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DISCOURSES

By SAMUEL BOURN.

VOLUME IV.



DISCOURSES

BY

W. H. W. W.

# DISCOURSES

BY SAMUEL BOURN.

VOLUME IV.

ON THE *Parables*

REMAINING PARABLES

OF

OUR SAVIOUR,

IN TWO PARTS.

- I. *Those that are National: Or characteristic of the Jews, and predatory of their Destruction.*
- II. *Those that are Apostolic: Or addressed to the Apostles, and intended to qualify them for their future Office.*

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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Καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἐν παραβολαῖς. Mat. xiii. 3.

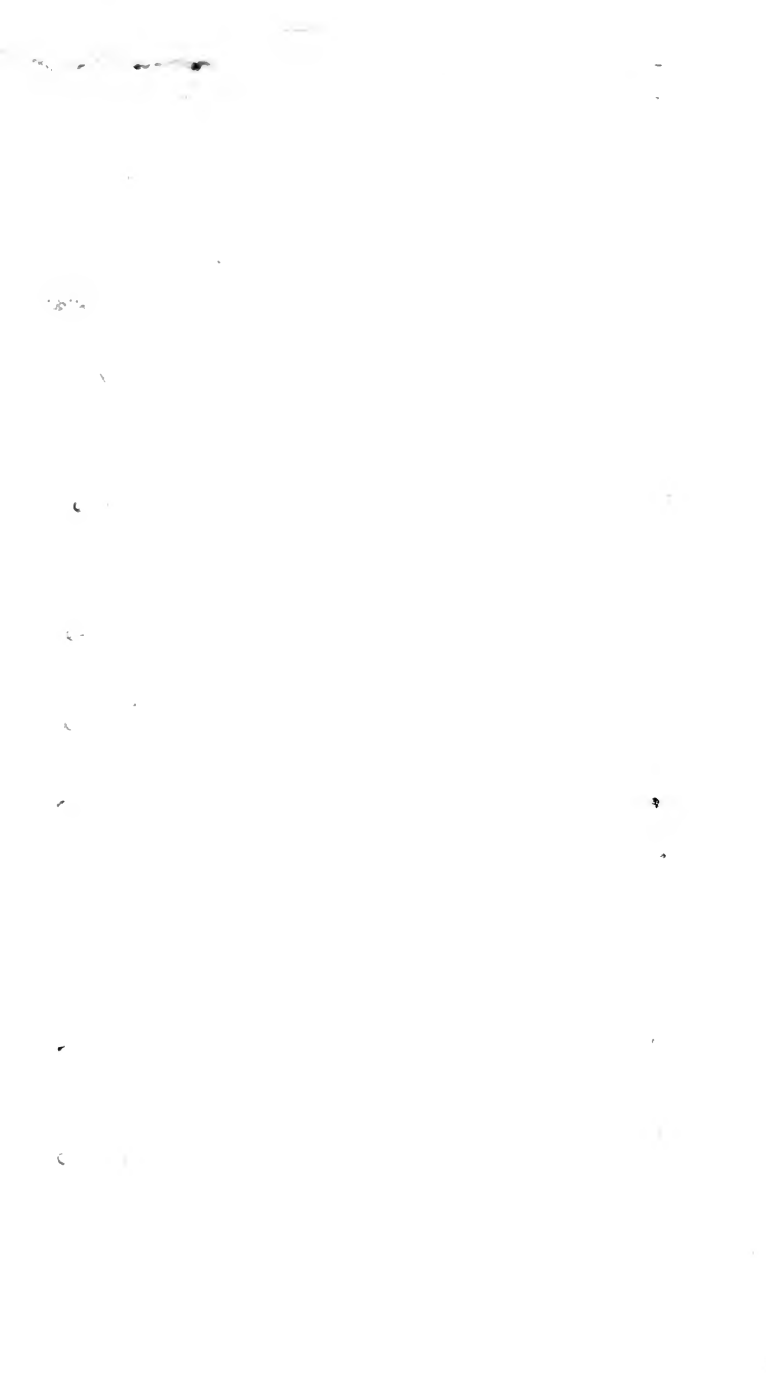
——— *Mutato nomine, de te*  
*Fabula narratur.*——— Hor. Sat. 1.

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C O N T E N T S  
O F T H E  
F O U R T H V O L U M E.

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P A R T III.

Containing the National Parables:  
Or, those which were character-  
istic of the Jewish Nation, and  
the several Parties in it, and pre-  
dictory of its Destruction.

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**T**H E Pharisee and the Publican: Or,  
Pride and Humility contrasted.

L U K E xviii. 9.

*And he spake this parable to certain persons,  
who trusted in themselves that they were  
A 3 righteous,*

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*righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed thus, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

### DISCOURSE II. Page 31

The Father's two Sons: Or, Profession and Practice contrasted.

MATTHEW XXI. 28.

*But what think you? A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said,*

## C O N T E N T S:

*said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir: but went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*

DISCOURSE III. IV. Page 57, 81

Defect of Virtue in the Jewish Nation.

The Fig-tree to be cut down: Or, the Jewish Nation to be destroyed.

LUKE xiii. 6.

*He spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and*

## C O N T E N T S.

*he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

### DISCOURSE V. Page 105

The Invitation refused: Or, the Jewish Rejection of the Gospel.

#### LUKE xiv. 16.

*Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.*

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*And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

## DISCOURSE VI. VII. VIII.

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The Vineyard let out: Or, the State of  
the Jewish Nation.

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The Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized: Or, the Oeconomy of Divine Providence.

The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or, the Jewish Rulers characterized.

MATTHEW XXI. 33.

*Hear another parable. There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw his son, they said*

## C O N T E N T S.

*said amongst themselves, This is the heir, —come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the Vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!— Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.*

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DISCOURSE IX. Page 207

The King punishing his barbarous Subjects: Or, the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.

MATTHEW xxii. 1.

*And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.*

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DISCOURSE X. Page 235

The King surveying his Guests: Or, the false Christian detected and punished.

MATTHEW xxii. 8.

*Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So these servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few chosen.*

P A R T

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## P A R T I V.

Containing the Apostolic Parables:  
Or, those which were intended  
for the Conversion of the first  
Disciples, especially the Apostles,  
and to qualify them for their fu-  
ture Office.

INTRODUCTION: Page 261

DISCOURSE I: Page 271

The rich man laying up his Goods: Or,  
Selfishness and Voluptuousness exposed.

LUKE xii. 16.

*And he spake a parable unto them, saying—  
The ground of a certain rich man brought  
forth plentifully. And he thought within  
himself, saying, What shall I do, because I  
have no room where to bestow my fruits?  
And he said, This will I do: I will pull  
down my barns and build greater; and  
there*

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*there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. —But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?—So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

### DISCOURSE II. Page 305

The Widow's Affiduity: Or, the Benefit of Perseverance.

#### LUKE xviii. 1.

*And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not faint: saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself—Tho' I fear not God,*

*nor*

## C O N T E N T S.

*nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

DISCOURSE III. IV. Page 329, 357  
The génerous Monarch: Or, the Duty of  
Forgiveness.

MATTHEW xviii. 21.

*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?—Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven. —Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun*

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*begun to reckon, one was brought before him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not, but went and cast him in prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done. Then his Lord, after that he had*

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*called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.—So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

### DISCOURSE V. Page 383

The compassionate Samaritan: Or, Universal Humanity recommended.

#### LUKE x. 25.

*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all*

*all*

## C O N T E N T S.

*all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: This do, and thou shalt live.—But he willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell amongst thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said*

## C O N T E N T S.

*unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell amongst the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

DISCOURSE VI. Page 419  
The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or, Spiritual Arrogance rebuked.

MATTHEW XIX. 30.

*But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.—For the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a-day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place: and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is*  
right



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*right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house; saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day. But*

## C O N T E N T S.

*he answered one of them and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?—So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

### DISCOURSE VII. Page 445

The Virgins raised at Midnight: Or, Vigilance and Preparation enjoined.

#### MATTHEW XXV. I.

*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there*

## C O N T E N T S.

*there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so—lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

D I S C O U R S E VIII. Page 471

The Servants examined: Or, Fidelity and Diligence required.

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## M A T T H E W XXV. 14.

*For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make*

## C O N T E N T S.

*make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: Lo, there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore*  
the

## C O N T E N T S.

*the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

DISCOURSE IX. Page 499

The Universal Judgment: Or the Practice of Humanity enforced.

MATTHEW XXV. 31.

*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom  
pre-*

## C O N T E N T S.

*prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not:  
Sick,*

## C O N T E N T S.

*Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not: Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*



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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HAT attention and deference, or in a word, faith, is due to every teacher in proportion to the marks which he discovers of wisdom, power and goodness in conjunction, will be readily granted by every considerate person.

THE marks of power which our Savior discovered, are his miracles; to which, especially the capital miracle, his own resurrection, we have the strongest historical testimony that was ever given to any particular fact.

MARKS of goodness are discoverable in his whole conduct, and that most singular and perfect character, which he invariably maintained; of which we have the same

## P R E F A C E.

historical evidence, with this addition, that the historians were not capable of imagining, much less representing, such a conduct and character, if it had not actually existed before their eyes.

MARKS of wisdom are to be found in his instructions and predictions, the evidence of which does not depend upon testimony, but is *now extant*, and obvious to our inspection and examination.

MANKIND are naturally most affected by marks of power. They astonish the mind, and overcome it, as it were by violence, and every man is sufficiently capable of understanding them, and disposed to attend to them. But in order to be attracted and won by marks of goodness, it is previously requisite to have a good disposition: And in order to be convinced by marks of wisdom, it is necessary, not only to give attention, but to have a capacity of comprehending them.

## P R E F A C E.

No man, except our Savior, ever did speak in parables, unpremeditated, and on various occasions. No man is now capable of conveying instruction in the like manner. No instructor can ever presume to be equal to him, nor so much as to imitate and resemble him.—This evidence of our Savior's wisdom, and of the truth and authority of the Christian Revelation, I have endeavored to shew in these two volumes.—If any reader, after a thorow perusal of these discourses, should still remain unconvinced of the excellence of his instructions, and the truth of his predictions; let him impute it to a want of ability in the author, who is not ashamed to confess, that the more he study'd them, the more he was self-convinced of his own inability to do justice to their excellence and merit.

BUT as studying our Savior's instructions, is undoubtedly going up to the fountain-head of Christianity, where the spiritual water flows pure and unmixed—

as

## P R E F A C E.

as he thought fit to convey so many of his most important instructions by parables—and as every parable was intended to answer a moral and valuable purpose, and to promote those virtues which are most conducive both to private and public happiness;—the author cannot doubt, but that his attempt to explain them, and give them their proper and deserved influence, will meet with a candid and favourable reception from all critical readers, who are friends to virtue and well-wishers to mankind.



## P A R T III.

Containing the National Parables :  
Or, those which were character-  
**istic** of the Jewish Nation, and  
the several Parties in it, and pre-  
dictory of its Destruction.



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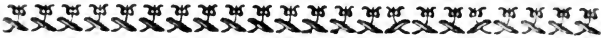
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



# DISCOURSE I.

The Pharisee and the Publican : Or,  
Pride and Humility contrasted.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

RESEARCH REPORT  
NO. 100

1955



## L U K E xviii. 9.

*And he spake this parable to certain persons, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed thus, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess. And the Publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalt-*

6 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,  
eth himself shall be abased, and he that hum-  
bleth himself shall be exalted.*

**T**HOUGH the persons, to whom this parable was addressed, are not named by the evangelist, yet it may be justly presumed, that they were pharisees, from his description of them, viz. *Certain persons, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* For they had a high opinion of their own piety and sanctity, looked upon the rest of mankind as having no pretensions to religion in comparison of their own sect, and particularly affected to shew a contempt and abhorrence of the publicans. To expose the arrogance and presumption of such pretenders to an extraordinary character of piety and holiness—to detect their solemn appearance and precise demeanor—to shew how much pride and selfishness were concealed under a specious outside of devotion, abstinence and charity; and on the other hand, to point out to our observation,  
that

that humility of heart, and genuine sense of piety and goodness, which are the spring of repentance and virtue, was a subject and design worthy of our divine instructor. With this view, he exhibits a pharisee and a publican together in contrast, engaged at the same time and place in an act of private devotion, each expressing his own temper and character, in a solemn address to God, and in the most significant language: and upon a comparison gives the preference to the latter. This was a direct attack upon the spiritual pride of that sect, as it served to shew, that notwithstanding all their appearances, they might be inferior in real worth to those persons, whom they were most ready to censure, as immoral and profane. This judgment of our Savior is the more remarkable and worthy of attention, as the pharisees stood the highest, and the publicans the lowest, in the general opinion of the Jewish nation. But he did not judge of

8 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
one of another. He penetrated into the hearts of men, and weighed their intrinsic character in an unerring balance—was able to distinguish, and disclose to view, vice in a pharisee and virtue in a publican, and to make a just comparison of the respective worth or demerit of each character. To this end, he makes all proper concessions in favour of the former, and to the disadvantage of the latter. For it is supposed, that what the pharisee alledged, in his own commendation, was true—that he was not an *extortioner*, nor *unjust*, nor an *adulterer*, nor even guilty of the vices with which the publican might stand chargeable—and moreover, that he *fasted twice in the week*, and *paid tythes of all that he possessed*. It is also supposed, that the publican had been a sinner, in the common sense of the word amongst the *Jews*, or had followed an intemperate and irregular course of life. Yet our Savior gives judgment for the latter, as the worthier person, and more acceptable in the sight of God.

For

For his words will not suffer us to confine his verdict to the single act of devotion, which each of them was performing; but require us to comprehend in it the sum total of their characters. *This man, saith he, went down to his house justified rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Here he plainly supposes all the boasted virtues of the pharisee to be excelled by the humility of the publican, and the spiritual pride of the former to be more than a balance to the vices of the latter.

LET us examine the marks which each of them exhibits of their respective dispositions. Our Savior hath brought them together to the Temple, and represented each of them as engaged there, in a private act of devotion; that we might compare them more exactly, and from their attitude and language discover more of their real characters. First appears the pharisee,

10 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
pharisee, *standing by himself,* (so it should  
be rendered) and he prayed in these terms,  
*God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men*  
*are — extortioners — unjust — adulterers —*  
*or even as this publican. I fast twice in the*  
*week—I pay tythes of all that I possess.—*  
It is impossible, methinks, to read this ex-  
traordinary specimen of devotion, without  
perceiving, with abhorrence, the auda-  
cious and censorious spirit of pride, with  
which the pharisee accosts the Deity. In-  
stead of adoring the divine perfections, he  
sets forth his own excellent qualities; in-  
stead of imploring God's mercy, reminds  
him of his own merit; instead of confess-  
ing his own sins, reflects upon the wick-  
edness of others; expressing a very bad  
opinion of all the world, except himself:  
perceiving the publican, he takes advan-  
tage of the incident, to raise himself, by a  
comparison with one, whom he thought  
so much his inferior. In a word, he  
thanks God and praises himself, with the  
same breath: the former, slightly; but the  
latter

latter most cordially and explicitly.—On the other hand, the signs, by which we are to judge of the disposition and character of the publican, are only these: That he *stood afar off*—that he *would not so much as lift up his eyes unto Heaven*—but *smote upon his breast*—and *said, God be merciful to me a sinner.*—But what a lively picture of true devotion is here? He approaches to the Temple at the same time with the pharisee; but struck with awe at the presence of that great Being whom he was going to address, abashed and confounded with a sense of his own unworthiness, he stops short, and stands at a distance: dejection, remorse, contrition, and penitence, appear in his countenance: he would not, he could not presume, so much as to lift up his eyes unto Heaven: but struck his heaving breast, full of those heart-felt sentiments, which he knew not how to express: 'till at length they burst forth, in this short but most earnest and significant petition, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

12 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or, sinner.* Such was the private worship of the publican. And hence our Savior pronounces sentence, upon a comparison, in his favour; contrary to the opinion, not only of the pharisee himself, but of the whole *Jewish* nation. *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*

IT will give us no very high idea, either of the understanding or morality of the *Jews* in our Savior's time, if we observe, that the scribes and pharisees were the most respected persons among them, for their education, learning, religious profession, and behavior—that the pharisee in the parable is selected as a specimen, not of the worst, but rather the best men of that denomination—that all his boasted virtue or merit is reduced to these particulars: that he was not guilty of \* *rapine* or *fraud*, or *adultery*, (vices to which

\* These words seem to correspond to the original terms, Ἀρπαγῆς and ἀδύτοι.



none but the worst of men are addicted)—that he lived abstemiously two days in the week (which might be from a motive of avarice or ostentation)—and that he *paid tythes of all that he possessed* (which was no more than what custom, and even the law demanded of him)—Yet that he seems to admire himself, as a man of singular and wonderful virtue, arrived to the very summit of all human excellence: *God, I thank thee, says he, that I am not as the rest of mankind are!*

THE aforementioned tythes or tenths of every person's income, were to be paid once in three years, as we find enacted in Deuteronomy xiv. 28. and were appointed for the support of the poor *Levites*, and the relief of the *stranger*, the *fatherless*, and the *widow*: it was therefore but the thirtieth part of every person's annual income, which was appropriated by law to the aforesaid charitable purposes. We may easily admit therefore, that this pharisee

rifice

14 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
rise not only fasted twice in the week,  
but paid tythes, with the utmost exact-  
ness, of every kind, not only of the grain  
of his harvest, and the herbage of his  
fields, but the produce of his garden also,  
even the smallest herbs, *mint, anise, and*  
*cumin*; yet entertain but a mean opinion  
of his piety and liberality, on account of  
these qualities; tho' they were, according  
to his own description, the excellent and  
shining parts of his character.

