ^{<244>}Isaiah 44:26.

[2.] That it should be made good quickly. Note, It is matter of comfort to Christ's labourers, that their working time will be short, and soon over; the hiring has his day; the work and warfare will in a little time be accomplished.

[3.] That then they should be advanced to a higher station. *When the Son of man comes, they shall be endued with greater power from on high*; now they were sent forth as agents and envoys, but in a little time their commission should be enlarged, and they should be sent forth as plenipotentiaries into all the world.

(2.) Here are many words that relate to their work in general, and the troubles they were to meet with in it; and *they are good words and comfortable words*.

[1.] That their sufferings were *for a testimony against them and the Gentiles*, v. 18. When the Jewish consistories transfer you to the Roman governors, that they may have you put to death, your being hurried thus from one judgment-seat to another, will help to make your testimony the more public, and will give you an opportunity of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews; nay, you will testify to them, and against them, by the very troubles you undergo. Note, God's people, and especially God's ministers, are his witnesses (^{<245>}Isaiah 43:10), not only in their *doing* work, but in their *suffering* work. Hence they are called martyrs — *witnesses* for Christ, that his truths are of undoubted certainty and value; and, being witnesses for him, they are witnesses against those who oppose him and his gospel. The sufferings of the martyrs, as they witness to the truth of the gospel they profess, so they are testimonies of the enmity of their persecutors, and both ways they are a testimony against them, and will be produced in evidence in the great day, when *the saints shall judge the world*; and the reason of the sentence will be, *Inasmuch as ye did it unto these, ye did it unto me*. Now if their sufferings be a testimony, how cheerfully should they be borne! for the testimony is not finished till those come, ^{<246>}Revelation 11:7. If they be Christ's witnesses, they shall be sure to have their charges borne.

[2.] That upon all occasions they should have God's special presence with them, and the immediate assistance of his Holy Spirit, particularly when they should be called out to bear their testimony *before governors and kings; it shall be given you* (said Christ) *in that same hour what ye shall speak*. Christ's disciples were chosen *from among the foolish of the world*, unlearned and ignorant men, and, therefore, might justly distrust their own abilities, especially when they were called before great men. When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, he complained, *I am not eloquent*, ^{<1840>}Exodus 4:10. When Jeremiah was set over the kingdoms, he objected, *I am but a child*, ^{<2016>}Jeremiah 1:6, 10. Now, in answer to this suggestion, First, they are here promised that *it should be given them*, nor some time before, but *in that same hour, what they should speak*. They shall speak *extempore*, and yet shall speak as much to the purpose, as if it had been never so well studied. Note, When God calls us out to speak for him, we may depend upon him to teach us what to say; even then, when we labour under the greatest disadvantages and discouragements. Secondly, They are here assured, that the blessed Spirit should draw up their plea for them. *It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you*, v. 20. They were not left to themselves upon such an occasion, but God undertook for them; his Spirit of wisdom spoke *in* them, as sometimes his providence wonderfully spoke *for* them, and by both together they were manifested in the consciences even of their persecutors. God gave them an ability, not only to speak to the purpose, but what they did say, to say it with holy zeal. The same Spirit that assisted them in the pulpit, assisted them at the bar. They cannot but come off well, who have such an advocate; to whom God says, as he did to Moses (^{<1842>}Exodus 4:12), *Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and with thy heart*.

[3.] That *he that endures to the end shall be saved*, v. 22. Here it is very comfortable to consider, First, that there will be an *end* of these troubles; they may last long, but will not last always. Christ comforted himself with this, and so may his followers; *The things concerning me have an end*, ^{<1227>}Luke 22:37. *Dabit Deus his quoque finem* — *These also will God bring to a termination*. Note, A believing prospect of the period of our troubles, will be of great use to support us under them. *The weary will be at rest, when the wicked cease from troubling*, ^{<1817>}Job 3:17. God will give an expected *end*, ^{<2011>}Jeremiah 29:11. The troubles may seem tedious, *like the days of a hireling*, but, blessed be God, they are not everlasting. Secondly, That while they continue, they may be *endured*; as they are not *eternal*, so

