

CHAPTER 6

In this chapter we have Christ's exposition of the moral law, which he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and to fill up, by his gospel.

I. Here is a proof of the lawfulness of works of necessity and mercy on the sabbath day, the former in vindication of his disciples' plucking the ears of corn, the latter in vindication of himself healing the withered hand on that day (v. 1-11).

II. His retirement for secret prayer (v. 12).

III. His calling his twelve apostles (v. 13-16).

IV. His curing the multitudes of those under various diseases who made their application to him (v. 17-19).

V. The sermon that he preached to his disciples and the multitude, instructing them in their duty both to God and man (v. 20-49).

LUKE 6:1-11

WORKS OF MERCY SUITED TO THE SABBATH

These two passages of story we had both in Matthew and Mark, and they were there laid together (~~411~~ Matthew 12:1; ~~412~~ Mark 2:23; 3:1), because, though happening at some distance of time from each other, both were designed to rectify the mistakes of the scribes and Pharisees concerning the sabbath day, on the *bodily rest* of which they laid greater stress and required greater strictness than the Law-giver intended. Here,

I. Christ justifies his disciples in a *work of necessity* for themselves on that day, and that was *plucking the ears of corn*, when they were hungry on that day. This story here has a date, which we had not in the other evangelists; it was *on the second sabbath after the first* (v. 1), that is, as Dr. Whitby thinks is pretty clear, the *first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread*, from which day they reckoned the *seven weeks* to the feast of pentecost; the first of which they called *Sabbaton deuteropron*,

the second *deuterodeuteron*, and so on. Blessed be God we need not be critical in this matter. Whether this circumstance be mentioned to intimate that this sabbath was thought to have some peculiar honour upon it, which aggravated the offence of the disciples, or only to intimate that, being the first sabbath after the offering of the first fruits, it was the time of the year when the corn was nearly ripe, is not material. We may observe,

- 1.** Christ's disciples ought not to be nice and curious in their diet, at any time, especially on sabbath days, but take up with what is easiest got, and be thankful. These disciples *plucked the ears of corn, and did eat* (v. 1); a little served them, and that which had no delicacy in it.
- 2.** Many that are themselves guilty of the greatest crimes are forward to censure others for the most innocent and inoffensive actions, v. 2. The Pharisees quarrelled with them as doing that which it *was not lawful to do on the sabbath days*, when it was their own practice to feed deliciously on sabbath days, more than on all other days.
- 3.** Jesus Christ will justify his disciples when they are unjustly censured, and will own and accept of them in many a thing which men tell them *it is not lawful for them to do*. How well is it for us that men are not to be our judges, and that Christ will be our Advocate!
- 4.** Ceremonial appointments may be dispensed with, in cases of necessity; as the appropriating of the showbread to the priests was dispensed with, when David was by Providence brought into such a strait that he must have either that or none, v. 3, 4. And, if God's own appointments might be thus set aside for a greater good, much more may the traditions of men.
- 5.** Works of necessity are particularly allowable on the sabbath day; but we must take heed that we turn not this liberty into licentiousness, and abuse God's favourable concessions and condescensions to the prejudice of the work of the day.
- 6.** Jesus Christ, though he allowed works of necessity on the sabbath day, will notwithstanding have us to know and remember that it is his day, and therefore is to be spent in his service and to his honour (v. 5): *The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath*. In the kingdom of the Redeemer, the sabbath day is to be turned into a *Lord's day*; the property of it is, in some respects, to be altered, and it is to be observed chiefly in honour of the Redeemer, as it had been before in honour of the Creator, ²¹⁴⁴Jeremiah

16:14, 15. In token of this, it shall not only have a new name, the *Lord's day* (yet not forgetting the old, for it is a sabbath of rest still) but shall be transferred to a new day, the first day of the week.

II. He justifies himself in doing *works of mercy* for others on the sabbath day. Observe in this,

1. Christ on the sabbath day *entered into the synagogue*. Note, It is our duty, as we have opportunity, to sanctify sabbaths in religious assemblies. On the sabbath there ought to be a *holy convocation*; and our place must not be empty without very good reason.

2. In the synagogue, on the sabbath day, *he taught*. Giving and receiving instruction from Christ is very proper work for a sabbath day, and for a *synagogue*. Christ took all opportunities to teach, not only his disciples, but the multitude.

3. Christ's patient was one of his hearers. *A man whose right hand was withered* came to learn from Christ. Whether he had any expectation to be healed by him does not appear. But those that would be *cured* by the grace of Christ must be willing to *learn* the doctrine of Christ.