THE pharisees made specious preten-  
sions to abstinence, devotion, and charity:  
but many of them only *disfigured their*  
*faces, that they might appear unto men to*  
*fast*;—repeated prayers *at the corners of*  
*streets, that they might be seen of men*;—and  
distributed *aims by sound of trumpet*, that it  
might be known abroad. However, they  
were in general strict and punctual in  
their payment of tythes, and seem to  
have valued themselves not a little on this  
account, and even gained a high reputa-  
tion

tion with others for piety and sanctity : (which may lead us to suspect, that the rest of the *Jews* were excessively addicted to fraud in the article of tythes as well as taxes) yet our Savior reproaches them, for *neglecting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, or fidelity; or, as it is expressed in another place, *justice, mercy, and the love of God* : i. e. with being void of piety, probity, and humanity. The pharisee in the parable, then, was really a better man than many of his brethren; who, at the same time that they appeared unto men to fast, pray, and give alms, and to be exceedingly conscientious in paying *tythes of mint, anise, and cummin*, yet were *extortioners, unjust, adulterers, devourers of widows houses*, tyrants and persecutors, the *true sons of them that killed the prophets* : yet even our pharisee, with all those good qualities which tempted him to break out in such a strain of devotion, shews himself to be deeply tinctured with

the genuine pharisaic spirit, the spirit of pride, presumption, censoriousness, selfishness, and inhumanity. The outside appearance and behavior of the man are indeed specious and popular : but examine him more closely, look within him, and observe his temper and spirit, expressed even in the language of devotion—and we shall find sufficient matter to excite our disapprobation, and even detestation. For what can be more odious and detestable, than to observe him—in the presence of the Deity—in a direct address to him—boasting of himself on so slight pretensions—and flandering others upon mere suspicion, in order to arrogate all divine favor to himself—swelling to the utmost stretch, with an admiration of himself, a contempt of the humble publican, and an ill opinion of all mankind.—Could any sensual excesses, to which the publican may be supposed to have been addicted, deserve a stronger abhorrence?

ON the other hand it must be allowed, that our Savior hath selected one of the better sort of publicans as well as pharisees: but in this he hath done no more than equal justice to both parties. And as we examined and balanced the good and ill qualities of the pharisee; we should proceed to consider in the same manner those of the publican. But a short view may suffice, if we only place over against the irregularities and excesses which he had been guilty of, the exquisite sensibility which he discovers of his own weakness and wrong conduct—the unfeigned humility with which he styles himself a sinner—the ardor of devotion with which he implores the mercy of the Deity—and in a word, the real penitence which his action and language bespeak. Including then these particulars, and summing up the whole of his character, no impartial judge, who understands human nature, and the moral differences of dispositions and characters, can refuse assenting

18 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
to the verdict which our Lord pronounces,  
*I tell you, this man went down to his house*  
*justified rather than the other.*

IT may perhaps be imagined by some, that the characters described in the parable are now become antique and obsolete, and that no such are existing in these modern times. But the contrary will easily appear to every man who knows the world, and is capable of comparing antient and modern transactions and characters. The Roman Catholic countries abound, at this day, with men of an education, genius, temper, and behavior, similar to the scribes and pharisees of old—men whose learning consists wholly in the study of the canon law, and the traditions of the fathers—whose reputation for sanctity is founded on some appearances of austerity and mortification—on an observance of stated times of devotion—and a zeal to enrich the church with <sup>t</sup>titles and oblations—who, on the basis of such imaginary merit, erect

*tytles*

towering

towering ideas of their own peculiar excellence and sanctity, and are actually held in no small estimation by the vulgar—who would confine to themselves, or their own sect or church, the favor of the Deity, and exclude the rest of mankind, as altogether profane—who, puffed up with spiritual pride and insolence, not only despise others, but would persecute and destroy, with unrelenting animosity, all who differ from them, or dispute their pretensions. Happy would it be, if even in the reformed and protestant countries, there were no traces to be found, in any rank, order, sect, or denomination of men, of a resemblance to the foregoing description. But take the proud and bigotted of any denomination, and try the prevailing spirit by which they are actuated, and we shall probably discover the main purport of their aspect, language, and behavior, both public and private, to be saying to their neighbors, “Stand off, we are holier than ye;”—and to God, “We thank thee

“ that we are not as all the rest of man-  
“ kind are—infidels—heretics—profane  
“ sinful—we refrain from all vain amuse-  
“ ments and diversions—we are of the  
“ purest sect, or best constituted church—  
“ we are found in the faith—we are the  
“ only serious and pious Christians.”

As to the publicans and sinners, it will be readily allowed, that all times and countries sufficiently abound with persons of a similar character, negligent, loose, and irregular in their conduct, indulging their appetites beyond the bounds of order and decency, temperance and chastity. Among these we ought to hope, and charitably presume, there are some of the like ingenuous temper, or who may be recovered to the like sensibility of the follies they have committed, as the publican expresses in his act of devotion. It is in this view alone, that our Savior gives him the preference to the regular, sober, and grave pharisee: it is the humility, penitence,  
and



and self-reproach of the one, contrasted to the pride, censoriousness, and self-applause of the other, which is the ground of that preference: the one thanks God that he was so good \*, the other implores his mercy for having been so bad a man.

THESE characters are not only to be found in modern times, but are more common, at least in some degree, than the world in general may be apt to imagine. The marks of spiritual pride are often discernable, in the more ordinary and familiar scenes of life;—such as these—a solemn grimace of countenance—an affectation of talking religiously upon all occasions, proper or improper—magnifying their own sect or church, and disparaging all others—lamenting and inveighing against the wickedness of the age; by which they do not mean to intimate their

\* It is a part of a speech which our poet Shakespear puts into the mouth of Richard III. “ I thank my God  
“ for my humility.”

22 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
own wickedness, but their pious thankfulness, that *they are not as other men are*—excluding from their communion such as they deem to hold erroneous opinions—paying a scrupulous attention to insignificant modes and forms—being more solicitous about the appearance than the real nature of their actions—contriving that the world shall hear of their devotion, mortification, and alms-giving—contending earnestly for their own peculiar tenets, under pretence of defending the faith; and railing against those who oppose them, upon a supposition that they are undermining and subverting it—and finally, confounding their own worldly schemes and interests with those of religion, and pursuing the former under colour of the latter.

IN order to understand the malignity and pernicious effects of this pharisaic spirit, we should consider it, not in a few individuals, or in private life only, but as dif-

diffused through a numerous and powerful body of men: for then it hath had power and opportunity of displaying itself, in its true colours, even with the general approbation of mankind, or at least without fear of incurring their indignation. It hath contributed more, perhaps, than any other passion or motive in the human mind, to all the animosities, calumnies, violences and persecutions, that ever took place under pretence of religion. By this spirit the *Jewish* rulers were instigated, when they persecuted to death our Savior and his apostles. Where it hath been restrained from proceeding to such extremities, yet its baneful influence hath appeared in the bitterness and acrimony of religious controversies—the disgust with which persons of different denominations have regarded each other—the difficulty of bringing men to co-operate to the public good—the opposition frequently made to the most useful designs—the partiality shewn in the distribution of public and private chari-

24 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
ties—the neglect of real merit—and the  
favor shewn to the most unworthy.

IN regard to individuals, this vice tends to extinguish the sentiments and dispositions of humanity in the person infected by it. It is naturally attended with selfishness—a contempt of others, especially inferiors—an impatience of contradiction—and an implacable resentment against an adverse person or party. The inconsistency of this temper with real piety, as well as humanity, was probably the reason, why our Lord thought fit to compare the pharisee and the publican, when both were engaged in private worship. For nothing can be more opposite than spiritual pride to that humility and penitence which are inseparable from true devotion. So long as it holds possession of the mind, it excludes all possibility of repentance. Justly then is this temper represented in Scripture as most displeasing, and the contrary as most acceptable, to Almighty God:

*For*

*For God resisteth the proud, saith the Apostle James, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

YET notwithstanding the malignity of this vice, those in whom it hath been most prevalent have frequently been held in much esteem and veneration. This misjudgment of mankind is to be accounted for, only by considering how far this vice, tho' of so heinous a nature, yet is compatible with some instances and degrees of virtue, with the appearance of many more, and especially with the most specious and popular shews of piety and zeal for religion. Such persons may be free from other notorious vices—may not be *adulterers*, or *unjust*, or *extortioners*, or guilty of any sensual excesses—may be not only temperate, but abstemious—and may contribute their full proportion to public exigencies and pious uses. And this conduct, especially when accompanied with outward marks of a fervent devotion, and of a high reverence and earnest zeal for certain doctrines

26 *The Pharisee and the Publican: Or,*  
doctrines of faith, and forms of worship,  
are sufficient to delude themselves and  
others into a strong presumption of their  
being very holy and religious persons: be-  
cause other men cannot discern, and they  
themselves will not attend to, the deformi-  
ty and malignity of that vice, which is  
their ruling passion, and the main spring  
of all their actions. Such hath been the  
real character of many who have passed  
for *Saints* in the Christian world: who  
under the cloak of religion, and with the  
appearance of much devotion, fasting,  
and mortification, have in fact only prac-  
tised the dictates of their own pride, and  
pursued the ends of avarice, ambition and  
tyranny. On the other hand, men may  
be betrayed by their own weakness, and  
the power of temptations, into such prac-  
tices as are justly accounted sinful, yet may  
retain, or recover, a strong love of virtue,  
and the genuine sentiments of piety. For  
sincerity of heart, benignity and humani-  
ty of temper, and a deep reverence of the  
supreme

supreme Being, may consist with some infirmities and irregularities. And persons of this temper will be as ready to reproach themselves, as others are to censure them: and instead of exalting themselves in their own opinion, or making an ostentation before others, will confess their sins in secret to Almighty God, and implore his mercy with a heart-felt devotion and penitence. This character, notwithstanding its visible imperfections, and tho' little esteemed in the world, or perhaps suffering under reproach and infamy, implies more intrinsic goodness and worth, and is consequently more acceptable in the sight of God, than the former character, which has its odious qualities varnished over with a glaring shew of extraordinary piety and sanctity.

LET us learn from the whole, to be attentive to our own follies and failings; that we may preserve a due sense of them, and avoid that pharisaic pride, which would

would corrupt our best actions, and render them of little or no esteem in the sight of God. Especially, when we presume to address the all-perfect Being, let us beware of pride and vanity, or a design to exalt ourselves either in our own imagination, or the opinion of others. On the contrary, let us always come before him with a deep sense of our own insignificance and unworthiness, to implore his mercy and favor. Let us beware also of despising and condemning our fellow-creatures, of whatsoever rank, condition, or denomination, lest we should be found to pass both an uncharitable and a false judgment upon them. Let us consider how liable we are to be mistaken in our opinion of them, to be biased by worldly prejudices, and to judge from mere appearances and minute circumstances; and let us be ready always to discern and acknowledge our own defects, and their excellences.



To conclude,—The more we consider how mean and weak all men appear in the sight of God, the wisest how ignorant, and the best how unworthy, the more shall we be sensible of the absurdity and impiety of spiritual pride, and of the beauty and worth of humility and penitence;—and shall the better understand the wisdom of our Savior's instructive parable, and the weight of that sentence which is the moral of it, *That every one who exalteth himself shall be abased, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted.*





## DISCOURSE II.

The Father's two Sons: Or, Pro-  
fession and Practice contrasted.



THE HISTORY OF THE

# DISCOVERY

OF THE GREAT OCEANIC  
CROSSING

BY THE GREAT OCEANIC CROSSING

## M A T T H E W XXI. 28.

*But what think you? A certain man had two sons: and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, Sir: but went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, re-*

VOL. IV.                    D                    *pented*

*pented not afterward, that ye might believe him.*

**T**HE spirit and design of this parable seem so obvious, as to be understood at the first perusal, by every attentive reader : at least, it admits of an easy explanation. For in a word, it represents to us, in a very conspicuous and defined point of view, the difference between promising and performing, or professing and practising, or making specious pretensions to religion, and an actual obedience to the will of God in the discharge of our duty.

THE *pharisees* and other religionists amongst the *Jews* pretended to have a profound veneration for the *law* and the *prophets*, as containing an authentic revelation of the will of God to them. They studied them, committed them to memory, commented upon them, read them in the *synagogues*, explained them to the people, guarded and enforced the observance  
of

of them (as they would have it thought) by their own explanations, distinctions, and *traditional* injunctions. They celebrated the praises of those righteous men, whose names and actions are recorded in *scripture*: they erected monuments to their memory, and adorned them in a superb manner. They lamented the folly, perverseness, and wickedness of their forefathers, in persecuting and murdering such excellent men, whose private virtue, public spirit, and prophetic character, rendered them worthy of a very different treatment. “ Ah! said they, had we lived in  
“ the days of our forefathers, we would  
“ not have been accomplices with them in  
“ such wickedness; we would have abhor-  
“ red, as the most execrable impiety, the  
“ very thought of shedding the blood of  
“ any of the true prophets of God: we  
“ would have received them with all the  
“ respect due to their character and worth:  
“ we would have listened to their instruc-  
“ tions, and obeyed them with the utmost

“readiness. For the will of God is the  
“most sacred thing in nature; and by  
“what *Prophet* soever its dictates are con-  
“veyed to us, all possible deference is due  
“to them. Should any *prophet* now arise  
“amongst us, and much more, should  
“the great *Messiah* himself appear, we  
“would receive him with a most cordial  
“welcome, pay him every mark of re-  
“spect, hear his instructions with plea-  
“sure, and obey his commands with per-  
“fect submission.”—Such was the lan-  
guage of those hypocrites!—But the fact  
was, that a *Prophet* of God had actually  
appeared at that time, and they had re-  
jected and despised him: nay, the *Messiah*  
himself was then present with them, and  
they hated him, and were resolved to per-  
secute him to death! And thus, as our  
Lord remarks to them, *they bore witness to  
themselves*, both by their words and actions,  
*that they were the genuine descendants of them  
that killed the prophets.*



JOHN the *Baptist* endeavoured to reform the corrupt morals of the *Jewish* nation: he reproached these men for their pride, superstition and wickedness; he persuaded and urged them to repentance and virtue; he forewarned them of their ruin and destruction; protesting to them, that if they did not repent and reform, they must no longer expect the patience and forbearance of divine providence: *For the ax was now laid to the root of the tree: if then they did not bring forth good fruit, they would inevitably be cut down, and utterly consumed, like a barren unsound tree, that is good for nothing, but to be hewn down, and used as fuel for the fire.*— But they paid no regard to him: and tho' no *prophet* uttered more intelligible and practical instructions and exhortations, or spoke and acted in a manner more becoming a person of wisdom, integrity, and public spirit, they turned off the edge of all his admonitions, by saying with a contemptuous sneer, *That he had a devil*—was

worse than an enthusiast, had lost his understanding, and was possessed with the *spirit of madness*; considering it as a sufficient proof of madness, that he should presume to think such holy and religious persons, as they were, needed any reformation.