they are not *intolerable*; they may be borne, and borne *to the end*, because the sufferers shall be borne up under them, in everlasting arms: *The strength shall be according to the day*, ^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 10:13. Thirdly, Salvation will be the eternal recompence of all those *that endure to the end*. The weather stormy, and the way foul, but the pleasure of home will make amends for all. A believing regard to the crown of glory has been in all ages the cordial and support of suffering saints, ^{<BIB>}2 Corinthians 4:16; 17, 18; ^{<BIB>}Hebrews 10:34. This is not only an encouragement to us to *endure*, but an engagement to *endure to the end*. They who *endure but awhile, and in time of temptation fall away*, have run in vain, and lose all that they have attained; but they who persevere, are sure of the prize, and they only. *Be faithful unto death*, and then thou shalt have *the crown of life*.

[4.] That whatever hard usage the disciples of Christ meet with, it is no more than what their Master met with before (v. 24, 25). *The disciple is not above his master*. We find this given them as a reason, why they should not hesitate to perform the meanest duties, no, not washing one another's feet. ^{<BIB>}John 13:16. Here it is given as a reason, why they should not stumble at the hardest sufferings. They are reminded of this saying, ^{<BIB>}John 15:20. It is a proverbial expression, *The servant is not better than his master*, and, therefore, let him not expect to fare *better*. Note, First, Jesus Christ is our *Master*, our teaching *Master*, and we are his disciples, to learn of him; our ruling *master*, and we are his servants to obey him: He is *Master* of the house, *oikodespotes*, has a despotic power in the church, which is his family. Secondly, Jesus Christ our Lord and Master met with very hard usage from the world; they called him Beelzebub, the god of flies, the name of the chief of the devils, with whom they said he was in league. It is hard to say which is here more to be wondered at, the wickedness of men who thus abused Christ, or the patience of Christ, who suffered himself to be thus abused; that he who was the God of glory should be stigmatized as the god of flies; the King of Israel, as the god of Ekron; the Prince of light and life, as the prince of the powers of death and darkness; that Satan's greatest Enemy and Destroyer should be run down as his confederate, and yet *endure such contradiction of sinners*. Thirdly, The consideration of the ill treatment which Christ met with in the world, should engage us to expect and prepare for the like, and to bear it patiently. Let us not think it strange, if they who hated him hate his followers, for his sake; nor think it hard if they who are shortly to be made

like him in glory, be now made *like him in sufferings*. Christ began in the *bitter cup*, let us be willing to pledge him; his bearing the cross made it easy for us.

[5.] That *there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed*, v. 26. We understand this, First, Of the revealing of the gospel to all the world. “Do you *publish* it (v. 27), for it shall be published. The truths which are now, as mysteries, hid from the children of men, shall all be made known, to all nations, in their own language,” ~~401~~ Acts 2:11. The *ends of the earth must see this salvation*. Note, It is a great encouragement to those who are doing Christ's work, that it is a work which shall certainly be done. It is a plough which God will speed. Or, Secondly, Of the clearing up of the innocency of Christ's suffering servants, that are called Beelzebub; their true character is now invidiously disguised with false colours, but however their innocency and excellency are now *covered*, they *shall be revealed*; sometimes it is in a great measure done in this world, when the righteousness of the saints is made, by subsequent events, to *shine forth as the light*: however it will be done at the great day, when their glory shall be manifested to all the world, angels and men, to whom they are now *made spectacles*, ~~402~~ 1 Corinthians 4:9. All their reproach shall be rolled away, and their graces and services, that are now *covered*, *shall be revealed*, ~~403~~ 1 Corinthians 4:5. Note, It is matter of comfort to the people of God, under all the calumnies and censures of men, that there will be a resurrection of *names* as well as of *bodies*, at the last day, when *the righteous shall shine forth as the sun*. Let Christ's ministers faithfully reveal his truths, and then leave it to him, in due time, to reveal their integrity.