4. Among those who were the hearers of Christ's excellent doctrine, and the eye-witnesses of his glorious miracles, there were some who came with no other design than to pick quarrels with him, v. 7. The scribes and Pharisees would not, as became *generous* adversaries, give him fair warning that, if he did *heal* on the sabbath day, they would construe it into a violation of the fourth commandment, which they ought in honour and justice to have done, because it was a case *without precedent* (none having ever cured as he did), but they basely *watched him*, as the lion does his prey, whether he would *heal on the sabbath day, that they might find an accusation against him*, and surprise him with a prosecution.

5. Jesus Christ was neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* to own the purposes of his grace, in the face of those who, he knew, confronted them, v. 8. *He knew their faults*, and what they designed, and he bade the man *rise, and stand forth*, hereby to try the patient's faith and boldness.

6. He appealed to his adversaries themselves, and to the convictions of natural conscience, whether it was the design of the fourth commandment to restrain men from doing good on the sabbath day, that good which their hand finds to do, which they have an opportunity for, and which cannot so

well be put off to another time (v. 9): *Is it lawful to do good, or evil, on the sabbath days?* No wicked men are such *absurd* and *unreasonable* men as *persecutors* are, who study to *do evil* to men for *doing good*.

7. He healed the poor man, and restored him to the present use of his right hand, with a word's speaking, though he knew that his enemies would not only take offence at it, but take advantage against him for it, v. 10. Let not us be drawn off, either from our duty or usefulness, by the oppression we meet with in it.

8. His adversaries were hereby enraged so much the more against him, v. 11. Instead of being convinced by this miracle, as they ought to have been, that he was a teacher come from God, — instead of being brought to be in love with him as a benefactor to mankind, — they were *filled with madness*, vexed that they could not frighten him from doing good, or hinder the growth of his interest in the affections of the people. They were *mad* at Christ, *mad* at the people, *mad* at themselves. Anger is a *short madness*, malice is a *long* one; *impotent* malice, especially *disappointed* malice; such was theirs. When they could not prevent his working this miracle, they *communed one with another what they might do to Jesus*, what other way they might take to run him down. We may well stand amazed at it that the sons of men should be so wicked as to do thus, and that the Son of God should be so patient as to suffer it.

LUKE 6:12-19

THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN

In these verses, we have our Lord Jesus in *secret*, in *his family*, and in *public*; and in all three acting like himself.

I. In *secret* we have him *praying to God*, v. 12. This evangelist takes frequent notice of Christ's retirements, to give us an example of secret prayer, by which we must keep up our communion with God daily, and without which it is impossible that the soul should prosper. *In those days*, when his enemies were filled with madness against him, and were contriving what to do to him, he went out to *pray*; that he might answer the type of David (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 109:4), *For my love, they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer*. Observe,

1. He was *alone* with God; he *went out into a mountain, to pray*, where he might have no disturbance or interruption given him; we are never less alone than when we are *thus* alone. Whether there was any convenient place built upon this mountain, for devout people to retire to for their private devotions, as some think, and that that *oratory*, or *place of prayer*, is meant here by *he proseuche tou theou*, to me seems very uncertain. He went into a mountain for privacy, and therefore, probably, would not go to a place frequented by others.

2. He was *long* alone with God: *He continued all night in prayer*. We think one half hour a great deal to spend in the *duties of the closet*; but Christ continued a *whole night* in meditation and secret prayer. We have a great deal of *business* at the throne of grace, and we should take a great *delight* in communion with God, and by both these we may be kept sometimes long at prayer.

II. In his *family* we have him nominating his immediate attendants, that should be the constant auditors of his doctrine and eye-witnesses of his miracles, that hereafter they might be sent forth as *apostles*, his *messengers* to the world, to preach his gospel to it, and plant his church in it, v. 13. After he had *continued all night in prayer*, one would have thought that, *when it was day*, he should have reposed himself, and got some sleep. No, as soon as any body was stirring, he *called unto him his disciples*. In serving God, our great care should be, not to *lose time*, but to make the end of one good duty the beginning of another. Ministers are to be ordained with *prayer* more than ordinarily *solemn*. The number of the apostles was *twelve*. Their names are here recorded; it is the *third time* that we have met with them, and in each of the *three* places the *order* of them differs, to teach both ministers and Christians not to be nice in precedency, not in *giving* it, much less in *taking* it, but to look upon it as a thing not worth taking notice of; let it be as it lights. He that in Mark was called *Thaddeus*, in Matthew *Lebbeus*, whose surname was *Thaddeus*, is here called *Judas the brother of James*, the same that wrote the epistle of Jude. Simon, who in Matthew and Mark was called the *Canaanite*, is here called *Simon Zelotes*, perhaps for his great zeal in religion. Concerning these twelve here named we have reason to say, as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, *Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom*; never were men so privileged, and yet one of them had a devil, and proved a traitor (v. 16); yet Christ, when he chose him, was not deceived in him.