ON the other hand, the publicans and sinners were persons that did not seem to concern themselves much about religion—made little or no profession of it—seldom shewed any marks of devotion—did not *pray in the corners of streets*—nor *distribute alms by sound of trumpet*—nor *disfigure their faces by fasting*. On the contrary, they seemed abandoned to the sensual vices: and to judge of them by their first appearance, one would have supposed them to have been as profligate in their principles and dispositions, as they were loose and disorderly in some of their practices. Yet these people were found, when matters were brought to the test, to have more conscience

conscience in them, more modesty, more sensibility of their own failings, a better sense of morality, and a stronger conviction of the necessity of repentance and virtue, than the other party. Having fewer prejudices, and being guided by common sense and common honesty, they were struck by the disinterested integrity of *John the Baptist*, were convinced by the wisdom with which he spoke, and felt the weight of his admonitions: and several of them were not only baptized by him, but, in consequence of it, actually reformed from their vices, and converted to sobriety and goodness.—Yet when the other party saw the admirable effects of *John's* ministry in the reformation of these people, and were convinced by their own observation of its useful design and tendency, they were not at all the more disposed to reform their own lives, or to pay any attention or respect to that worthy prophet of God and reformer of the people.—*Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publi-*

40      *The Father's two Sons : Or,*  
*cans and harlots go into the kingdom of God*  
*before you. For John came unto you in the*  
*way of righteousness, and ye believed him not :*  
*but the publicans and harlots believed him.*  
*And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not af-*  
*terward, that ye might believe him.*

THIS different temper and spirit of these two parties our *Savior* characterizes with admirable brevity and accuracy, by the preceding parable of two brothers, who each of them received the same instruction and command from their father, to go and employ the day in labouring in his vineyard. To which one of them answered, *I will not*—but afterward recollecting himself, *he repented and went.*—Thus the lower and more dissolute people amongst the *Jews* seemed at first to be most averse to religion and reformation; and when the prophet *John* addressed them with his arguments and exhortations, discovered marks of sullenness and ill humour: and tho' their curiosity led them  
into

into the wilderness to see so singular a man, and to hear his discourse; yet they were apparently more disposed to receive his admonitions with a rude scorn and insult, than to comply with them. But, as soon as they began to reflect and consider, their minds became susceptible of the force of moral impressions: and when they found, that the drift of his whole discourse was no other, than to urge them to repentance, sobriety and virtue, as the means of their own private welfare and public safety; and that his instructions were supported by an uncommon appearance of integrity and authority; then their prejudices subsided—their natural honesty took place—their moral sensibility was awakened—their own consciences took part with the prophet's address—and many of them professed openly their repentance and conversion, by being baptized, and shewed their sincerity by a real amendment of their lives.

THE conduct of the other brother, who, upon receiving the same command from his father, answered, "*I go, Sir,*"—*but went not*—represents that of the other party, the *pharisees* and profess'd religionists, who were in like manner led by their curiosity to attend the prophet's ministry; and went with all the solemn appearances of a reverence for religion, with pretensions to a most ready and punctual obedience to every divine precept, and professions of paying entire respect and deference to every true prophet of God. Yet when they found, that *John the Baptist* discoursed to them in the way of righteousness—that he inculcated the precepts of genuine morality—that he admonished them against pride, covetousness, worldliness, and hypocrisy—and that he not only intimated to them the need they had of repentance, but assured them that they would be abandoned by divine providence to destruction, if they were not reformed;—they immediately turned their backs upon him

him with an affected scorn and derision, and his instructions had no influence upon them.—If indeed we attend to the *language* only, or the *answers* of the two sons, the latter must be allowed to be perfectly decent, and suitable to the character of an obedient son; and the other to be as much the contrary. But the conduct of each afterward proved the reverse of their language and appearance while in their father's presence. The one then resembles the behavior of the vulgar, when any thing is proposed to them by some eminent person, which they dislike, tho' it be for their advantage: at first they shew their aversion in the most open, and often indecent manner; yet afterward, when they begin to reflect and reconsider the matter, repent and are persuaded to their own good. The other resembles the behavior of persons of a higher rank and station, who preserve external decency, and pretend to give attention and respect to all persons and things, in proportion to their

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real

real excellence: yet if any thing is proposed to them, and urged upon them, that is opposite to their favorite views of interest or ambition, especially when those views pass under the disguise of religion, and are supported by the system which they have embraced; they are always found in the end to be of all men the most insusceptible of conviction and reformation, and most fixed in their aversion to those persons, of whatever character, who attempt to convince and persuade them.—The cause of this difference will be found, upon examination, to lie, not in their external circumstances, but in the different nature of the vices to which they are severally addicted: namely, the gay and sensual, or the grave and interested vices. For these of the latter kind, such as pride, avarice, ambition, hypocrisy, malice, and revenge, (which are most frequently found in persons of an advanced age and station) are more incompatible  
with



with honesty and fairness of temper, and therefore more difficult to be corrected, than those of the former kind. The intemperate and dissolute are often known to condemn their own practices, and discover a willingness to be reformed: which is rarely if ever observed in persons of the other character. On the contrary, they usually endeavor to vindicate their own conduct, subdue their opponents, and advance themselves, by methods of power and policy.—Such appears to have been the case, upon a fair comparison, between the temper and disposition of the inferior and looser kind of people amongst the *Jews*, and that of the *pharisees* and other eminent and strict professors of the *Jewish* religion.—And in all ages and nations, it has often been found, that many of those who have put on the most specious appearances, and made the most remarkable profession of religion, have been most incorrigibly averse to some of the most important duties of morality: whilst the same  
means

means which had no effect upon them, but to excite their disgust and hatred, were notwithstanding effectual to the conversion and amendment of others, whose outside was very unpromising, and seemed to bear not the least mark or tincture of religion. So widely different is the practice of the moral virtues, in obedience to the precepts of religion, from the most zealous profession of its doctrines, or attachment to its rites and ceremonies: and so little are mens bare language, looks and gestures, to be depended upon, as certain marks of genuine piety and virtue, or real indications of their inward temper and governing principles and views.

To speak of God and religion in a pious tone, and terms of profound respect—to repeat the articles of faith, and join in acts of devotion, with frequency and fervor—to observe with punctuality the customary modes of worship—to contend earnestly for these things, as essential to the  
glory

glory of God, and edification of his church and to be zealous for the advancement and propagation of them in the world—what is all this, in respect to the will and authority of Almighty God, but saying to him, as the son in the parable answered his father, *I go, Sir?*—Exclusive of the practice of real virtue and goodness, it is all at best but mere profession, empty compliments, a hypocritical shew of filial respect, followed by the most wilful and criminal disobedience. The other son appears indeed to receive his father's commands with a sour disdain: and instead of expressing any degree of respect and compliance, gave him an insolent and positive denial; *but afterward repented and went.* So there are some persons in the world, who may seem to spurn at religion, to avoid purposely and petulantly even such professions and appearances of it, as are most highly reasonable and becoming, and to have little or no regard to the duties it requires: yet afterward, by means of reflection

reflection and consideration, they become sensible of its obligations, and tho' they neglect the profession, yet diligently apply themselves to the practice of it, in all sobriety, justice and humanity. This latter character, it must be confessed, is by no means perfect and free from all censure; for religion ought to be professed: it deserves and requires such an external and visible respect to be paid to it in words and forms, as is most decent and convenient in itself, and exemplary in society. But taking the two characters, just as they have been exhibited, and making an exact estimate and fair comparison, *What think ye?* Which of them do you judge to be preferable, and to approach nearer to the standard of substantial worth and genuine piety?—Shall we prefer the son who returned a smooth and dutiful answer to his father, but at the same time entirely neglected to do what he had commanded, to the other son, who tho' rude and indecent in his answer, yet repented, changed his purpose,

and resolved industriously to execute his father's order?—In the common affairs of civil and social life, what is the test of a real friendship and good will? mere professions? or actual services?—One man, when you apply to him for his assistance, may appear to receive you with singular marks of affection—may express himself in the most civil and polite terms that can be imagined—seem to be very attentive to your request, and to have your cause and interest at heart—declare, that it would be the greatest pleasure to himself to oblige you—and promise that nothing in his power shall be wanting to serve you: but you find afterward, that he thought no more about it; nay, on the contrary, was fixed unalterably in a resolution rather to defeat your purpose, and disappoint your hopes. Another, when you appear to ask a favor of him, demurs upon it—contracts his brow—seems disgusted—returns a hasty and disagreeable answer, if not a positive

denial: yet afterward relents—is sorry that he answered in so abrupt a manner—takes the matter of your request into consideration—and finding that you desire nothing but what is just and reasonable, labors industriously to serve your purpose and promote your interest. Which of these two is kind and obliging? which do you consider as your real friend? Undoubtedly him who actually complied with your request, and endeavored to serve you, how unpromising soever his language and behavior might be at first.—In the parable, the only proper question, to determine the difference between the two sons, is that which our *Savior* puts, *Whether of them twain did the will of his father?*—he that said, *I go, Sir, but went not*; or he that said *he would not*, but actually *went* and wrought in the vineyard? The case is too evident to admit of a dispute. The command was, *Go and work in my vineyard*—Was it then he who only promised to work, or he who actually wrought, that

was truly obedient?—So in regard to religion, works, not words, are the test—the only certain proof of a sincere piety and real regard to the will of God.

THERE have ever been two sorts of men, so different from each other in appearance, that one would hardly imagine them to belong to the same species of creatures—*viz.* the devout and the profane. If we were to form an opinion of them from their mere aspect, we should pronounce the one to be full of piety, exceedingly conscientious, and attentive to every thing which had the name and authority of religion annexed to it: and the other to be regardless of all sacred ties and moral obligations. But let us beware of giving our verdict upon so slight evidence: the merits of the cause lie too deep, to be so suddenly discovered and so easily understood: possibly along with all the appearances of seriousness and devotion, there may be foul passions and wicked designs

lurking within; and while the tongue is uttering the language of praise or supplication, the heart may be fraught with pride, or envy, be meditating upon unrighteous lucre, or devising mischief against its neighbor. On the other hand, where appearances are the least promising, we may possibly find, to our admiration and surprize, such worthy actions performed, or such instances of self-command, as can spring only from a strong sense of moral and divine obligations. In this case, must we not necessarily decide in favor of the latter character, however unfavorable or untoward the first symptoms might appear? What tho' the former may have obtained the reputation of sanctity in a misjudging world? and the latter have the misfortune to stand disgraced by some infamous appellation? Shall we accept the persons of men? Shall we suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by mere affectation and grimace? Shall we yield our tribute of respect to empty shew  
and

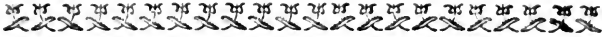


and hypocritical pretences? and refuse it at the same time to real and substantial worth?—True goodness and unfeigned piety are hidden qualities of the heart; and may be either crusted over, like unwrought jewels, with a coarse and rugged outside, or polished and set to view by human art. But in either case, they ought to be carefully distinguished from the false and counterfeit.—It is indeed readily acknowledged, that the natural presumption lies in favor of the devout, and against the profane part of mankind: and charity requires us not to be suspicious of other mens sincerity; but rather to take it for granted, that where there is so much of the appearance of religion, there is also something of the reality. All that we mean to assert then is, that appearances are often deceitful; and that if we would judge wisely or righteously either of ourselves or others, we must pay very little regard to them—we must examine further, and dive, if possible, to the very bottom of the heart.

To sum up the whole then—The son in the parable, who upon receiving his father's command to go and work in the vineyard, replied, *I will not*, was undoubtedly culpable in giving so unbecoming and disrespectful an answer. But he repented—he went—he did the thing which was commanded him. Therefore he undoubtedly deserved the preference, beyond comparison, in his father's esteem, to the other son, who was willing and obedient in *words only*. So in regard to religion, he whose practice is right, whatever he may or may not profess, and how defective soever the character may otherwise be, yet is infinitely preferable to the man who is religious only by profession. But the complete character is that of the man, whose profession and practice are consistent and uniform—who pays with willingness and pleasure the tribute which decency and the order of society require, to the external profession of religion—who joins cordially and without ostentation in the proper forms and language

guage of devotion; but whose actions at the same time speak the inward sense of his mind, in a more significant and incontestable manner than any words can express—whose conduct, in all the various circumstances of life, perfectly corresponds to the sentiments expressed in his offices of devotion—who is one and the same man in public and in private, at church and at home, in his closet and in the world—invariably determined to pursue the main end of life, in the practice of all that is right and good, useful and valuable, honorable and becoming, according to his own best judgment, and the known will of the all-wise *Father* of mankind.





## DISCOURSE III.

Defect of Virtue in the *Jewish*  
Nation.





## LUKE xiii. 6.

*He spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

**I**F we look back to the beginning of the preceding chapter, and the last verses of the eleventh, we shall find, that there  
were

were present with our *Savior* an innumerable multitude of people, among whom were many *scribes* and *pharisees*, and his own disciples: and while he was giving them several important instructions, and forewarning them of the ensuing troubles and calamities, some of his audience took occasion to inform him of a late tragical event, *viz.* the destruction of a number of *Galileans*, whom *Pilate* had fallen upon suddenly with a body of *Roman* soldiers, and put to the sword, as they were offering sacrifices. The motive for mentioning this event to him, was probably a desire of hearing what reflections he would make upon it. He replies, *Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

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THE *Jews* were ready to interpret such events, as divine judgments, inflicted upon the sufferers for some peculiar wickedness. In this passage therefore, he not only reprehends the common prejudice of inferring sin from suffering, where there is no natural and visible connection; but admonishes his audience of that general calamity and destruction, which he foresaw would come upon the nation, as the natural consequence of their wickedness, without timely repentance. *Except ye repent, ye shall ALL perish LIKEWISE*, or in like manner with those *Galileans*, and the eighteen inhabitants of *Jerusalem*: i. e. they should all be slain by the *Roman* armies, or destroyed in the ruins of the city. Thus he takes occasion, from the violent fate which some of their countrymen had undergone, to warn them of their common danger, and incite them to the only means of national safety. He then delivers to them the parable, which is the subject of our present attention—"of a  
" certain

“ certain proprietor who had a fig-tree  
 “ planted in his vineyard, which had been  
 “ barren for three years successively: and  
 “ he gave orders to the vine-dresser to cut  
 “ it down as a mere encumbrance to the  
 “ ground. But the dresser of the vineyard  
 “ desired leave to try his skill and industry  
 “ in curing its barrenness, for one year  
 “ more, and no longer.”—That he intended this parable for the *Jews collectively*, and the barren fig-tree for an *emblem* of their state and character as a *nation*, is evident both from the fable itself, and the discourses which precede it. To which we may add, that the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen (Luke xx.) bears a strong resemblance to this, and admits of no other explanation, than as applied to the rulers and chief men of the *Jewish* state, and predictive of their destruction. And when he pronounced upon the fig-tree by the way-side (Mat. xxi. 19.) on which he himself had sought for fruit and found none, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth*

*forth for ever*; and the tree was observed by his disciples, to their great surprize, to be withered and dead the very next day; it may be naturally supposed, though we have no express authority for it, that he intended *this* for a visible and striking *emblem*, of the speedy decay, and irrecoverable ruin, of the *Jewish state*.

It appears then very probable, from the character of our *Savior*, his usual parabolic manner of instruction, the occasion and circumstances of his speaking this parable, and from the figure itself, that his design was to insinuate to his audience, the following important and interesting considerations: — That, notwithstanding their boasted religion, they were a people void of real virtue and goodness—that in consequence of it they were in imminent danger of destruction—that the only means of avoiding that destruction was repentance and reformation—that a season was yet allowed them for that end—that

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it was his own concern and endeavor to promote that end—but that if his endeavors should fail of success, no remedy would remain, and their ruin would then be speedy and inevitable.