[6.] That the providence of God is in a special manner conversant about the saints, in their suffering, v. 29-31. It is good to have recourse to our first principles, and particularly to the doctrine of God's universal providence, extending itself to all the creatures, and all their actions, even the smallest and most minute. The light of nature teaches us this, and it is comfortable to all men, but especially to all good men, who can in faith call this God their Father, and for whom he has a tender concern. See here,

First, The general extent of providence to all the creatures, even the least, and least considerable, to the *sparrows*, v. 29. These little animals are of so small account, that one of them is not valued; there must go two to be worth *a farthing* (nay, you shall have five for a halfpenny, ~~404~~ Luke 12:6),

and yet they are not shut out of the divine care; *One of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father*: That is,

1. They do not light on *the ground* for food, to pick up a grain of corn, but *your heavenly Father*, by his providence, laid it ready for them. In the parallel place, ^{<0116>}Luke 12:6, it is thus expressed, *Not one of them is forgotten before God*, forgotten to be provided for; *he feedeth them*, ^{<0165>}Matthew 6:26. Now he that feeds the sparrows, will not starve the saints.

2. They do *not fall to the ground* by death, either a natural or a violent death, without the notice of God: though they are so small a part of the creation, yet even their death comes within the notice of the divine providence; much more does the death of his disciples. Observe, The birds that soar above, when they die, *fall to the ground*; death brings the highest to the earth. Some think that Christ here alludes to the *two sparrows* that were used in cleansing the leper (^{<0344>}Leviticus 14:4-6); the two birds in the margin are called *sparrows*; of these one was killed, and so *fell to the ground*, the other was let go. Now it seemed a casual thing which of the two was killed; the persons employed took which they pleased, but God's providence designed, and determined which. Now this God, who has such an eye to the sparrows, because they are his creatures, much more will have an eye to you, who are his children. If a sparrow die not *without your Father*, surely a man does not, — a Christian, — a minister, — my friend, my child. A bird falls not into the fowler's net, nor by the fowler's shot, and so comes not to be sold in the market, but according to the direction of providence; your enemies, like subtle fowlers, *lay snares for you*, and *privily shoot at you*, but they cannot take you, they cannot hit you, unless God give them leave. Therefore be not afraid of death, for your enemies have no power against you, but what is *given them from above*. God can break their bows and snares (^{<0382>}Psalm 38:12-15; 64:4, 7), and make our souls to *escape as a bird* (^{<0347>}Psalm 124:7); *Fear ye not, therefore*, v. 31. Note, There is enough in the doctrine of God's providence to silence all the fears of God's people: *Ye are of more value than many sparrows*. All men are so, for the other creatures were made for man, and *put under his feet* (^{<0386>}Psalm 8:6-8); much more the disciples of Jesus Christ, who are the excellent ones of the earth, however contemned, as if not worth one sparrow.

Secondly, The particular cognizance which providence takes of the disciples of Christ, especially in their sufferings (v. 30), *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered*. This is a proverbial expression, denoting the account which God takes and keeps of all the concerns of his people, even of those that are most minute, and least regarded. This is not to be made a matter of curious enquiry, but of encouragement to live in a continual dependence upon God's providential care, which extends itself to all occurrences, yet without disparagement to the infinite glory, or disturbance to the infinite rest, of the Eternal Mind. If God numbers their hairs, much more does he number their heads, and take care of their lives, their comforts, their souls. It intimates, that God takes more care of them, than they do of themselves. They who are solicitous to number their money, and goods, and cattle, yet were never careful to number their hairs, which fall and are lost, and they never miss them: but God *numbers the hairs of his people, and not a hair of their head shall perish* (~~218~~ Luke 21:18); not the least hurt shall be done them, but upon a valuable consideration: so precious to God are his saints, and their lives and deaths!

[7.] That he will shortly, in the day of triumph, own those who now own him, in the day of trial, when those who deny him shall be for ever disowned and rejected by him, v. 32, 33. Note, First, It is our duty, and if we do it, it will hereafter be our unspeakable honour and happiness, to *confess Christ before men*.