III. In *public* we have him *preaching* and *healing*, the two great works between which he divided his time, v. 17. He came down with the twelve from the mountain, and *stood in the plain*, ready to receive those that resorted to him; and there were presently gathered about him, not only the *company of his disciples*, who used to attend him, but also a great *multitude of people*, a mixed multitude *out of all Judea and Jerusalem*. Though it was some scores of miles from Jerusalem to that part of Galilee where Christ now was, — though at Jerusalem they had abundance of famous rabbin, that had great names, and bore a mighty sway, — yet they came to hear Christ. They came also from the *sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon*. Though they who lived there were generally men of business, and though they bordered upon Canaanites, yet there were some well affected to Christ; such there were dispersed in all parts, here and there one.

1. They *came to hear him* and he *preached* to them. Those that have not good preaching near them had better travel far for it than be without it. It is worth while to go a great way to hear the word of Christ, and to go out of the way of other business for it.

2. They came to be *cured* by him, and he *healed* them. Some were troubled *in body*, and some *in mind*; some had *diseases*, some had *devils*; but both the one and the other, upon their application to Christ, were *healed*, for he has power over *diseases* and *devils* (v. 17, 18), over the effects and over the causes. Nay, it should seem, those who had no *particular diseases* to complain of yet found it a great confirmation and renovation to their bodily *health* and *vigour* to partake of the *virtue that went out of him*; for (v. 19) *the whole multitude sought to touch him*, those that were in health as well as those that were sick, and they were all, one way or other, the better for him: he *healed them all*; and who is there that doth not need, upon some account or other, to be *healed*? There is a *fulness of grace* in Christ, and healing virtue in him, and ready to go out from him, that is enough for all, enough for each.

LUKE 6:20-26

BLESSINGS AND WOES

Here begins a practical discourse of Christ, which is continued to the end of the chapter, most of which is found in the *sermon upon the mount*,

Matthew 5 and 7. Some think that this was preached at some other time and place, and there are other instances of Christ's preaching the same things, or to the same purport, at different times; but it is probable that this is only the evangelist's abridgment of that sermon, and perhaps that in Matthew too is but an abridgment; the beginning and the conclusion are much the same; and the story of the cure of the centurion's servant follows presently upon it, both there and here, but it is not material. In these verses, we have,

I. Blessings pronounced upon *suffering saints*, as *happy* people, though the world *pities them* (v. 20): He *lifted up his eyes upon his disciples*, not only the *twelve*, but the whole *company of them* (v. 17), and directed his discourse to them; for, when he had healed the sick in *the plain*, he went up again *to the mountain*, to preach. There he *sat*, as one having authority; thither *they come to him* (⁴⁰¹Matthew 5:1), and to them he directed his discourse, to them he applied it, and taught them to apply it to themselves. When he had laid it down for a truth, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, he added, *Blessed are ye poor*. All believers, that take the precepts of the gospel to themselves, and *live by them* may take the promises of the gospel to themselves and *live upon them*. And the application, as it is here, seems especially designed to encourage the disciples, with reference to the hardships and difficulties they were likely to meet with, in following Christ.

1. “You are *poor*, you have *left all to follow me*, are content to live upon alms with me, are never to expect any worldly preferment in my service. You must work hard, and fare hard, as poor people do; but you are blessed in your poverty, it shall be no prejudice at all to your happiness; nay, you are blessed *for it*, all your losses shall be abundantly made up to you, for *yours is the kingdom of God*, all the comforts and graces of his kingdom here and all the glories and joys of his kingdom hereafter; yours it *shall be*, nay, yours *it is*.” Christ's *poor* are *rich in faith*, ⁵⁰⁸James 2:5.

2. “You *hunger now* (v. 21), you are not *fed to the full* as others are, you often rise hungry, your *commons* are so *short*; or you are so intent upon your work that you have not time to eat bread, you are glad of a few *ears of corn* for a meal's meat; thus you *hunger now* in this world, but in the other world *you shall be filled*, shall *hunger no more*, nor *thirst any more*.”