LET us consider these particulars distinctly.—(1.) That the *Jews* in our *Savior's* time were a people destitute of virtue and goodness.—Before they were conquered, and removed from their country, by the *Babylonians*, they were so exceedingly addicted to an admiration and imitation of the idolatrous and debauched manners of the neighboring nations, as not to be reclaimed by all the remonstrances of their prophets. By their captivity they were indeed cured of their propensity to idolatry, and became zealous adherents to the *Mosaic* religion, which was established and preserved by the erection of synagogues, and having the law stately read in them. But as mankind are apt to go from one extreme to another no less hurtful, so their  
former

former neglect of their own religion was changed into a zealous attachment, not to the moral and essential, but the ceremonial and circumstantial part of it, to which they made many additions. Their former admiration of the religious customs of other nations was changed also, into a contempt and hatred of the rest of mankind, and an arrogant conceit of themselves, on the mere account of their nation and religious profession. And, which is worse, they appear to have had as little mutual kindness amongst themselves, as humanity to the rest of mankind: were divided into sects, parties and factions, which conceived an extreme dislike of each other. They were also prone to sedition and rebellion: and many refused to pay the taxes to the *Roman* government, pretending it to be unlawful, tho' they were governed by the *Romans* with much equity and moderation, and had the free observance of their own laws, and exercise of their own religion. Their notions of a

*Messiah* were so perverted, as only served to encourage them in vain hopes of being redeemed from the *Roman* power, and raised to national prosperity and dominion. If they had been possessed of any esteem for virtue, or sense of humanity, the excellence of our Savior's moral character and the good he did to numberless distressed objects, would undoubtedly have made a strong impression upon their minds in his favor, even exclusive of the power of his miracles, and the wisdom of his doctrine. But the manner in which they treated him is alone a sufficient proof, how far they were alienated from all goodness, and ready to proceed to the most desperate lengths of malice and wickedness. He describes, on many signal occasions, the temper and character, not only of the several parties in the *Jewish* nation, but of the nation in general. He applies to them the words of the prophet *Isaiab*—*This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they*  
*have*

have closed; that they might not see and hear, and be converted and healed. He represents them, as seeking after signs and wonders, yet less disposed to conversion by the miracles he had wrought to confirm his doctrine, than the heathens;—than *Tyre and Sidon*, or even *Sodom and Gomorrah*;—as ready to follow impostors, who came in their own name, with vain pretensions, yet rejecting him, who came in God his Father's name, with undeniable marks of divine power and beneficence. He declares that the *Ninevites* would rise up in judgment against that generation, and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of *Jonah*, a prophet far inferior to himself. He stiles the scribes and pharisees, tho' by profession the most religious, *hypocrites*, and *an evil and adulterous generation*; as they made void the commandments of God by their traditions, and substituted ceremony and show in the stead of moral virtue. He expresses, in the strongest terms, the incorrigible wickedness of

the city of *Jerusalem*, at the same time that he laments, with tears of affectionate sorrow, the misery and destruction, which he foresaw were coming upon it: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee!*

(2.) IN consequence of this general depravity, they were in imminent danger of destruction.—As they were void of those virtues which are the cement of society, and the foundation of national wisdom, strength and security—and were addicted to those vices which are productive of national weakness and disorder. A spirit of division and faction—an enmity to the *Roman* government—a fondness for rash and violent counsels—an antipathy to all other nations—a vain conceit of themselves as *Jews*—and a presumptuous confidence in the special favor and protection of Heaven—were their prevailing and distinguishing qualities, and the causes of their ruin and extirpation. For hence  
they



they became obstinate, implacable, incapable of good advice, determined to resist the *Roman* power to the utmost, and to reject even the most reasonable and equitable terms of accommodation. The opinion which was industriously propagated, by such as affected to be most religious and zealous, *viz.* that it was not lawful to pay tribute to *Cæsar*, was an apparent symptom of their approaching ruin. The extreme animosity and malice which they discovered against our Savior, particularly in the circumstance of demanding the release of *Barabbas*, who was a robber, in preference to him, and the imprecation which they uttered before *Pilate*, saying, *His blood be upon us and upon our children*—were horrible indications of that spirit of wickedness which possessed their minds, which rendered them incorrigible by any means of reformation, and instigated them to their own destruction.

(3.) REPENTANCE and reformation would have been the means of preventing the impending destruction, and promoting the national safety and welfare. Could they have been persuaded to apply their minds to the weightier matters of their own law or religion, justice, mercy, and fidelity; instead of employing all their zeal about forms and ceremonies, and the traditions of the elders—to be assiduous in works of humanity and for the relief of the poor; instead of devouring widows houses, and for a pretence making long prayers—to diffuse a spirit of concord, unanimity and mutual benevolence; instead of maintaining invidious distinctions, opposing other parties, and *compassing sea and land* only to gain *profelytes* to their own sect or party—to subdue the spirit of national pride, and religious self-conceit; instead of flattering and encouraging it by superstitious notions and practices—to recommend a prudent and conscientious submission and obedience to that govern-

government which divine providence had established over them; instead of fomenting a spirit of insolence, discontent and sedition—had they been possessed of that sincere piety to God and belief of religion, which is the spring of humility and repentance, of justice, equity and goodness—or, in a word, of that social virtue both in public and private life, on which the peace and safety of human society depend—they would have hereby avoided that national ruin, which was the natural consequence, and just punishment of their wickedness.

(4.) A SEASON was allowed them by divine providence for that end. Many years intervened between the time of our *Savior's* ministry and the destruction of *Jerusalem*. For tho' he predicts, that the present generation should not pass away before all that he had said, concerning the ruin of the *Jewish* nation, should come to pass, yet that generation was drawing to an end, before the event took place. This

interval then, was the space allowed to them for their repentance and amendment. The time of our *Savior's* ministry and his *Apostles* was *their day*, and the *time of their visitation*, as himself expresses it, when he beheld the city of *Jerusalem*, and weeping over it, said, (Luke xix. 42.) *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace—but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

(5.) It was our *Savior's* concern and endeavor, to promote a reformation, in order to their temporal safety and welfare as a nation, as well as their eternal happiness as individuals. For tho' he never interfered in matters of government, but avoided

avoided every appearance of assuming to himself civil power, and even rejected it, as foreign to his office and character; yet his instructions, example, and miracles, were the most effectual means that could be employed, for the amendment, not only of individuals, but of the nation in general. It might be thought perhaps enlarging too far, if we were to produce the many passages that might be selected, in which he reprehends, with inimitable propriety and force, their prevailing superstition, selfishness, pride, and malice, which were the characteristics of the nation, and recommends those important and useful virtues which were generally neglected. His instructions had indeed so great an effect, even in regard to the nation in general, amongst such as were impartial and well-disposed, that the pharisees and rulers of the state seem to have thought themselves reduced to a necessity, either of coinciding with his views, and submitting to a reformation, or of destroying his influence

ence by calumny, and defeating his endeavors by putting him to death: but in this dilemma, (such was the envy and malignity of their minds) they preferred the latter method, in opposition to the strongest motives of piety, justice and humanity. This he himself frequently and expressly foretold: and thus they accomplished the purpose of divine wisdom, which knows how to convert the greatest wickedness of men to the ends of infinite goodness and mercy, *even to mankind.*

THE last proposition was, That if his endeavors should fail, no remedy would remain, and their ruin would then be speedy and inevitable. For, as in the human body, when distempers are once risen to such a height, as to resist the force of the most proper and powerful medicines, they bring on, by their own natural tendency and progress, a dissolution; the like connection of events may be observed in the state of human society. When a national

tional community becomes infected with certain vices, to such a degree, as to resist the efficacy of the most powerful means of conversion and amendment, those spiritual distempers will make a continual progress; and no method will remain of preventing the fatal consequence. When those principles and sentiments in the minds of men, which were the foundation of national safety and welfare, are destroyed; public disorder and ruin naturally ensue. A corruption in the social temper and morals of any people hath a direct and necessary tendency to their destruction; especially when such corruption is excited and increased by superstition, instead of being restrained and subdued by true religion. Such was the state and temper of the *Jewish* nation in the time of our *Savior*. And we may justly presume, that if neither the wisdom of his instructions, nor the weight of his character, nor the perfection of his example, nor the series of his miracles, nor the thoroughly attested report of his resurrection

rection from the dead, nor the faithful and indefatigable labors of his *Apostles*, were effectual to cure the nation of their prevailing vices; no other means whatsoever would have taken effect, but they would proceed, as in fact they did, to the utmost obstinacy and malignity. This became apparent, not only in the violent and continual persecutions, which they carried on against the *Christians*, but in their *mutual* animosities, feuds, treacheries, violences, and massacres. They pretended, as a plea for condemning our *Savior* to death, that he was a sower of sedition, and endangered the public safety; and that if they did not put a stop to his attempts, the *Romans* would come and take away their city and nation: when in fact, it was their own spirit of discord and malice; their propensity to sedition, their hatred of the *Romans*; their *Jewish* pride; and presumptuous confidence, that God would protect and prosper them, in their most unjustifiable and rebellious attempts to throw off the

*Roman*



Roman government; that provoked the Romans to invade them, and were the real causes of their national ruin.

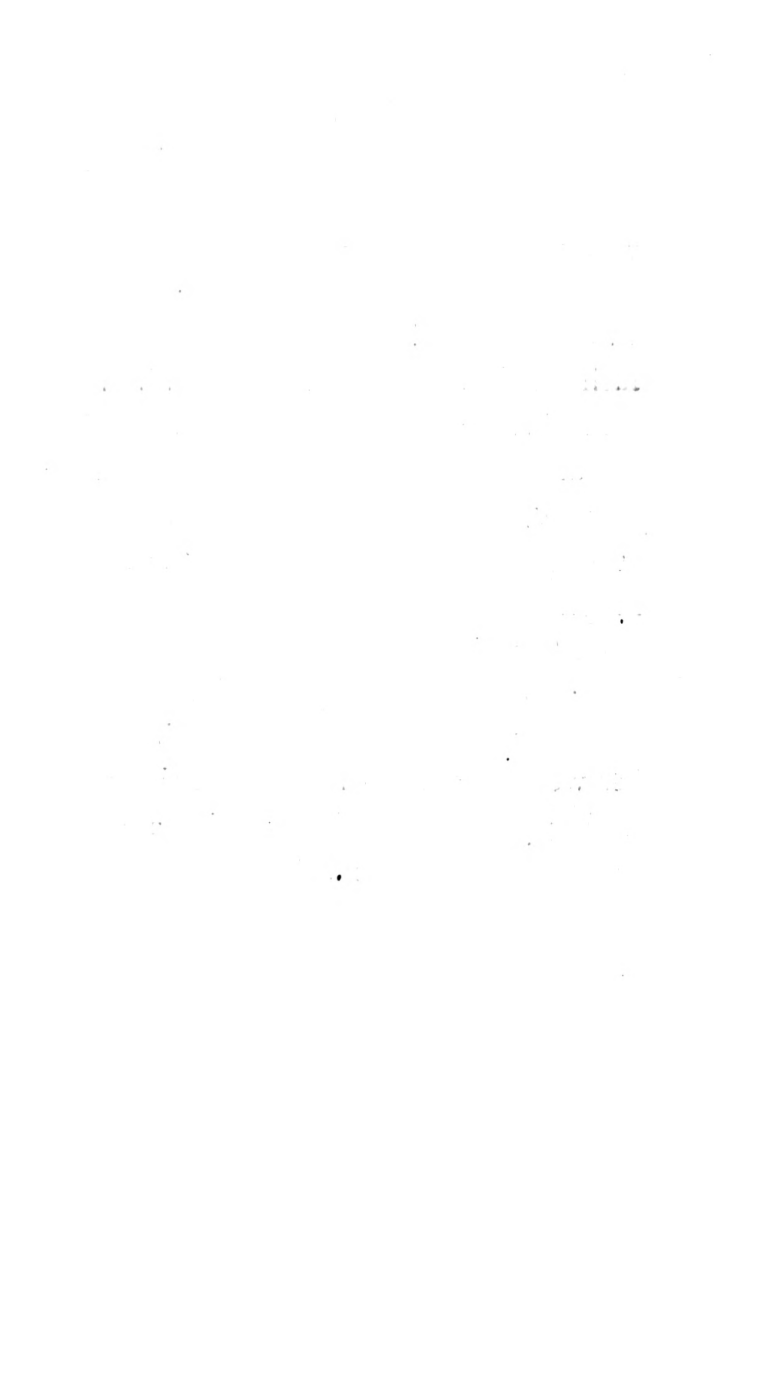
THUS we have considered this parable, as intended for a figurative representation of the state and character of the *Jewish* nation, and as a prediction of its approaching destruction, if it remained incorrigible, notwithstanding his endeavors to reform it.

THE description is indeed capable of being applied to the state of particular persons, as well as to a nation or community; and such an application may be very useful to the ends of piety and virtue. Every vicious person would do wisely to consider, how far his own character and condition may properly fall under such a description; that he may take warning, and avoid his own ruin, by a timely reformation. Every unprofitable subject of divine government is like the *barren tree* in the Lord's vineyard, fit only to be cut down, as encum-  
bring

*bring the ground.* Some fruits of virtue and goodness are justly expected from every man, according to his rational and moral nature. But if his nature is become so degenerate, and his temper so vitiated, as to render him useless to the purposes for which his nature was designed, a mere nuisance and encumbrance to the world; how justly may he expect the sentence of excision to be executed upon him, by the proprietor of the world? especially if a reprieve has been already granted him, and not only a season for repentance allowed, but all proper application made use of, to that end.—Thus every *Christian* may reflect upon his own state, and apply the parable to his own immediate admonition and reformation.

BUT the wisdom and propriety of our *Savior's* discourses, and the importance of the instructions they contain, will not appear so conspicuously, if we do not duly attend to their original and principal design.

sign. As the parable was spoke with a national view, it is not to be considered as meant to describe the condition of individuals, any farther than as they composed all together the body of the nation, and as each person would be liable to perish in the general ruin: according to the admonition of our Savior preceding the parable, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*: i. e. not every person in particular, but the nation in general. For there were amongst the *Jews* some *just men who did not need repentance*: nor did every *Jew* of a different character perish; but a considerable number were preserved, from whom the unbelieving *Jews* now existing, who are very numerous, are descended.

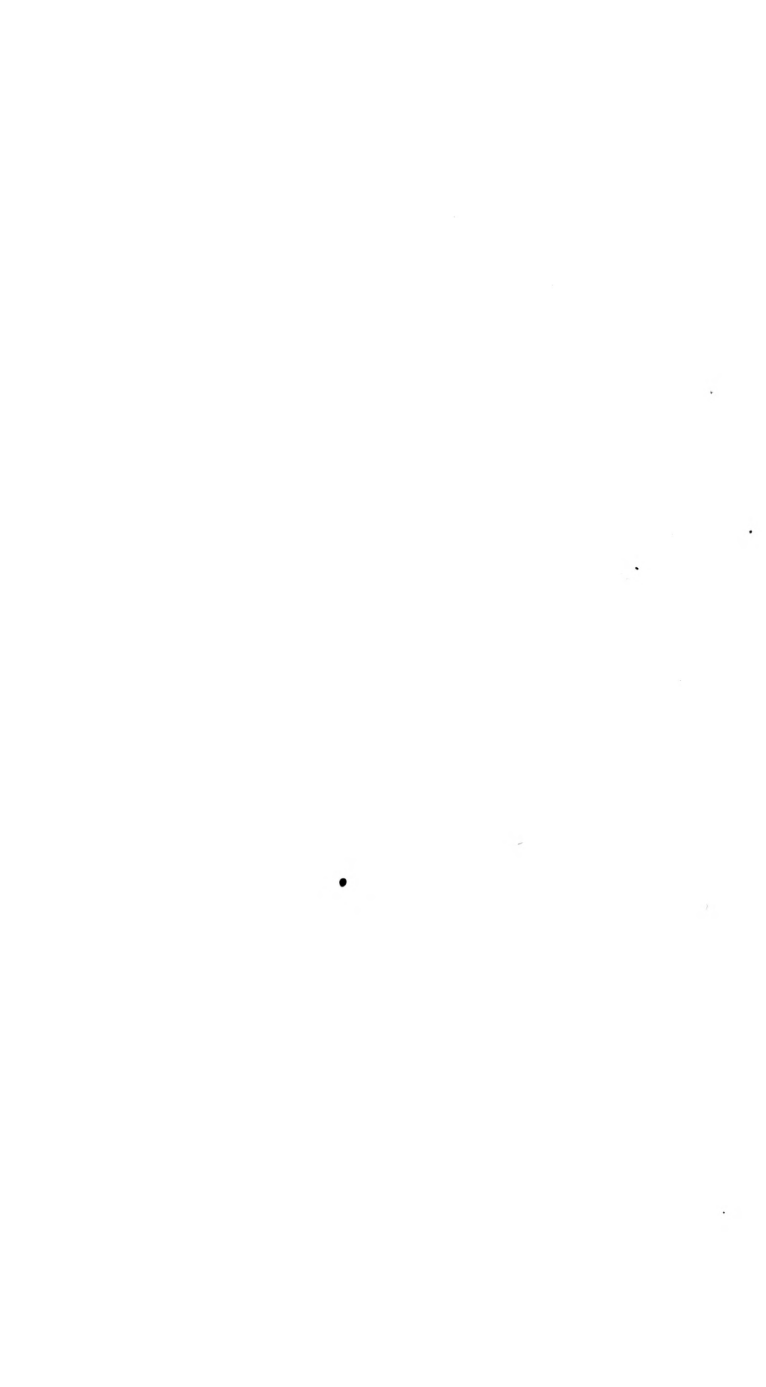




## DISCOURSE IV.

The Fig-tree to be cut down: Or,  
the *Jewish* Nation to be destroyed.