1. 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. We must never be ashamed of our relation to Christ, our attendance on him, and our expectations from him: hereby the sincerity of our faith, is evidenced, his name glorified, and others edified.
2. However this may expose us to reproach and trouble now, we shall be abundantly recompensed for that, *in the resurrection of the just*, when it will be our unspeakable honour and happiness to hear Christ say (what would we more?) "*Him will I confess*, though a poor worthless worm of the earth; this is one of mine, one of my friends and favourites, who loved me and was beloved by me; the purchase of my blood, the workmanship of my Spirit; *I will confess him before my Father*, when it will do him the most service; I will speak a good word for him, when he appears before *my Father* to receive his doom; I will present him, will represent him to *my Father*." Those who honour

Christ he will thus honour. They honour him *before men*; that is a *poor* thing: he will honour them *before his Father*; that is a *great* thing. Secondly, It is a dangerous thing for any to deny and disown *Christ before men*; for they who so do will be disowned by him *in the great day*, when they have most need of him: he will not own them for his servants who would not own him for their master: *I tell you, I know you not*, ⁴⁰⁷³Matthew 7:23. In the first ages of Christianity, when for a man to *confess Christ* was to venture all that was dear to him in this world, it was more a trial of sincerity, than it was afterwards, when it had secular advantages attending it.

[8.] That the foundation of their discipleship was laid in such a temper and disposition, as would make sufferings very light and easy to them; and it was upon the condition of a preparedness for suffering, that Christ took them to be his followers, v. 37-39. He told them at first, that they were *not worthy of him*, if they were not willing to part with all for him. Men hesitate not at those difficulties which necessarily attend their profession, and which they counted upon, when they undertook that profession; and they will either cheerfully submit to those fatigues and troubles, or disclaim the privileges and advantages of their profession. Now, in the Christian profession, they are reckoned unworthy the dignity and felicity of it, that put not such a value upon their interest in Christ, as to prefer that before any other interests. They cannot expect the gains of a bargain, who will not come up to the terms of it. Now thus the terms are settled; if religion be worth *any* thing, it is worth *every* thing: and, therefore, all who believe the truth of it, will soon come up to the price of it; and they who make it their business and bliss, will make every thing else to yield to it. They who like not Christ on these terms, may leave him at their peril. Note, It is very encouraging to think, that whatever we leave, or lose, or suffer for Christ, we do not make a hard bargain for ourselves. Whatever we part with for this pearl of price, we may comfort ourselves with this persuasion, that it is well worth what we give for it. The terms are, that we must prefer Christ.

First, Before our nearest and dearest relations; *father or mother, son or daughter*. Between these relations, because there is little room left for envy, there is commonly more room for love, and, therefore, these are instanced, as relations which are most likely to affect us. Children must love their parents, and parents must love their children; but if they love them better than Christ, they are unworthy of him. As we must not be

deterred from Christ by the hatred of our relations which he spoke of (v. 21, 35, 36), so we must not be *drawn* from him, by their love. Christians must be as Levi, who *said to his father, I have not seen him,*
Deuteronomy 33:9.

Secondly, Before our ease and safety. We must *take up our cross* and *follow him*, else we are *not worthy* of him. Here observe,

1. They who would *follow Christ*, must expect *their cross* and *take it up*.
2. In taking *up the cross*, we must *follow Christ's example*, and bear it as he did.
3. It is a great encouragement to us, when we meet with crosses, that in bearing them we *follow Christ*, who has showed us the way; and that if we follow him faithfully, he will lead us through sufferings like him, to glory with him.

Thirdly, Before life itself, v. 39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it*; he that thinks he had found it when he has saved it, and kept it, by denying Christ, *shall lose it* in an eternal death; but *he that loseth his life for Christ's sake*, that will part with it rather than deny Christ, *shall find it*, to his unspeakable advantage, an eternal life. They are best prepared for the life to come, that sit most loose to this present life.