3. “You *weep now*, are often in tears, tears of repentance, tears of sympathy; you are of them that mourn in Zion. But *blessed are you*; your present sorrows are no *prejudices* to your future joy, but *preparatories* for it: *You shall laugh*. You have triumphs in reserve; you are but *sowing in tears*, and shall shortly *reap in joy*,” ^{<B66>}Psalm 126:5, 6. They that now *sorrow after a godly sort* are treasuring up comforts for themselves, or, rather, God is treasuring up comforts for them; and the day is coming when their *mouth shall be filled with laughing and their lips with rejoicing*, ^{<B82>}Job 8:21.

4. “You now undergo *the world's ill will*. You must expect all the base treatment that a spiteful world can give you for Christ's sake, because you serve him and his interests; you must expect that wicked men will *hate you*, because your doctrine and life convict and condemn them; and those that have church-power in their hands will *separate you*, will force you to separate yourselves, and then excommunicate you for so doing, and lay you under the most ignominious censures. They will pronounce anathemas against you, as scandalous and incorrigible offenders. They will do this with all possible gravity and solemnity, and pomp and pageantry of appeals to Heaven, to make the world believe, and almost you yourselves too, that it is ratified in heaven. Thus will they endeavour to make you odious to others and a terror to yourselves.” This is supposed to be the proper notion of *aphorisosin hymas* — *they shall cast you out of their synagogues*. “And they that have not this power will not fail to show their malice, to the utmost of their power; for *they will reproach you*, will charge you with the blackest crimes, which you are perfectly innocent of, will fasten upon you the blackest characters, which you do not deserve; they will *cast out your name as evil*, your name as Christians, as apostles; they will do all they can to render these names odious.” This is the application of the eighth beatitude, ^{<B50>}Matthew 5:10-12.

“Such usage as this seems hard; but *blessed are you* when you are so used. It is so far from depriving you of your happiness that it will greatly add to it. It is an honour to you, as it is to a brave hero to be employed in the wars, in the service of his prince; and therefore *rejoice you in that day, and leap for joy*, v. 23. Do not only *bear it*, but *triumph* in it. For,”

(1.) “You are hereby *highly dignified* in the *kingdom of grace*, for you are treated as the prophets were before you, and therefore not only need not be ashamed of it, but may justly rejoice in it, for it will be an evidence for you

that you *walk in the same spirit*, and *in the same steps*, are engaged in the same cause, and employed in the same service, with them.”

(2.) “You will for this be abundantly *recompensed* in the *kingdom of glory*; not only your services for Christ, but your sufferings will come into the account: *Your reward is great in heaven*. Venture upon your sufferings, in a full belief that the glory of heaven will abundantly countervail all these hardships; so that, though you may be losers for Christ, you shall not be losers by him in the end.”

II. *Woes* denounced against *prospering sinners as miserable people*, though the world *envies them*. These we had not in Matthew. It should seem, the best exposition of *these woes*, compared with the foregoing *blessings*, is the parable of the *rich man* and Lazarus. Lazarus had the blessedness of those that are *poor*, and *hunger*, and *weep*, now, for in Abraham's bosom all the promises made to them who did so were *made good* to him; but the rich man had the *woes* that follow here, as he had the character of those on whom these woes are entailed.

1. Here is a *woe* to them that are *rich*, that is, that *trust in riches*, that have abundance of this world's wealth, and, instead of serving God with it, serve their lusts with it; woe to them, for *they have received their consolation*, that which they placed their happiness in, and were willing to take up with for a portion, v. 24. They in their life-time received *their good things*, which, in their account, were the *best things*, and all the good things they are ever likely to receive from God. “You that are *rich* are in temptation to *set your hearts* upon a *smiling world*, and to say, *Soul, take thine ease* in the embraces of it, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell; and then woe unto you.*”

(1.) It is the *folly* of carnal worldlings that they make the things of this world *their consolation*, which were intended only for their *convenience*. They please themselves with them, pride themselves in them, and make them their heaven upon earth; and to them the *consolations of God* are small, and of no account.

(2.) It is their misery that they are *put off* with them as *their consolation*. Let them know it, to their terror, when they are parted from these things, there is an end of all their comfort, a final end of it, and nothing remains to them but everlasting misery and torment.

2. Here is a *woe* to them that are *full* (v. 25), that are *fed to the full*, and have *more than heart could wish* (⁴⁹⁷³Psalm 73:7), that have their *bellies filled with the hid treasures of this world* (⁴⁹⁷⁴Psalm 17:14), that, when they have abundance of these, are *full*, and think they have *enough*, they *need no more*, they *desire no more*, (⁴⁶⁸⁷Revelation 3:17. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich*, ⁴⁶⁸⁸1 Corinthians 4:8. They are *full of themselves*, without God and Christ. *Woe to such*, for *they shall hunger*, they shall shortly be *stripped* and *emptied* of all the things they are so proud of; and, when they shall have *left behind them* in the world all those things which are their fulness, they shall *carry away with them* such appetites and desires as the world they remove to will afford them no gratifications of; for all the delights of sense, which they are now so full of, will in hell be *denied*, and in heaven *superseded*.