## L U K E xiii. 6.

*And he spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Lo these three years do I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down; why cumbreth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, 'till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well—if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

**H**A V I N G considered in the preceding discourse the sentiments which our *Savior* meant to convey to the minds of his

84 *The Fig-tree to be cut down : Or,*  
*Jewish* audience, we shall now attend to  
the propriety of the figures or allegory  
which he made use of.

To explain moral and spiritual senti-  
ments by material images, and sublime,  
extensive, or complex subjects, by com-  
paring them to things easy and familiar,  
so far as a likeness subsists, is often the on-  
ly method of accommodating them to the  
ordinary capacities of men, or at least of  
representing them with such clearness and  
force as are requisite to make an impres-  
sion. This method is practised in perfec-  
tion, when some very important and inte-  
resting subject, and which is not easily ap-  
prehended or believed, or but little attend-  
ed to, is concealed at first by a fabulous  
disguise, 'till the process and conclusion of  
the narration lead the persons, for whose  
instruction it was intended, to discover the  
meaning by their own reflection; and  
then every preceding part contributes, to  
fix



fix their attention, and enlarge their thoughts upon it.

WHEN our Savior began to relate this fable—*A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard*—his audience would not be able to conceive immediately the purpose of it: but it is probable, that in the end, all of them who were capable of reflection, and who observed his last words preceding the parable, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, would find out his main intention; after which the whole would be sufficiently intelligible, and they would be able to form some notion at least of what he meant, by the images of the vineyard and fig-tree—the proprietor and dresser—the barrenness of the tree—the application of manure to it—as well as the sentence of cutting it down, if it remained fruitless.

THERE is in this, as in all or most of the other parables, one point which is principally intended, and to which all the

other parts are to be considered as subservient. Some circumstances may be thrown in, merely to support the narration, and give it due proportion and consistence: these are to be distinguished from those which are essential to the main point. We shall be in danger of wandering from the purpose, and making an impertinent use, if not direct abuse, of a parable, if we attempt to build doctrines upon such passages of it, as are merely circumstantial and expletory, or lay more weight upon them than they were intended to bear. The principal point of design in this, was to represent the imminent danger the *Jewish* nation was in, of being abandoned to destruction by divine providence, in consequence of their being a worthless people. The figure therefore of *the fig-tree*, and the *sentence of excision* denounced by the *proprietor* for its *barrenness*, are essential parts of the fable, and necessary to the purpose. Next to these, the *interposition* of the *dresser* of the vineyard, and his endeavors to cure  
the

the barrenness of the tree, and make it fertile, are very significant; as they serve directly to enhance the other figures, by adding the supposition of an *incurable* barrenness, and consequently a confirmation of the reason for cutting it down, as a mere encumbrance. The remaining parts are expletive of the fable, and proper to give it life and action, but seem not intended for any further application.

WE shall confine therefore our observations of the construction and propriety of the fable or allegory, to three principal figures—Those which represent, (1.) The state and character of the *Jewish* people. (2.) The order and appointment of divine providence for their destruction: and (3.) The interposition and endeavors of our *Savior* to reform them, and save them from ruin.

(1.) THE figure representing the state and character of the *Jewish* nation, *viz.*

88 *The Fig-tree to be cut down: Or,  
the fig-tree which bore no fruit for some  
years.*

IN the warmer climates, which naturally produce more excellent fruits, and in greater abundance, and where mankind live more upon them, and less upon animal food, the fig-tree is held in great esteem, and much cultivated. Hence we find it often mentioned in the *Old Testament*, and ranked with the vine and the olive. It was usual to describe a state of the greatest security and plenty, by *every man sitting under his own vine, and his own fig-tree.*—Our Saviour therefore was far from meaning to express any contempt of the *Jews* as a nation, by this comparison: but it was his usual manner to draw parables from the vegetable creation; and often to enliven his discourse, by alluding to such objects as were before the eyes of his audience, at the time he was speaking.—In this parable the whole earth is compared to a vineyard  
—the

—the several nations to trees planted in it  
—and the *Jewish* nation to the fig-tree  
which bore no fruit. Such comparisons  
are founded upon a resemblance between  
the vegetable and animal world. By the  
oeconomy of creative wisdom, all things  
are formed in due proportion, similitude,  
and correspondence. Mankind are akin,  
in some degree, to the lowest creatures,  
even the plants and herbs; hence the pro-  
priety of various figures which have been  
used, denoting such similitude—such as,  
*All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as  
the flower of grass.*—The *Jews* were not  
unaccustomed to such comparisons: we  
find their antient *Prophets* frequently using  
them: particularly the vine is introduced  
as an emblem of the nation, Psalm 80.  
*Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt—thou  
hast cast out the heathen and planted it—thou  
preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to  
take deep root, and it filled the land—the hills  
were covered with the shadow of it, and the  
boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.*

*Why*

90 *The Fig-tree to be cut down: Or,*  
*Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so*  
*that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?*  
*the boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the*  
*wild beast of the field doth devour it—it is burnt*  
*with fire, it is cut down.* And in 5th chap-  
ter of *Isaiah*, where the prophet concludes  
his allegory with this explanation, *For the*  
*vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of*  
*Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant*  
*—and he looked for judgment, but behold op-*  
*pression, and for righteousness, but behold a*  
*cry.* Our *Savior* uses a different image,  
that of the fig-tree. But the foregoing  
examples serve to shew, that it might be  
easily understood by his hearers, as design-  
ed to characterize the nation in general.  
The vineyard, in the *prophet's* description,  
*brought forth wild grapes.* The quality de-  
scribed by our *Savior* of the fig-tree, is *bar-*  
*renness.* But the meaning and design is si-  
milar in each description, *viz.* to repre-  
sent the *Jewish* people as destitute of virtue  
and goodness—as not answering the spirit  
and intention of their religion and govern-  
ment

ment—as making no improvement of their situation and privileges—and therefore unworthy of being preserved any longer. The practice of justice, humanity, and goodness, is the fruit, which every nation ought to produce, in proportion to the culture and advantages bestowed upon it, by divine providence. Whenever it ceases to produce this fruit, it forfeits all safety and protection, and is in imminent danger of destruction.

THIS leads us, (2.) to another figure in the text, which intimates the order and appointment of divine providence for the destruction of the *Jewish* nation. The proprietor is represented as saying to the dresser of his vineyard, *Lo these three years do I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none—cut it down—why cumbereth it the ground?*—In respect to the unbounded extent and grandeur of the universe, and infinite variety of things in it, we may reasonably conceive, that the most numer-

ous and powerful nation on earth is not more considerable, in the eye of the sovereign proprietor and disposer, than any common plant in the eye of man; tho' the providence of God undoubtedly extends to the minutest objects equally as to the greatest. He hath formed all creatures as they are, and disposeth of them by his uncontrollable will, for the reasons and ends of perfect wisdom, but which are often incomprehensible to us. For *his judgments are an unfathomable depth, and his ways past finding out.* He sometimes *planteth one nation, and plucketh up another, raiseth high or bringeth low, establisheth or destroyeth,* according to such designs of his infallible counsel, as we are not able to penetrate. Yet some reasons and ends of his providence are apparent, or may be understood by due attention and reflection: and so much knowledge of the measures of his wisdom, justice and goodness may be attained to, as is sufficient to the support of virtue, and the highest welfare of mankind.



kind. The instructions of our Savior are peculiarly adapted to bring us to this knowledge. He leads us to form ideas of the measures and ends of the divine government, in the only way suitable to human capacity, by comparing them to the conduct of men, when acting according to their own natural reason and judgment, in the disposal of things subject to their use and management. To this end he applies various images taken from the common transactions of men—such as the master calling his servants to an account—the father bestowing gifts upon his children—the prince promoting his faithful and useful subjects—the shepherd attending his flocks and herds—the fisherman assorting his capture—the husbandman separating his grain from the weeds or the chaff—and in the parable before us, the proprietor of a vineyard taking a view of his plants, and ordering *a barren tree to be cut down.*—The propriety of all these comparisons is founded upon an analogy or resemblance

semblance in the judicial conduct of divine providence over mankind, both in this world and another, to that of men, in those things which are subject to their jurisdiction and disposal. Whatever is the effect of reason, and a distinguishing judgment in men, how imperfect soever, bears some degree of likeness to the effects of the infinite understanding and infallible wisdom of God; as the light of a taper, how small and dim soever, hath some resemblance to the glory of the sun in the meridian: otherwise it would be a vain attempt to form any conception of the reason or end of the divine procedure in any instance; nor could we assert, upon any real evidence, the wisdom, justice or goodness of providence. The right method therefore, and the only one, for which we have sufficient capacity, of acquiring any true sentiments of the divine conduct, or forming any right judgment of what is or is not to be expected from it, is by considering what conduct the natural

tural

tural sense and reason of mankind direct them to, in such transactions as appear most similar to the case we are supposing of the divine government.—Thus, for instance, our *Savior* teaches his *disciples* to argue and infer, that if the shepherd is not willing that any part of his flock should go astray and be lost, *so it is not the will of your Father in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*—If earthly parents *know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?*—As the husbandman is careful to separate his grain from the weeds and chaff, and to preserve it, so will divine providence, in due time, sever the good and worthy part of mankind from the unprofitable and vicious.—As it is the property of a wise master or prince, to distinguish and prefer his faithful and diligent servants, so virtuous and good men may hope for honor and reward from the supreme Lord and Governor of the world.

On the other hand, as men reject, cast away, or destroy, whatever is found to be useless, cumbersome, or hurtful; so the worthless and wicked part of mankind shall, sooner or later, by the course and appointment of divine providence, be abandoned to destruction.—And to come to the parable under our present consideration—As it was natural and reasonable in the owner of the vineyard, when he observed a fruit-tree in it barren for so long a time, and consequently useless, to direct his servant who had the immediate care of the plantation, to cut it down: our *Savior* intended that his audience should understand and infer, from this figure, that it was an appointment suitable to the reason and judgment of divine providence, that the *Jewish* nation being degenerate, and producing no fruits of virtue, should be exposed to destruction.—His forerunner *John the Baptist* uses the same figure, with a manifest view to the character of the *Jews as a nation*, and their approaching fate.

fate. For when he saw a multitude, and among them many *pharisees* and *sadducees* come to his *baptism*, he said unto them—*O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now the ax is laid to the root of the trees; i. e. the destruction is at hand—Every tree then, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.*

THE third figure we proposed to consider, is that which represents the interposition and endeavors of our Savior, to reform the *Jewish* nation, and save it from ruin. *The dresser of the vineyard* answering, said unto him, *Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it—and if it bear fruit, well—if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

THO' our Lord thought fit on some occasions to use a sublime language and majestic stile ; yet when his intention was to explain to his disciples his own character, office or agency, and to give them such a clear and lively idea of it, as was best suited to their capacity, he was pleased to make choice of such figures, as were most simple, intelligible, and familiar, and taken for the most part from rural life. Thus in one parable he exhibits himself under the character of the husbandman—in another, of the shepherd—in this, of the dresser of a vineyard, whose care and labor in the culture of it, in order to subdue the barren quality of the fig-tree, represent his endeavors to instruct and reform the *Jewish* people. He applied to this end the most powerful means: and his doctrine and instructions, delivered with so much authority and grace, and enforced by such proofs of miraculous power and beneficence, were like the *richest manure*, most fit to improve and *fertilize*

lize the nation; to correct the unkindly temper and unprofitable manners of the people, and infuse into them a spirit of goodness and usefulness, as far as they were capable of amendment, and not incurably degenerate. His own disposition, and earnest desire to produce such a reformation, is beautifully intimated by the interposal and request of the dresser of the vineyard, saying, *Lord, let it alone this year also*—and by the tender of his utmost care and industry to render the tree fruitful in the ensuing season. The disposition also of divine providence to spare the *Jewish* people, and relieve them from ruin, till the last and most efficacious means had been used for their amendment, may seem to be implied. But it would be an absurd perversion of the parable, to infer from it any change in the divine mind or purpose, by any intercession whatsoever. The only meaning we can reasonably suppose of the figure, in respect to the purposes of providence, which are immutable, is to infi-

100 *The Fig-tree to be cut down : Or,*  
nuate the divine clemency and forbearance, in sparing the *Jewish* nation so long: and that it was in obedience to the divine will, and subservience to the ends of his wisdom, that our Savior employed his endeavors to reform it, and preserve it from destruction. However, he plainly intimates his own care and concern for its preservation, his fidelity and diligence in the discharge of his office to that end, and the fitness of the means he applied; and that if his endeavors had not the desired success, its condition would be desperate and remediless—*If it bear fruit, well—if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.* These last words are to be understood only as a prediction, expressing in strong terms the absolute certainty of its destruction, if it continued unreformed.

THE endeavors of any wise and good man to reform a vicious people, to convert them from superstition to true religion, from savageness to humanity, from vice  
to



to virtue, may be properly considered and represented, as an *intercession* to the Supreme Being, and if successful, an actual *interposition* in the course of his providence, to preserve them from ruin. How much more justly might our blessed Savior represent his own endeavors in such a view? To express an earnest desire of the reformation and happiness of mankind, in acts of devotion to the Supreme Being, is stiled *making intercession* for them: but the main end and use of such devotion, is to cherish good affections in the heart of the worshipper, and dispose him to all the duties he owes to society. That intercession alone is beneficial to others, and actually promotive of their welfare, which is accompanied with successful endeavors for their reformation and improvement. For this is using the means, which the providence of God hath appointed, to that end, without which, the most frequent and fervent prayers are, in respect to that end, fruitless wishes. We need not doubt

102 *The Fig-tree to be cut down: Or,*  
but our Savior interceded, by expressions of the most sincere and ardent devotion, for the safety and welfare of his country, as well as for the conversion and salvation of mankind in general. But tho' here is room to suppose, that his *intercession by prayer* is signified, yet the figure principally refers to his *indefatigable labors* to convert and reform the *Jews*, as the only means of their national preservation. He expresses these his endeavors to preserve them from ruin, and concern to find them so ineffectual, in the most affectionate and lively manner, at his last approach to the city of *Jerusalem*, when he beheld it and wept over it, saying, *How often would I have gathered thy children together, as the hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold your habitation is left unto you desolate.*

HAVING gone through the proposed explanation of the parable; the important sentiments to be drawn from it, and ap-

plied by every man to his own use, are to this effect:—That the preservation or destruction of mankind, both as communities and individuals, is made to depend, by the just appointment of divine providence, on their fruitfulness or barrenness in the Lord's vineyard, *i. e.* their usefulness or inutility in the world—That the instructions and motives of true religion are intended to excite and diffuse a spirit of virtue and beneficence—That when the best instructions and most powerful motives are applied, in order to the reformation of any vicious people, without effect, their state is become hopeless, and their ruin inevitable—And that every wicked *Christian*, who, in opposition to the motives and engagements of his profession, continues impenitent, tho' he may escape with impunity for a while, or during this life, yet shall assuredly suffer at last *the righteous judgment of God*—shall have his lot with the workers of iniquity, when they shall all be *extirpated* from the king-

104 *The Fig-tree to be cut down, &c.*

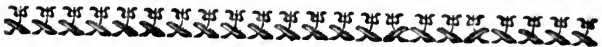
dom of Heaven, and consumed with an everlasting destruction. For it is the sentence of our divine Master, as well as his forerunner, that *every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.*

D I S-



## DISCOURSE V.

The Invitation refused: Or, the  
*Jewish* Rejection of the Gospel.