[9.] That Christ himself would so heartily espouse their cause, as to show himself a friend to all their friends, and to repay all the kindnesses that should at any time be bestowed upon them, v. 40-42. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*.

First, It is here implied, that though the generality would reject them, yet they should meet with some who would receive and entertain them, would bid the message welcome to their hearts, and the messengers to their houses, for the sake of it. Why was the gospel market made, but that if some will not, others will. In the worst of times there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Christ's ministers shall not *labour in vain*.

Secondly, Jesus Christ takes what is done to his faithful ministers, whether in kindness or in unkindness, as done to himself, and reckons himself *treated* as they are *treated*. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*. Honour or

contempt put upon an ambassador reflects honour or contempt upon the prince that sends him, and ministers are *ambassadors for Christ*. See how Christ may still be entertained by those who would testify their respects to him; his people and ministers we have always with us; and he is *with them always*, even to the end of the world. Nay, the honour rises higher, *He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me*. Not only Christ takes it as done to himself, but through Christ God does so too. By entertaining Christ's ministers, they entertain not *angels unawares*, but Christ, nay, and God himself, and *unawares* too, as appears, ^{<4157>}Matthew 25:37. *When saw we thee an hungered?*

Thirdly, That though the kindness done to Christ's disciples be never so small, yet if there be occasion for it, and ability to do no more, it shall be accepted, though it be *but a cup of cold water given to one of these little ones*, v. 42. They are *little ones*, poor and weak, and often stand in need of refreshment, and glad of the least. The extremity may be such, that a *cup of cold water* may be a great favour. Note, Kindnesses shown to Christ's disciples are valued in Christ's books, not according to the cost of the gift, but according to the love and affection of the giver. On that score the widow's mite not only passed current, but was stamped high, ^{<217>}Luke 21:3, 4. Thus they who are truly rich in graces may be rich in good works, though poor in the world.

Fourthly, That kindness to Christ's disciples which he will accept, must be done with an eye to Christ, and for his sake. A prophet must be received *in the name of a prophet*, and a *righteous man* in the name of a *righteous man*, and one of those *little ones* in the name of a *disciple*; not because they are learned, or witty, nor because they are our relations or neighbours, but because they are righteous, and so bear Christ's image; because they are prophets and disciples, and so are sent on Christ's errand. It is a believing regard to Christ that puts an acceptable value upon the kindnesses done to his ministers. Christ does not interest himself in the matter, unless we first interest him in it. *Ut tibi debeam aliquid pro eo quod praestas, debes non tantum mihi praestare, sed tanquam mihi* — *If you wish me to feel an obligation to you for any service you render, you must not only perform the service, but you must convince me that you do it for my sake.* Seneca.

Fifthly, That kindnesses shown to Christ's people and ministers, shall not only be accepted, but richly and suitably rewarded. There is a great deal to

be gotten, by doing good offices to Christ's disciples. If it be done to the Lord, he will repay them again with interest; for he is *not unrighteous to forget any labour of love*, ^{<810>} Hebrews 6:10.

1. They shall *receive a reward*, and in no wise *lose it*. He does not say, that they *deserve* a reward; we cannot merit any thing as wages, from the hand of God; but they shall *receive a reward* from the free gift of God; and they shall *in no wise lose it*, as good services often do among men; because they who should reward them are either false or forgetful. The reward may be deferred, the full reward will be deferred, till the resurrection of the just; but it shall in no wise be *lost*, nor shall they be any *losers* by the delay.

2. This is a *prophet's reward*, and a *righteous man's*. That is, either,

(1.) The reward that God gives to prophets and righteous men; the blessings conferred upon them shall distil upon their friends. Or,

(2.) The reward he gives by prophets and righteous men; in answer to their prayers (^{<811>}Genesis 20:7), *He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee*, that is a prophet's reward; and by their ministry; when he gives the instructions and comforts of the word, to those who are kind to the preachers of the word, then he sends a *prophet's reward*. Prophets' rewards are spiritual blessings in heavenly things, and if we know how to value them, we shall reckon them good payment.