3. Here is a *woe* to them that *laugh now*, that have always a *disposition to be merry*, and always something to *make merry with*; that know no other joy than that which is carnal and sensual, and know no other use of this world's good than purely to indulge that carnal sensual joy that banishes sorrow, even godly sorrow, from their minds, and are always entertaining themselves with the laughter of the fool. *Woe unto such*, for it is but *now*, for a little time, that they *laugh*; they shall *mourn and weep* shortly, shall *mourn and weep* eternally, in a world where there is nothing but *weeping and wailing*, endless, easeless, and remediless sorrow.

4. Here is a *woe* to them *whom all men speak well of*, that is, who make it their great and only care to gain the praise and applause of men, who value themselves upon that more than upon the favour of God and his acceptance (v. 26): “*Woe unto you*; that is, it would be a bad sign that you were not faithful to your trust, and to the souls of men, if you preached so as that nobody would be disgusted; for your business is to tell people of their faults, and, if you do that as you ought, you will get that *ill will* which never *speaks well*. The false prophets indeed, that flattered your father in their wicked ways, that *prophesied smooth things* to them, were caressed and spoken well of; and, if you be in like manner cried up, you will be justly suspected to deal deceitfully as they did.” We should desire to have the approbation of those that are wise and good, and not be indifferent to what people say of us; but, as we should despise the reproaches, so we should also despise the praises, of the fools in Israel.

LUKE 6:27-36

EXHORTATIONS TO JUSTICE AND MERCY

These verses agree with ⁴⁰⁵⁸Matthew 5:38, to the end of that chapter: *I say unto you that hear* (v. 27), to all you that hear, and not to disciples only, for these are lessons of universal concern. *He that has an ear, let him hear*. Those that diligently hearken to Christ shall find he has something to say to them well worth their hearing. Now the lessons Christ here teacheth us are,

I. That we must render to all their due, and be honest and just in all our dealings (v. 31): *As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise*; for this is *loving your neighbour as yourselves*. What we should expect, in reason, to be done to us, either in justice or charity, by others, if they were in our condition and we in theirs, that, as the matter stands, we must do to them. We must *put our souls into their souls' stead*, and then pity and succour them, as we should desire and justly expect to be ourselves pitied and succoured.

II. That we must be free in *giving* to them that *need* (v. 30): “*Give to every man that asketh of thee*, to every one that is a proper object of charity, that wants necessaries, which thou hast wherewithal to supply out of thy superfluities. Give to those that are not able to help themselves, to those that have not relations in a capacity to help them.” Christ would have his disciples ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, *to their power* in ordinary cases, and beyond their power in extraordinary.

III. That we must be generous in *forgiving* those that have been any way injurious to us.

1. We must not be *extreme* in *demanding* our right, when it is denied us: “*Him that taketh away thy cloak*, either forcibly or fraudulently, *forbid him not* by any violent means to *take thy coat also*, v. 29. Let him have that too, rather than fight for it. And (v. 30) *of him that taketh thy goods*” (so Dr. Hammond thinks it should be read), “that borrows them, or that *takes them up* from thee upon trust, of such do not *exact them*; if Providence have made such insolvent, do not take the advantage of the law against them, but rather lose it than *take them by the throat*,

⚔️ Matthew 18:28. If a man run away in thy debt, and *take away thy goods* with him, do not perplex thyself, nor be incensed against him.”

2. We must not be rigorous in revenging a wrong when it is done us: “*Unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek*, instead of bringing an action against him, or sending for a writ for him, or bringing him before a justice, *offer also the other*,” that is, “pass it by, though thereby thou shouldst be in danger of bringing upon thyself another like in dignity, which is commonly pretended in excuse of taking the advantage of the law in such a case. If any one *smite thee on the cheek*, rather than give another blow to him, be ready to receive another from him;” that is, “leave it to God to plead thy cause, and do thou sit down silent under the affront.” When we do thus, God will *smite our enemies*, as far as they are his, *upon the cheek bone*, so as to *break the teeth of the ungodly* (⚔️ Psalm 3:7); for he hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, and he will make it appear that it is so when we leave it to him to take vengeance.

3. Nay, we must *do good to them that do evil to us*. This is that which our Saviour, in these verses, chiefly designs to teach us, as a law peculiar to his religion, and a branch of the perfection of it.