## LUKE xiv. 16.

Then said he unto him, *A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes*

*lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

**I**T was at an entertainment in the house of a pharisee of distinction, that our Savior spoke this parable. There were present, beside many others, some of his capital enemies of the pharisaic sect. It being the Sabbath-day, they had watched him as he went to the house, to observe whether he would violate the Sabbath, as they termed it, by healing a poor man, who was afflicted with a dropsy. In contempt of their religious casuistry, he first asked them, Whether they thought it lawful to perform such a cure on that day?  
and



and upon their silence, healed the man and dismissed him. Then, in vindication of his own conduct, (for such was their superstition and bigotry, as to make it proper for him to defend by argument his own conduct, even in instances of the greatest goodness, as well as miraculous power) he asked them, if they did not think it right, to use their endeavors on that day to save the life of a brute creature, one of their own cattle, for instance, supposing it to be in danger of perishing? They thought fit to be silent, as indeed they could return no proper answer to an argument so rational and convincing. Now as they had watched *his* conduct, he had very soon an opportunity of remarking upon *theirs*. For their behavior was so remarkable, in affecting precedence, and contending for the chief seats at this entertainment, that he thought fit to give his disciples some instruction with a manifest reference to it; which was, that instead of contending, like the pharisees, for

precedence and pre-eminence, they should do the reverse—be content to take the lowest place, and instead of assuming any distinction to themselves, appear to decline it: for such modesty of behavior was the way, not to lose but to gain respect from the whole company, and particularly from the master of the house, who would thereby be the more obliged to distinguish them by his civilities. For the less men arrogate to themselves, the more willingly will others be disposed to do them honor.

AFTER giving his disciples such a pertinent instruction, and his enemies such a mortifying rebuke, he addressed his discourse to the noble pharisee who had invited him, with a view to convince him, how much more true generosity, how much more real virtue and merit would be shewn, by supplying the wants of such poor persons, as were unable to provide themselves with necessary sustenance, than by making the most liberal and elegant enter-

entertainment for his wealthy neighbors and acquaintance. *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, saith he, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*—We may here observe, that the usual manner of expression in Scripture, when one thing is recommended in preference to another, is by seeming to prohibit the one, as well as require the other. So that our Savior's meaning was, not to forbid such mutual entertainments as are customary amongst persons of rank and wealth, but to assert the superior excellence of that real liberality and munificence, which is extended to the needy and distressed, above all the pomp and elegance of such entertainments, as the wealthy alone are invited to partake of.

of. Men may affect to shew the largeness of their heart, and the elegance of their taste, in entertaining their kindred and wealthy neighbors: but this implies so little real virtue or worth, that all their reward is to meet with a return of the same kind. But blessed is he who selects for the objects of his munificence such as can make him no return but gratitude and thanks: for *he shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*—Upon this, one of the company expressed his high opinion of the plenty and prosperity which he supposed would attend the Messiah's kingdom, and the happiness of those who should enjoy it—*Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*—In reply to this, our Savior, who frequently chose to convey his spiritual instruction by such images as arose from the occasion and the objects before him, related to him the parable in the text—A certain person of opulent fortune had invited a number of guests to a liberal entertainment; and  
when

when it was ready, sent notice by a servant, requesting their company immediately. But they all began to make excuses, each such as he thought best for himself, and refused to come. When the servant reported their behavior to his master, he conceived a just and natural indignation at their contemptuous rejection of his civility and kindness. And that he might shew in the most proper and significant manner, both his resentment of such behavior, and the humanity of his own disposition, he dispatched his servant with all expedition, first into the streets and lanes of the city, and then into the country, with orders to bring to his house all the poor, maimed, halt and blind; and if occasion required, to be very urgent with them; declaring that it was his full purpose and resolution, that his house should be filled with such guests, instead of those who had insolently despised his invitation, and who should not now be admitted on any terms.

POSSIBLY, the pharisee, whose guest our Savior was when he delivered this parable, might understand him, as meaning only to corroborate his preceding instruction of preferring the poor to the rich, by exhibiting this example of a person who had originally intended to shew his respect to his wealthy neighbors; but finding himself unworthily treated by them, resolved to supply their absence, with all such persons, as were distinguishable only by their extreme poverty, or some bodily defect: a method which prudence and humanity suggested to him, of giving himself satisfaction for the affront he had received. The places of those who had refused, upon false or frivolous pretences, the friendly invitation he had sent, were to be filled up—by whom?—even by the poor, the halt, the maimed, and the blind. This example then might be adduced to represent, how much more proper and worthy objects of our kindness and generosity, the poor and distressed part of mankind may be,

be, than those insolent sons of wealth, to whom it is too much the custom of the world to pay all attention and respect.

BUT we shall endeavor to trace out a further and more important meaning in the parable recited. For as it was spoke in answer to the expression of one of the company, *Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*—as it bears so considerable a resemblance to the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son, which was evidently intended to describe the manners of the *Jews* in their rejection of the gospel—as our Savior always kept in view the grand design and effect of his own appearance and office, which he represents by so many other parabolic figures—we may conclude with the highest probability, that he had the like view in this parable; and that his main intention was, to exhibit under these familiar and festive images, the rejection of the gospel by the wealthy and worldly part of the

*Jewish* nation, and the acceptance of it by numbers of the poorer sort both *Jews* and Heathens, to whom it should be offered. But here he does not extend his view so far as in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son. For there, he comprehends, not only the neglect and contempt which the wealthier sort of *Jews* discovered, but the villany and barbarity also of that remnant of them, who not contented with despising the gospel, conceived a mortal hatred against its author and first propagators, and proceeded to persecute them to death. He comprehends also the ensuing calamities of the nation, and the horrible destruction of the city of *Jerusalem*;—then, the reception which the gospel, after being rejected by the *Jews*, would meet with from the world in general;—and finally, the detection and exclusion of the pretended but unqualified Christian. These important particulars are all omitted, except one, in this parable;



rable; the scope and design of which we shall proceed to explain.

HE had himself published the gospel, and sufficiently made known his own character and pretensions, and had sent forth his servants also, to invite the *Jewish* nation, particularly the wealthier part of them, the scribes, pharisees, and other persons of distinction, to partake with him of the honor and happiness of the kingdom of God. But instead of discovering any proper sense of his kindness and benevolence, and gratefully accepting his invitations, they behaved in a manner which evidently shewed they had no respect for him, no esteem of the offers he had made to them, no taste for that spiritual entertainment which he had proposed to them. On the contrary, they despised the happiness he offered to them, and preferred their own worldly views and interests to the honors and privileges of his kingdom. And tho' they were all

ready to say, like one of the company, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*, yet in fact they had no relish for such spiritual diet, no conception of the value of divine mercy and favor, of the rewards annexed to virtue and goodness, or of the happiness of a celestial kingdom. The most trifling considerations appeared to them of greater moment. As soon as they found that the gospel interfered in any degree with their worldly schemes and interests, they rejected it, and were ready to plead the urgency of such affairs as a sufficient vindication of their own conduct. This temper and spirit our Savior characterizes in the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son, and who sent forth his servants to invite his subjects to the marriage-feast, by these terms—*They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize*—and in this parable, by their *beginning one and all to make excuses. One said, he had bought a piece of ground, and he*

*must needs go and see it. Another, that he had bought five yoke of oxen, and he was going to make trial of them. A third, that he had married a wife, and therefore could not come.*

Now as our Savior thought fit to paint in such colours the countenance and behavior of the *Jews*, and the air of indifference, if not of scorn, with which, not only his mortal enemies the scribes and pharisees, but most of the wealthier part of the nation, rejected the gospel; so we may proceed to observe, that he hath characterized also, in a very expressive manner, the real temper and behavior, not of the *Jews* only in regard to Christianity, but of a great part of mankind in regard to religion in general; who, whenever the practice of virtue, and the rewards of another world are recommended to them, always think, or seem to think, that they have some other affairs that are more urgent, and that require their immediate care and attention. They flatter themselves, that they can put off religion just as they please—that any excuse is sufficient—

or at least, that some other time will be more proper and convenient. It seems necessary, first and above all things, to secure their worldly interest, and to transact their temporal affairs: and, when all those are settled and finished, when there is nothing else to engage their attention, then will be the proper time to mind religion. —But let it be remembered and seriously considered, that to such persons that time never will arrive—and they will lose forever the honor and reward which are now offered to them, but which they have the folly to neglect, and the insolence to despise. In this sense we may understand the conclusion of the parable, where the master of the house expresses his fixed resolution, that *none of those men which were bidden should taste of his supper.*

BUT the main point designed, as I apprehend, in this parable, remains to be considered; namely, that the gospel, tho' rejected by the major and almost all the wealthier

wealthier part of the *Jewish* nation, should not be lost in the world—It should be tendered to such as would gratefully accept the invitation, and gladly partake of that noble and liberal entertainment, which the others despised—It should be offered to persons of the lowest rank and meanest appearance, the poor, the infirm, the distressed—They would be better disposed than the wealthier sort to embrace with satisfaction and joy its overtures. Our Savior marks it as one characteristic of his kingdom, that *to the poor the gospel was preached*: not as intending to exclude persons of superior condition, unless they first excluded themselves, by their utter contempt, or at least neglect of it. How beautiful an image then is here presented to us, of the divine benignity and liberality, tendered by our Savior to the lowest of the human species?—There are numbers, who now appear as the most forlorn and abandoned part of mankind, who shall supply the places of such as were far superior

superior to them in this world, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God: nay, they shall come from the east and the west, the north and the south, from all parts of the world, even the most ignorant and uncultivated nations, and shall possess that dignity and happiness, which others had refused and forfeited, through a criminal attachment to worldly possessions and pleasures.—Such was the import of those *glad tidings* which our Savior sent his servants to make known to the world, when he gave them a commission to go and instruct all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature. The message they were to deliver was worthy of the most joyful acceptance from all mankind, those of the highest as well as the lowest condition. But the wealthier sort would for the most part reject it, having a variety of affairs upon their hands, which would seem to them more interesting. How then were the apostles to act in this case? were they to pay an ever-

everlasting attendance on the rich and great, and endeavor to win them by servile compliances and the arts of adulation?—By no means—After meeting with a refusal from them, they were to go out into the streets, lanes, and highways, and carry their messages and invitations to the poor, maimed, halt, and blind; and if occasion required, to compel them to come in, that the house might be filled.—Compel them! not certainly by force of arms, as the *Romanists* have strangely interpreted it, (for how absurd and ridiculous an image would it be, to represent persons compelled in this sense to partake of a feast) but by using the most powerful arguments and pressing persuasions to induce them to a compliance. They were to represent to them the magnificence, honor and joy of that celestial entertainment, to which they were invited, the liberal disposition and hospitable intention of the master of the house, and the cordial welcome with which they would every one, even  
the

the meanest and most decrepid, be received: *i. e.* they were to traverse the world, and make their application to persons of the lowest rank and condition, to present them with the strongest assurances of the gracious and bountiful disposition of the supreme Being to his poor creatures on earth—and of the ample provision he hath made for their reception and entertainment in his celestial habitation; from which none should be excluded but such as had forfeited all kindness and favor by ingratitude and obstinacy; and to persuade, urge and intreat them, not to slight so generous an offer and so kind an invitation, but to accept it with all possible alacrity and expedition. So the apostle *Paul* pathetically represents his apostolic business and office, and his earnestness in the discharge of it—*We are ambassadors of Christ, as tho' God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead—be ye reconciled to God:* The manner of expression deserves our particular attention, For the design of our Sa-



avior's coming, and the publication of the gospel, is properly speaking, to reconcile, not God to men, but men to God. He is always most mercifully and liberally disposed towards all his creatures, and cannot become more so by any intercession or means whatsoever. The difficulty is to make men thoroughly sensible of his goodness, to engage them to make him suitable returns, and persuade them to seek his favor. He is not the enemy, but the best friend of mankind. It is they who are enemies to him by their wicked works, and who are therefore to be persuaded to lay aside their enmity, and to be reconciled to him. So far is the Deity from being averse to a reconciliation, that he sends forth his servants with the most gracious message, inviting, and as it were entreating them to accept his intended kindness, and not despise, or make light of, the riches of his goodness. The mission of our Savior is represented as the grand instance and effect of his paternal love to mankind,

mankind, and desire of their happiness. This is the evident doctrine of the gospel, according to the express declarations of our Savior and his apostles. If we consult the parable before us, we shall find that nothing was wanting on the part of the master of the house: the entertainment was provided, all things were ready, and the servant was sent to inform those that were bidden, and request their attendance. But strange as it may seem, the difficulty was to find persons willing to accept the invitation, and partake of the feast. All they who were first applied to refused. There is so much perverseness, folly, insolence, and ingratitude in mankind, that the most earnest importunity is often insufficient to induce them to accept the proffered bounty of Heaven, and to consult their own greatest honor and happiness. In the other parable referred to, the king is represented as sending his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, and when they refused to come, sending

sending forth other servants, saying, *Tell them which were invited, Behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize.*—So far the two parables are similar, and conspire to represent, on one hand, the divine benignity and liberality tendered to the *Jews*, and which they were earnestly invited and persuaded to accept, by our Savior and his apostles—and on the other, the strange rudeness and perverseness of those *Jews*, who slighted the invitation. The Deity has most liberally provided a future state by our Savior, for the reception, entertainment, and happiness of mankind. A messenger was sent from Heaven to proclaim the joyful tidings first to the *Jewish* people, and then to all nations. Yet many are so infatuated and brutish, that they make light of it, treat it as a subject not worthy of their attention, nay, are disgusted by having such

offers and invitations sent to them. See then where lies the evil temper, the dislike and enmity which prevents reconciliation, and deprives men of divine favor:—not in the Deity, but in men themselves, who are not to be moved by the strongest instances and most engaging overtures of divine goodness.—It was this view of the divine benignity and liberality that made the apostle labor to find words strong enough to express his sense, in his epistle to the *Ephesians*. For after representing the wickedness of mankind, he adds, *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ—by grace ye are saved—and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us thro' Christ Jesus.*

H A V I N G

HAVING so far endeavored to give an explanatory view of this parable, we shall add some reflections arising from it.—

(1.) That tho' our Lord intended to describe the ill temper and sullen spirit of those *Jews*, who slighted the invitation of the gospel, yet the images which he makes use of are of the pleasant kind, and evidently borrowed, according to his usual manner, from the occasion, when he was himself present at a splendid entertainment: and the story was a proper reply to that *Jew*, who said, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*: as it implies, that how ready soever the *Jews* were to express their high opinion of the honor and happiness of the kingdom of Heaven, yet in fact, very few of them would have any relish for such preferment and entertainment, but would refuse it when offered to them.