(1.) We must be kind to those from whom we have *received injuries*. We must not only *love our enemies*, and bear a good will to them, but we must *do good* to them, be as ready to do any good office to them as to any other person, if their case call for it, and it be in the power of our hands to do it. We must study to make it appear, by positive acts, if there be an opportunity for them, that we bear them no malice, nor see revenge. Do they *curse* us, speak ill of us, and wish ill to us? Do they *despitefully use us*, in word or deed? Do they endeavour to make us contemptible or odious? Let us *bless them*, and *pray for them*, speak well of them, the best we can, wish well to them, especially to their souls, and be intercessors with God for them. This is repeated, v. 35: *love your enemies*, and *do them good*. To recommend this difficult duty to us, it is represented as a generous thing, and an attainment few arrive at. *To love those that love us* has nothing *uncommon* in it, nothing peculiar to Christ's disciples, for *sinner*s will *love those that love them*. There is nothing self-denying in that; it is but following nature, even in its corrupt state, and puts no force at all upon it (v. 32): it is no thanks to us to love those that say and do just as we would have them. “And (v. 33) *if you do good to them that do good to you*, and return their kindnesses, it is from a common principle of

custom, honour, and gratitude; and therefore *what thanks have you?* What credit are you to the name of Christ, or what reputation do you bring to it? for *sinner*s also, that know nothing of Christ and his doctrine, *do even the same*. But it becomes you to do something more excellent and eminent, herein to out-do your neighbours, to do that which sinners will not do, and which no principle of theirs can pretend to reach to: you must *render good for evil;*” not that any thanks are due to us, but *then* we are to our God *for a name and a praise* and he will have the thanks.

(2.) We must be kind to those from whom we expect no manner of advantage (v. 35): *Lend, hoping for nothing again*. It is meant of the rich lending to the poor a little money for their necessity, to buy daily bread for themselves and their families, or to keep them out of prison. In such a case, we must *lend*, with a resolution not to demand interest for what we lend, as we may most justly from those that borrow money to make purchases withal, or to trade with. But that is not all; we must *lend* though we have reason to suspect that what we *lend* we *lose*, lend to those who are so poor that it is not probable they will be able to pay us again. This precept will be best illustrated by that law of Moses (^{<687>}Deuteronomy 15:7-10), which obliges them to lend to a *poor brother* as much as he *needed*, though the *year of release* was at hand. Here are two motives to this generous charity.

[1.] It will redound to our profit; for our *reward shall be great*, v. 35. What is given, or laid out, or lent and lost on earth, from a true principle of charity, will be made up to us in the other world, unspeakably to our advantage. “You shall not only be *repaid*, but *rewarded*, greatly rewarded; it will be said to you, *Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom.*”

[2.] It will redound to our honour; for herein we shall resemble God in his goodness, which is the greatest glory: “*Ye shall be the children of the Highest*, shall be owned by him as his children, being like him.” It is the glory of God that he is *kind to the unthankful and to the evil*, bestows the gifts of common providence even upon the worst of men, who are every day provoking him, and rebelling against him, and using those very gifts to his dishonour. Hence he infers (v. 36), *Be merciful, as your Father is merciful*; this explains ^{<405>}Matthew 5:48, “*Be perfect, as our Father is perfect*. Imitate your Father in those things that are his brightest perfections.” Those that are *merciful* as God is *merciful*, even *to the evil and the unthankful*, are *perfect* as God is *perfect*; so he is pleased

graciously to accept it, though infinitely falling short. Charity is called the *bond of perfectness*, ^{<314>}Colossians 3:14. This should strongly engage us to be merciful to our brethren, even such as have been injurious to us, not only that God is so to others, but that he is so to us, though we have been, and are, evil and unthankful; it is of his mercies that *we* are not consumed.

~~<167>~~ LUKE 6:37-49

EXHORTATIONS TO JUSTICE AND SINCERITY

All these sayings of Christ we had before in Matthew; some of them in Matthew 7, others in other places. They were sayings that Christ often used; they needed only to be mentioned, it was easy to apply them. Grotius thinks that we need not be critical here in seeking for the coherence: they are golden sentences, like Solomon's proverbs or parables. Let us observe here,

I. We ought to be very candid in our censures of others, because we need grains of allowance ourselves: “Therefore *judge not* others, because then *you yourselves shall not be judged*; therefore *condemn not* others, because then *you yourselves shall not be condemned*, v. 37. Exercise towards others that charity which *thinks no evil*, which *bears all things*, *believes* and *hopes all things*; and then others will exercise that charity towards you. God will not *judge* and *condemn* you, men will not.” They that are merciful to other people's names shall find others merciful to theirs.

II. If we are of a *giving* and a *forgiving* spirit, we shall ourselves reap the benefit of it: *Forgive and you shall be forgiven*. If we forgive the injuries done to us by others, others will forgive our inadvertencies. If we forgive others' trespasses against *us*, God will forgive our trespasses against *him*. And he will be no less mindful of the *liberal* that *devise liberal things* (v. 38): *Give, and it shall be given to you*. God, in his providence, will recompense it to you; it is *lent* to him, and *he is not unrighteous to forget* it (^{<380>}Hebrews 6:10), but he will *pay it again*. *Men shall return it into your bosom*; for God often makes use of *men* as instruments, not only of his *avenging*, but of his *rewarding* justice. If we in a right manner give to others when they need, God will incline the hearts of others to give to us when we need, and to give liberally, *good measure pressed down and*

shaken together. They that *sow plentifully* shall *reap plentifully*. Whom God recompenses he recompenses *abundantly*.

III. We must expect to be dealt with ourselves as we deal with others: *With the same measure that ye mete it shall be measured to you again.* Those that deal *hardly* with others must acknowledge, as Adoni-bezek did (~~xxx~~Judges 1:7), that God is righteous, if others deal hardly with them, and they may expect to be paid in their own coin; but they that deal *kindly* with others have reason to hope that, when they have occasion, God will raise them up friends who will deal kindly with them. Though Providence does not always go by this rule, because the full and exact retributions are reserved for another world, yet, ordinarily, it observes a proportion sufficient to deter us from all acts of rigour and to encourage us in all acts of beneficence.

IV. Those who put themselves under the guidance of the ignorant and erroneous are likely to perish with them (v. 39): *Can the blind lead the blind? Can the Pharisees, who are blinded with pride, prejudice, and bigotry, lead the blind people into the right way? Shall not both fall together into the ditch?* How can they expect any other? Those that are led by the common opinion, course, and custom, of this world, are themselves blind, and are led by the blind, and will perish with the world that *sits in darkness*. Those that ignorantly, and at a venture, *follow the multitude to do evil*, follow the blind in the broad way that leads the many to *destruction*.

V. Christ's followers cannot expect better treatment in the world than their Master had, v. 40. Let them not promise themselves more honour or pleasure in the world than Christ had, nor aim at the worldly pomp and grandeur which he was never ambitious of, but always declined, nor affect that power in secular things which he would not assume; but every one that would show himself *perfect*, an established disciple, let him be *as his Master* — dead to the world, and every thing in it, as his Master is; let him live a life of labour and self-denial as his Master doth, and make himself a servant of all; let him stoop, and let him toil, and do all the good he can, and then he will be a complete disciple.

VI. Those who take upon them to rebuke and reform others are concerned to look to it that they be themselves blameless, and harmless, and without rebuke, v. 41, 42.

1. Those with a very ill grace censure the faults of others who are not aware of their own faults. It is very absurd for any to pretend to be so quick-sighted as to spy small faults in others, like a mote in the eye, when they are themselves so perfectly past feeling as not to perceive *a beam in their own eye*.

2. Those are altogether unfit to help to reform others whose reforming charity does not begin at home. How canst thou offer thy service to thy brother, to *pull out the mote from his eye*, which requires a good eye as well as a good hand, when thou thyself hast a *beam in thine own eye*, and makest no complaint of it? 3. Those therefore who would be serviceable to the souls of others must first make it appear that they are solicitous about their own souls. To help to pull the mote out of our brother's eye is a good work, but then we must qualify ourselves for it by beginning with ourselves; and our reforming our own lives may, by the influence of example, contribute to others reforming theirs.

VII. We may expect that men's words and actions will be according as *they are*, according as their hearts are, and according as their principles are.

1. The heart is the *tree*, and the words and actions are fruit according to the nature of the tree, v. 43, 44. If a man be really a *good man*, if he have a principle of grace in his heart, and the prevailing bent and bias of the soul be towards God and heaven, though perhaps he may not abound in fruit, though some of his fruits be blasted, and though he may be sometimes like a tree in winter, yet he does not *bring forth corrupt fruit*; though he may not do you all the good he should, yet he will not in any material instance do you hurt. If he cannot reform ill manners, he will not *corrupt good manners*. If the fruit that a man brings forth be *corrupt*, if a man's devotion tend to debauch the mind and conversation, if a man's conversation be vicious, if he be a drunkard or fornicator, if he be a swearer or liar, if he be in any instance unjust or unnatural, his *fruit is corrupt*, and you may be sure that he is not a *good tree*. On the other hand, a *corrupt tree doth not bring forth good fruit*, though it may bring forth green leaves; *for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble do they gather grapes*. You may, if you please, stick figs upon thorns, and hang a bunch of grapes upon a bramble, but they neither are, nor can be, the natural product of the trees; so neither can you expect any *good conduct* from those who have justly a *bad character*. If the fruit be good, you may conclude that the tree is so; if