(2.) WE learn from the tenor of this parable, as well as from many other pas-

pages of the New Testament, that the purposes of divine goodness and clemency to mankind shall not be frustrated, either by the folly and stupidity of them who neglect, or the insolence and wickedness of them who despise, the overtures of the gospel. For when the master of the house had met with a refusal from those unworthy persons, to whom he first sent the invitation, he dispatched his servant into the streets, lanes, and highways, to collect and bring to his house the poor, the halt, the maimed, and the blind, with a charge to compel them to come in, *that his house might be filled.* As certainly then as God has provided a world to come for mankind, and given to our Savior a kingdom and territory in the invisible regions, so certainly shall that world, that kingdom or territory, be fully peopled. How much soever men of vain, conceited, and obdurate minds, possessed and enslaved by worldly passions, may slight the entertainments of virtue and piety, and the rewards  
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of a world to come : others shall be found of a better disposition ; and even many advanced to the possession of them, who were most ready to think themselves unworthy of so great an honor and happiness ; according to the words of our Savior,—Luke vi. 20. *when he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said—Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. And blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and shall cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Behold your reward is great in Heaven : for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But wo unto you that are rich ; for ye have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you ; for so did their fathers to the false prophets.—And*

the apostle *James* says, *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, who are rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*—These admonitions expressed in so general terms, are not to be understood so literally, as if mere poverty and distress would entitle men to future happiness, and wealth and prosperity disqualify them; except so far as their hearts are amended or corrupted by their circumstances; but that divine favor, and the rewards of eternal life, shall be conferred on mankind, according to an estimate and judgment of their qualifications, very different from their respective circumstances, their reputation and appearance, in this world, and, in many instances, totally the reverse: of which our Savior hath given us a most pathetic and striking representation in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus.—The *Jews* in general were apt to think themselves intitled to divine favor, on account of the nominal holiness of their nation—the  
pharisees



pharisees in particular, for the ceremonial shew of religion which they assumed—and the wealthy and powerful were most disaffected to the gospel, and ready to oppose a reformation. Hence it came to pass, that the overtures of our Savior and his apostles met with so little acceptance amongst them, tho' they were first invited. By duly considering this corrupt state of that nation, we may learn the meaning and propriety of many of our Savior's expressions, and particularly, his representing the master of the house as resolving to substitute, in the room of those that were invited, all the poor, halt, maimed, and blind, that he could collect from city and country. Thus he prefigures the real success and propagation of the gospel, in the world at large; when instead of being accepted by the *Jewish* rulers, and producing a happy reformation of their state, it was spread amongst other nations, and accepted chiefly by people of the lowest quality and condition. This is represented by the

apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26. in terms which may serve as a comment or explanation of our parable. *For you see your calling, brethren; that there are not many wise men, (in the opinion of the world) not many mighty, not many noble. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty, and the base and despised—nay, things that are not, to bring to nought things that are—that no flesh might glory in his presence.*

(3.) NOTHING can so effectually deprive men of the favor of God and the rewards of the world to come, as an abuse of his goodness, and a contemptuous rejection of the offers of his grace and mercy. *Despisest thou, says the apostle Paul, the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not considering that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself*

*thysself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?*

—That men should make light of the blessings of divine favor, and the offers of glory, honor, and immortality—that they should think eternal life a subject not worthy of their attention—that they should suffer themselves to be diverted from the pursuit of it by the slightest occasions—that their worldly affairs should seem to them a sufficient pretence or excuse for neglecting what is of no less than infinite importance—that it should be so difficult to prevail either with ourselves or others, by the clearest and most invincible arguments, to give that attention to a future state which the subject deserves;—all this might justly be thought unaccountable, and indeed incredible, if we had not so ample experience of its reality. The gospel is an assurance of divine goodness to mankind, and a promise of a future state of immortality, which men are invited

and urged to accept, and warned not to despise or neglect. The *Jews* acted in the most unjustifiable manner, in their insolent rejection of it, after it had been tendered to them, with all proper and sufficient evidences, to engage their belief and esteem. And we shall in like manner be guilty of inexcusable folly and ingratitude, if notwithstanding our Christian profession, we neglect *that great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed by them that heard him, God bearing them witness by signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.*—How much soever then we may endeavor at present to excuse our own conduct—how bitterly soever we may repent at last, and how earnestly soever we may beg for admittance to the habitation, society, and entertainment of the blest, all will be in vain. For when once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, they who are  
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without may stand and knock, saying, *Lord, Lord, open to us.*——But the answer will be, *I know you not, whence you are*——*Depart from me all ye that work iniquity.*

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## DISCOURSE VI.

The Vineyard let out: Or, the  
State of the *Jewish* Nation.

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## MATTHEW XXI. 33.

*Hear another parable. There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw his son, they said amongst themselves, This is the heir, — come,*

—come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the Vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes !— Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

**I**N the passage preceding our parable, it is related, that the chief priests and the elders came unto him, as he was teaching at the Temple, and demanded by what authority he acted? and who gave him that authority? To which question he promises to give an answer, if they would answer his question, *Whether the baptism of John was from Heaven, or of men?* But as they had not the honesty to give any direct answer, but replied, that *they could not tell: Neither do I tell you,* saith he, *by what authority I do these things.* He knew that they dissembled their own opinion, through a fear of the populace, who had a great reverence for *John the Baptist*; and that in their hearts they did not believe *John's* ministry to have any authority in it more than human; and therefore he draws a contrast between their character and disposition, and that of the common people, in his following comparison of the two sons, who were commanded by their father to go and work in his vineyard; and

and one said, he would not; but afterward repented and went;—the other professed much readiness to do what he was commanded, but when it came to the point, refused. Our Savior then appeals to them, which of these two shewed upon the whole the better temper, and was really obedient? They answered, The former. He then observes to them, that this was a fair representation of their disposition, compared to that of the common people, in respect to *John's* doctrine. For many of the latter; even such as were reputed the greatest sinners, and most indifferent or averse to religion, the publicans and harlots, were brought to repentance by him : whilst they, who were professed religionists, and pretended to have the highest reverence for the divine precepts, and the instructions of the prophets, yet in fact despised *John's* ministry, and paid no real obedience to the will of God. Then follows the parable which is the subject of our present consideration, of the vineyard, which

which the owner had let out to husbandmen. But they, instead of paying him the annual revenue which he expected and had a right to demand, seized the servants he sent to receive it, and treated them with the utmost insolence and cruelty, wounding some and killing others. At last, the proprietor having a son, determined to send him; upon a reasonable supposition, that how ill soever they had treated his servants, they would surely shew some respect to his only son, or at least, not proceed to the like violence and outrage, as they had done before. But the event was the contrary: they no sooner saw him, than they conspired with an unrelenting spirit of avarice and tyranny, to destroy him; as thinking, that when they had dispatched *him*, they should keep all in their own possession, and remain absolute masters of the vineyard. So they seized him, cast him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. Having related this parable, our Savior asked his audience, by

way of conclusion, what measures they supposed the Lord of the vineyard would take with those husbandmen? The two other evangelists represent himself as giving the answer: but our evangelist puts it into the mouth of some of the people—*They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.* Another part of the audience, according to St. Luke, when they heard the answer, and perceived the meaning of the parable, replied, *God forbid.* He then made his own application of it, by quoting and applying to himself the passage in the 118th Psalm. *Did ye never read, saith he, in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner : This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* And he adds, *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* Our evangelist inserts this verse also, which is omitted

ted by the other. *Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* All three assert, that the chief priests and pharisees, or as St. Mark and St. Luke have it, the chief priests, scribes and elders, perceived the design of the parable, that it was spoken against *them*, and therefore sought means to apprehend and destroy him.—It appears then, that it was spoke to many of the principal persons of the *Jewish* nation, amidst a great concourse of people, in the city and at the temple of *Jerusalem*, after he had made his public entry, and but a few days before he was apprehended and put to death. It was at the same place and to the like audience, that he concluded his declamation against the scribes and pharisees, related by our evangelist in the 23d chapter, with these words: *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men,*

*and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city : that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee—how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.—It appears from this passage, that our Savior not only prefigured the terrible catastrophe of the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, by parables, but predicted the same events in terms also of the plain-*

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est import, and the most direct and solemn denunciation; and this not to his disciples only, or a private and select audience, but in the most public place, and to as great a number of persons of all ranks, as we can well suppose to be assembled together. And it is to be observed, that this was his last or farewell discourse to the *Jewish* people. For tho' he held conversation with his disciples after this, in which he gave them many important instructions and affectionate encouragements, as we find related by the evangelist John; yet this was the last of his public instructions, as is implied in these words, *Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

He had frequently vindicated himself against the objections of his enemies, the scribes, pharisees, and chief men of the nation, and represented the perverseness of their temper, and malignity of their opposition to him, in terms of gentleness

and respect, by clear arguments, and most instructive, pertinent, and pathetic parables, but without effect. When therefore they had resisted all the methods of milder censure and reproof, and when the time of his ministry was near accomplished, he lays aside his accustomed lenity and reserve—declaims openly against their incorrigible wickedness with a just indignation and severity of language—and concludes with denouncing the approaching ruin of the state, and desolation of the city. But he saw fit previously to predict these tragical events in his usual figurative manner, by three remarkable parables spoke in public, to a multitude of people; one of which we have considered in a preceding discourse; another is this of the text; and the third is of the king who made a marriage for his son, which is recorded immediately after in the next chapter.—As many of his most powerful enemies, and persons of chief rank and distinction were present; and as the evangelist

list informs us, that they understood this parable to be levelled against *them*; so we may naturally suppose, that as in the former parable, he intended the barren fig-tree for a characteristic emblem of the nation in general; so in this latter, by the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let, he meant to characterize the principal or governing part of the nation. The large use which the Psalmist and the prophet Isaiah make of the figure of a vineyard, in describing the state and character of the nation, renders it almost impossible, that our Savior's audience should either be ignorant of or mistake his meaning. And it is probable, that one circumstance, which offended the great men, and exasperated their malice against him, was his speaking so plainly, representing their malignity by figures so lively and intelligible, and consequently exposing them to the lowest of the people. For that the Lord's vineyard was the nation of *Israel*, is expressly defined by the aforesaid prophet,

and was a figure as well understood by the *Jews*, as any common metaphor or proverb. Consequently they would naturally understand by the husbandmen to whom the vineyard was let, the ruling persons who had the direction, charge and government of the nation; and by their withholding from the proprietor the revenue or profits which were due to him, would be understood the abuse of their power and influence, or their application of it to their own unjust, selfish, and ambitious purposes, instead of the ends which divine providence intended. The servants then, which the proprietor sent at different times to receive the revenue, were the prophets, who endeavored to bring the chief men to a sense of their duty, and to promote a reformation; and who had most of them been abused and persecuted, and some of them put to death, by those that were then in power, for their presuming to admonish them. Hence it would follow, that by the *only Son*, whom  
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the proprietor determined at last to send, our Savior would be understood to characterize himself. And then the meaning of the rest of the parable would as plainly appear, that as the rulers in former times had persecuted and destroyed the prophets, so they that were then in power would proceed in like manner to seize and destroy him: and that the just consequence of this wicked procedure would be, their own ruin and destruction, by the will and appointment of divine providence.

Thus our Savior lets his enemies understand, that he perfectly knew their disposition towards him, and intentions against him; and that he foreknew that they would execute their purpose, and, in imitation of the worst rulers in former times in their conduct to the prophets, persecute him, the Son of God, even to death.—It may then seem unaccountable at first view, that this representation, conceived in so remarkable figures, and expressive of such

such a prophetic warning, should have the effect which our evangelist intimates, and instead of damping their animosity, or restraining them in any measure from executing the murder they were meditating, should serve on the contrary to heighten their malice, and hasten their design. But it has been found by too frequent experience, that in certain cases, when mens passions are raised, and malice is conceived, when they are arrived at a certain degree of wickedness, or of inveteracy in any evil design, then nothing is so provoking to them as the truth; and the more it ought in justice to convince, the more it will in fact inflame; and the more they feel themselves overcome by reason, the more they will strive to conquer in their turn by force. Admonitions against the purpose they have conceived and resolved on in their hearts, serve to render them more determined and obstinate in it: and those representations and arguments which would have the best effect on men of a candid

candid and ingenuous temper, will operate very differently on persons of a contrary disposition, when opposed to their favorite passions or views. To describe to a bad man his own wicked character often serves only to excite his resentment and hatred—to intimate to him that you know his evil design, often tends to confirm him in it—to foretell his committing some great act of wickedness, to quicken him in the execution of it—and to warn him of its terminating in his own destruction, to harden his mind and destroy his apprehension of danger; because his heart rises in opposition to the remonstrance, and glories in the contempt of it. Thus he flatters himself with gaining a victory over the person he is pleased to consider as an enemy. If the gentle and affectionate counsel of known friends sometimes produces an effect contrary to the intention of the advisers; how much more such remonstrances, tho' ever so just, as come from a party whom the other is disposed to

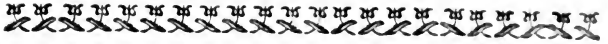
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to look upon as adverse and hostile? especially when the spirit of animosity and hatred is risen on that side even to the greatest height. For that the pharisees and *Jewish* rulers had conceived an inveterate and personal hatred to our Savior, seems very evident from the whole course of the gospel-history. They looked upon their own reputation, power, and influence, as attacked and in danger, by the freedom and authority with which he instructed the people, and exposed the superstition they taught, and the immoralities they practised: and therefore they not only hated him, but resolved to destroy him, as deeming it necessary to their own interest. We need not wonder then, that his representing to them this their resolution, and foretelling that they would accomplish it, did not serve to abate their animosity, or cause them to desert their purpose, but rather the contrary. For, as his foretelling to his own disciple Peter, that he would that evening deny him three times, did



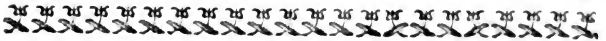
did not operate in preventing that disciple from being guilty of the fact; as the warning he gave Judas of his intended treachery, saying, *The Son of man is going to be betrayed, but see to that man by whom he is betrayed*; and expressly telling him that *he was the man*, did not deter him from the villainy he meditated: and, as the prophet Elitha's forewarning Hazael of the cruelties he would exercise upon the Israelites, did not restrain him from committing such barbarities, (tho' he replied at the time, *Is thy servant a dog that he should do such things?*)—So, these instances, added to common experience of human folly and obstinacy, may serve to explain how it came to pass, that our Savior's prophetic instructions and admonitions, both by parables, and in more plain and direct language, produced so unhappy an effect upon the minds of such men as the *Jewish* priests and rulers, so possessed by prejudices, and actuated by the passions of pride, envy and malice.—It was not then  
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with any hope or design of converting this part of his audience, that he thought fit to deliver this parable, but for the sake of others, and especially his own disciples—to fortify their minds against the influence and authority of persons so considerable and powerful—and that afterward, when the events were come to pass, they might be the more encouraged and confirmed in their faith, by calling to mind the prediction he had delivered in so memorable figures, and comparing it with those events. He spoke it also, we need not doubt, that it might be recorded for the conviction and instruction of all in future ages, who would give attention to it.



## DISCOURSE VII.

The Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized: Or, the Oeconomy of Divine Providence.





## MATTHEW XXI. 33.

*Hear another parable: There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country, &c.*

**H**A VING in the preceding discourse explained the parable, and observed the time, the occasion, the audience, the design and effect of it; we shall consider more at large the principal figures it contains, the temper and character of the *Jewish* rulers which it describes, and the destruction of their state and nation which it foretells.