the conversation be holy, heavenly, and regular, though you cannot infallibly know the heart, yet you may charitably hope that it is upright with God; for *every tree is known by its fruit*. But the *vile person will speak villany* (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 32:6), and the experience of the moderns herein agrees with the *proverb of the ancients*, that *wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*, (⁰²¹³1 Samuel 24:13).

2. The heart is the *treasure*, and the words and actions are the expenses or produce from that treasure, v. 45. This we had, (⁴¹²⁴Matthew 12:34, 35). The reigning love of God and Christ in the heart denominates a man *a good man*; and it is *a good treasure* a man may bring forth that which is good. But where the love of the world and the flesh reign there is an *evil treasure* in the heart, out of which an *evil man* is continually bringing forth *that which is evil*; and by what is brought forth you may know what is in the heart, as you may know what is in the vessel, water or wine, by what is *drawn out from it*, (⁴¹¹⁸John 2:8). *Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*; what the mouth ordinarily speaks, speaks with relish and delight, generally agrees with what is innermost and uppermost in the heart: *He that speaks of the earth is earthly*, (⁴¹³⁵John 3:31). Not but that a good man may possibly drop a bad word, and a wicked man make use of a good word to serve a bad turn; but, for the most part, the heart is as the words are, *vain* or *serious*; it therefore concerns us to get our hearts filled, not only with *good*, but with *abundance* of it.

VIII. It is not enough to *hear* the sayings of Christ, but we must *do* them; not enough to profess relation to him, as his servants, but we must make conscience of obeying him.

1. It is putting an *affront upon him* to call him *Lord, Lord*, as if we were wholly at his command, and had devoted ourselves to his service, if we do not make conscience of conforming to his will and serving the interests of his kingdom. We do but mock Christ, as they that in scorn said, *Hail, King of the Jews*, if we call him ever so often *Lord, Lord*, and yet walk in the way of our own hearts and in the sight of our own eyes. Why do we call him *Lord, Lord*, in prayer (compare (⁴⁰⁷²Matthew 7:21, 22)), if we do not obey his commands? He that *turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination*.

2. It is *putting a cheat* upon ourselves if we think that a bare profession of religion will save us, that *hearing* the sayings of Christ will bring us to

heaven, without *doing* them. This he illustrates by a similitude (v. 47-49), which shows,

(1.) That those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will stand them in stead in a trying time, who do not only *come* to Christ as his scholars, and *hear his sayings* but do them, who think, and speak, and act, in every thing according to the established rules of his holy religion. They are like a *house built on a rock*. These are they that *take pains* in religion, as they do, — that *dig deep*, that found their hope upon Christ, who is the Rock of ages (and other foundation can no man lay); these are they who *provide for hereafter*, who get ready for the worst, who lay up in store a good foundation for the *time to come*, for the *eternity to come*, ⁵⁰⁸1 Timothy 6:19. They who do thus do well for themselves; for,

[1.] They shall keep their integrity, in times of temptation and persecution; when others fall from their own stedfastness, as the seed on the stony ground, they shall *stand fast in the Lord*.

[2.] They shall keep their comfort, and peace, and hope, and joy, in the midst of the greatest distresses. The *storms* and *streams* of affliction shall not shock them, for their feet are *set upon a rock*, a rock *higher than they*.

[3.] Their everlasting welfare is secured. In death and judgment they are safe. Obedient believers are *kept by the power of Christ, through faith, unto salvation*, and shall never perish.

(2.) That those who rest in a bare hearing of the sayings of Christ, and do not live up to them, are but preparing for a fatal disappointment: *He that heareth and doeth not* (that knows his duty, but lives in the neglect of it), he is like a man that *built a house without a foundation*. He pleases himself with hopes that he has no ground for, and his hopes will fail him when he most needs the *comfort* of them, and when he expects the *crowning* of them; when the *stream beats vehemently* upon his house, it is gone, the sand it is built upon is washed away, and *immediately it falls*, Such is the *hope of the hypocrite, though he has gained, when God takes away his soul*; it is as the spider's web, and the giving up of the ghost.