BOTH in this parable and that of the barren fig-tree, the supreme Lord of the world is represented, in his relation to the *Jewish* people, under the image or character of the proprietor of a vineyard. We shall admire our Savior's use of such images, if we understand how requisite and proper they are to convey the clearest apprehensions of divine providence that human capacity is fitted to receive. Whatever qualities or operations may belong to superior beings, especially the supreme, to which human properties and transactions bear no resemblance, we must of necessity be absolutely ignorant of; nor can the knowledge of them be conveyed to us, by means of any instruction whatsoever. All true ideas must be derived from similitude, and formed by comparison. It was our Savior's constant method, therefore, in teaching his disciples, and forming their apprehensions of divine things, to appeal to their experience and knowledge of human affairs. He reduces things great and  
mysterious

mysterious to the level of their capacity, by comparing them to things mean and familiar, and transferring their ideas of the latter to the former, as far as the similitude was proper to carry them. Thus, when he intimates to them the infinite extent of the universe, and the variety of regions and worlds in it, he makes use of the most familiar and intelligible figure—*In my Father's house, saith he, are many mansions : I go to prepare a place for you.* And in representing to them the future state, and his own glory and dominion, judgment and agency in it, he borrows images from the state and process of things in this world : and hereby not only pursues the only method by which mysterious and unknown subjects can be revealed, and real knowledge communicated to mankind, but prevents that amazement, that disturbance of imagination, that enthusiastic transport or horror, with which the minds of men are apt to be affected, in contemplating objects of so

164 *Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized:*  
much grandeur and obscurity. It plainly appears to be his design, that his disciples should understand what they believe—that their faith should be in proportion to their knowledge—that their religious affections should be governed by their reason; and their expectations of the divine judgment and procedure be regulated by their apprehensions of what is most natural, wise, just and becoming in the conduct of men.—Thus much we may observe in general, from the structure of his parables, and the familiar images he makes use of, in explaining the government of God, and the process of things in a future state, as well as the measures of his providence in this. Hence, in our parable, in order to give his disciples proper ideas of the disposition and procedure of the providence of God towards the *Jewish* nation, he explains the subject with his usual natural simplicity, by the conduct of a man, who was possessed of a vineyard, in regard to his unjust and treacherous tenants, who  
not



not only refused to pay him his just revenue, but abused and destroyed his servants, and at last his only son, whom he sent to receive it. In this case it was a natural conclusion, that the proprietor would use his power in bringing such offenders to justice, dispossessing them of the vineyard, and punishing them with death. From this supposed example of human procedure, they would be naturally and easily led to form such ideas of the divine Being and his providence, as these following, *viz.* “ That God is the absolute proprietor  
“ of the world—that all nations are  
“ planted in it by his providence—that  
“ they to whom he hath committed the  
“ care and government of nations, hold  
“ their territory and dominion by tenure  
“ from him—that if they abuse the  
“ power, and pervert the people entrusted  
“ to them, to the purposes of their own  
“ avarice and tyranny, instead of those  
“ ends which are agreeable to the divine  
“ wisdom, justice and benignity; they

“ violate their obligations to the supreme  
“ Lord of the world, betray the trust he  
“ hath reposed in them, and refuse to  
“ make him the returns which are indis-  
“ pensably due to him—that by persecut-  
“ ing and destroying the prophets or re-  
“ formers, whom he raiseth up amongst  
“ them from time to time, in order to re-  
“ claim to a sense of their duty, they  
“ highly aggravate, as well as persist in,  
“ their perfidy and injustice—consequent-  
“ ly, that the *Jewish* rulers, by proceed-  
“ ing still further, and conspiring to put  
“ to death the greatest prophet and re-  
“ former that ever was sent to them, even  
“ the only Son of God, forfeited all cle-  
“ mency, and exhausted the divine pa-  
“ tience and long-sufferance, and God  
“ would assuredly bring upon them a  
“ speedy and horrible destruction. For  
“ in this case, the divine conduct would  
“ be similar to that of a man acting ac-  
“ cording to his own power and proper-  
“ ty, and the common sense and justice  
“ of

“ of mankind.” It does by no means follow from our Lord’s using such comparisons, that we are able to infer with certainty, in any instance, what the divine conduct will be, from our ideas of wisdom or justice; or that we have any adequate standard by which to estimate it. This would be going beyond his meaning, and the reason and design of the similitude: but that the best and only method we have of judging of the divine procedure, is by comparing it to the most natural and rational conduct of men. There are undoubtedly infinite parts and numberless occasions in the divine government, to which human affairs have no degree of similitude: and in all cases the resemblance must be very partial and imperfect; and therefore our apprehension and judgment must be in proportion defective. If in human affairs we are often at a loss to determine what is wisest and fittest to be done, especially in the larger spheres and more complicated cases of civil prudence

and government, how much more in the affairs of divine administration, which have immense and endless connections? when the very standard by which we must measure is infinitely short of the subject, and our ability of applying it very imperfect? Yet we have no other way of acquiring any knowledge of divine actions, but by referring them to it, and imagining something similar in human councils and conduct.—This method of thinking and judging will be the best preservative from all hurtful errors and superstitious delusions in religion, and prevent us from ever attributing to the Deity such qualities and actions, as would be thought unnatural in men, or unworthy of the best human character to imitate. For instance; Christians would never have imagined the Deity to elect some persons to everlasting life, and reprobate others to eternal destruction, without any respect to their works or moral character—or to preserve condemned sinners in another world, in order

to

to inflict upon them never-ending torments; if they had but considered how unnatural, tyrannical, and detestable any resemblance of such conduct would appear amongst men, in a prince towards his subjects, or a father towards his children. Whatever method of acting would be universally disapproved or condemned, when practised by men, in things subject to their inspection and management, it must be direct impiety to impute the like to the supreme Being. If we are desirous of forming a reasonable opinion or probable expectation, what will be the measures of divine government in any supposed instance, either in this world or another, we must first conceive an idea of something similar in human affairs, and then consider what kind of procedure, reason, justice, humanity, common-sense, or natural affection, dictate to mankind. This is the only clue by which we can guide ourselves, when we are searching into the ways of infinite wisdom. This is the method

170 *Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized:*  
thod in which our Savior instructed his disciples, and consequently which he directs us to pursue. Thus in that inquiry which is of the greatest moment to us, how the Deity will dispose of mankind in a future state; or what will be the rule, method and process of divine judgment:— in order to a satisfactory and clear investigation of so mysterious a subject, he presents to us various similitudes taken from the common affairs of men. Good men are compared to useful grain; bad men to noxious weeds. How then does the husbandman proceed in the time of harvest, in disposing of one and the other?—Or they resemble servants, who in the time of their master's absence had their several offices appointed to them: but some of them proved unfaithful, negligent and abusive. What will the lord of these servants do when he comes to reckon with them?— In like manner our Savior gives his disciples prophetic instruction concerning the conduct of divine providence towards the

*Jewish*

*Or, the Oeconomy of Divine Providence.* 171  
Jewish nation in this world. That nation resembled a fruit-tree which had been barren for some years: and the rulers of it were like husbandmen who occupied a vineyard, but instead of rendering to the owner the revenue due from it, abused and murdered those whom he sent to receive it. What measures then was it natural and reasonable to suppose the proprietor would pursue?—In this manner are we taught to form our notions of the divine administration both in this world and another. And whatever philosophers or divines may pretend, or whatever different methods of speculation they may pursue, this is the only way by which we can attain to any real knowledge.

ANOTHER principal figure is that by which our Savior represents himself in the image or character of *the Son* of the proprietor of the vineyard.—Our conceptions of the relation which mankind and other intelligent beings bear to the supreme

172 *Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized:*  
preme Being, are all naturally and necessarily formed according to our ideas of human relations. Thus we conceive and speak of him as our owner, master, governor and father—terms evidently borrowed from human properties and relations. Hence the prophets, in addressing the nation of *Israel*, represent their obligations to the supreme Being, and the care of his providence over them, by every human character which had any propriety or likeness in it. He was their shepherd, guide, teacher, governor, redeemer, purchaser, husband, father; and they were fed, guided, taught, governed, redeemed, bought, espoused, begotten by him. The prophet Hosea gives to that nation the title of the Son of God—*When Israel was a child then I loved him, I called my son out of Egypt.* Chap. xi. 2. And the prophet Jeremiah—*Is not Ephraim my dear son?* chap. xxxi. 20. With much more propriety does our Savior characterize himself by this title, corresponding to the figure by which



*Or, the Oeconomy of Divine Providence.* 173  
which he had represented the Almighty. For in like sense as the prophets of old were the *servants* of the owner of the vineyard, he himself was the *son*. This teaches us what distinct and peculiar ideas we should annex to this peculiar title, *viz.* such as imply eminence and superiority, in comparison of the preceding prophets, or a greater importance and favor in the eye of the supreme Being. It may indeed be properly given, as it actually is in scripture, to any rational creature, in proportion to his rank in the creation, his moral excellence, and filial obedience to God. Hence, not only *Angels*, but *good Men* also, are denominated *the Sons of God*. But our *Savior* assumes this title, and hath it ascribed to him by his *Apostles*, by way of eminence above all other good men, or prophets, that ever appeared in the world. They are denominated, upon a comparison, *Servants* only, and he alone is the *Son*, the one *only-begotten Son of God*: because no other *Prophet* ever did appear in the  
world

174 *Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized:*  
world with a character, importance and  
commission equal to his. Thus the author  
to the Hebrews clearly states the compa-  
rison between *Moses* and *Christ*. The for-  
mer was but as *a servant in another man's*  
*house*, the latter as *a son in his own house*,  
chap. iii. The same author argues his su-  
periority to the angels also, who are stiled  
in scripture *the Sons of God*, from his hav-  
ing this title ascribed to him in a peculiar  
manner. *For to which of the angels said he*  
*at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I*  
*begotten thee?*—from his dominion over  
the world to come, and from the prophe-  
tic address to him, *Thy throne, O God, is*  
*for ever and ever.*—The stile of commission  
to the prophet Ezekiel we find always was,  
*Son of man, prophecy or say to the house of*  
*Israel*—and such was our Lord's humility,  
that he uses the same term, when speaking  
directly of himself—*The Son of Man is be-*  
*trayed*—*The Son of Man goeth as it is writ-*  
*ten of him*—*Ye shall desire to see one of the*  
*days of the Son of Man.* And when he was  
asking

*Or, the Oeconomy of Divine Providence. 175*  
asking his disciples what notion men had of him—*Whom do men say, that I the Son of Man am?*—they answered, *Some say that thou art John the Baptist—some, Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* It follows, *But whom say ye that I am?* Peter answered, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* Then he charged them that they should tell no man that he was *Jesus the Christ.* For tho' he permitted his apostles amongst themselves to attribute that title to him, yet he would not suffer them at that time to declare it to others; nor does it appear that he ever assumed it himself directly, openly and before his enemies, till the time of his trial, when he was solemnly adjured by the high priest to declare, whether he was the Christ the Son of God, or not: and then he avowed it before the court; upon which they immediately proceeded to his condemnation, saying, *What need we any further witnesses? he himself hath spoken blasphemy.* For they had a law which made it blasphemy, and a capital crime,

crime, to assume the character falsely: and therefore the main point which they endeavored to prove, was, that he had expressly assumed it. But it seems from the history, that they could find no witnesses sufficient to prove it, and consequently could not have convicted him, if he had not made the confession. The reserve he kept till that time, tho' often urged to declare himself, might be shewn from several passages. Yet he made his pretensions to the character sufficiently known, by appealing to his miraculous works to determine that question—by continually styling God *his Father*—and by describing himself in parables, particularly this under our present consideration, the meaning of which was understood by his enemies, as the Evangelists observe. The titles of the *Christ*, i. e. *the Anointed of God*, and *the Son of God*, were considered by the *Jews* as equivalent: and the ideas which they annexed to these terms, were only those of dignity and importance of character and office.

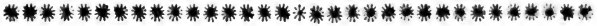
office. And it is no less absurd to apply the title of *the Son of God* to a metaphysical sense, and to draw any inference from it concerning his spiritual essence, or his derivation from the supreme Being, than it would be to infer any thing concerning the essence of God, from his being compared in this parable to a certain householder who planted a vineyard. It is undoubted, that the *Jews* in our Savior's time were in high expectations of a great person who was to appear amongst them, superior to all their former prophets and princes, and who was therefore distinguished from them by the foregoing titles. When our Lord therefore shewed himself publicly, and wrought miracles, two questions naturally arose amongst them, *viz.* one, Whether he pretended to be that person—and the other, Whether he was so in reality. Hence we find them demanding of him, John x. 24. *How long wilt thou hold us in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*—When the court of priests and

178 *Proprietor of the Vineyard characterized :*  
rulers, therefore, had got legal evidence of his pretensions, by his own answer to the high-priest, when he adjured him to confess, they reduced themselves to a kind of necessity, either of acknowledging him for the real person, or putting the law in execution against him as an impostor. But before this, they held many consultations about him ; and after seeming to examine into the truth of his character, came to a resolution to reject him. As they had from the first conceived a strong prejudice against him, on account of his parentage, birth, and education, which was increased by the offensiveness of his doctrine, and especially his arraigning their superstition and immorality ; and as they had all along opposed his progress, and studied to render him odious or contemptible in the eyes of the nation ; so it was only proceeding further in consistency with their former conduct, to take away his life. If they had then acknowledged him for the Messiah, or even hesitated in their judgment concerning

cerning him, they would have utterly ruined their own character and influence among the common people. If they had owned him for the Messiah, they must, according to their own notions, have resigned their own power and authority to him, put the government into his hands, and instead of trying and judging him, have submitted to be tried and judged by him, as heir to the throne, and possessor of the kingdom by right of inheritance. By putting him to death then, they meant to destroy his pretensions, to put an end to their own fears and jealousies, and to preserve their dignity and authority. He not only understood perfectly this temper and situation which they were in, and the dilemma to which they had brought themselves, but describes it to them in this parable: *When the husbandmen of the vineyard, saith he, saw the son, they said among themselves, Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.*

THIS would lead us to another figure in the parable, that of the husbandmen of the vineyard, by which the *Jewish* rulers are characterized. But this will be the subject of the following discourse.





## DISCOURSE VIII.

The Husbandmen of the Vineyard :  
Or, the *Jewish* Rulers characterized.





## MATTHEW XXI. 33.

*Hear another parable. There was a certain householder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country, &c.*

**T**HE end of government is the punishment of evil doers, and the protection of them that do well. Hence a presumption arises, that they, who are condemned by the established courts of judicature, in any country, are criminals, deserving of the punishment to which they are adjudged. Yet it is certain, that the power lodged in the hands of a few, for

184 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
the protection of many, and the general welfare of the community, is not only liable to be, but often has been, perverted to opposite ends; and that the most atrocious acts of oppression and cruelty have been committed, under pretence of administering justice, and supporting government. It hath been sometimes known, that men of the most virtuous characters, and best subjects of the state, have been looked upon with the most evil eye, by the ruling powers, and marked out for destruction. It is observed by a *Roman* historian, that in certain times of that government, it was dangerous to have an eminent character for probity and virtue: and it is an observation of Solomon, *I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there, and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.* Wherever wickedness hath thus gained possession of high places, and corruption prevailed through the several orders of the state, there men of public spirit, patriots, reformers, preachers of righteousness,

ness, advocates for truth, enemies to superstition and tyranny, and friends to mankind, have been deemed most obnoxious to the state, and incurred the indignation of those in power, whose interest and authority have depended, not upon the knowledge and virtue, but the ignorance and corruption of the people, and their servile submission to arbitrary government. The constant method, in which governors have proceeded, in such cases, against those who attempted a reformation, has been,—first to attack their characters by all the arts of calumny and defamation, and to excite a public odium against them—then to take away their lives by some form or pretence of law or justice. By pursuing this method artfully and gradually, there is scarce any government of so little weight and influence, as not to bring over the majority of the people to approve even its worst treatment of the best men.

FROM these general reflections we shall pass on to consider the state of things in the *Jewish* nation; as we may find them amply verified in the conduct of the *Jewish* rulers, both to our Savior and the preceding prophets. He himself describes *this* their character and conduct, by the expressive figure in the parable, of the *husbandmen of the vineyard*, who persecuted and murdered the *servants*, and last of all the *son* of the proprietor.

WHILST the nation preserved the form of government which Moses had established, and even during the two or three first reigns of their kings, men of virtue and public spirit, zealous for the *Jewish* law and religion, and avowed enemies to idolatry, were in general respected and promoted. Most of their judges, and their prophets Samuel and Nathan, appear to have owed their advancement chiefly to their eminent character of wisdom and virtue: not to mention their kings also,

David

David and Solomon, who were themselves reformers of the nation, establishers of justice, promoters of true religion, and preachers of righteousness. But no sooner was the nation divided into two kingdoms, than the temper, policy, and measures of the court of Israel became totally changed, and along with it the general disposition and manners of the people. They began to imitate both the religion and polity of the neighboring nations: the most corrupt innovations were not only connived at, but encouraged, and both priests and prophets were created, or hired, on purpose to abett and support them. In consequence of this fatal change, men of virtue and piety were diminished in number, and still more in weight and influence. Even the most eminent qualifications and astonishing miracles of the prophet Elijah were not sufficient to protect him from the rage of a superstitious and tyrannical court. The queen Jezabel openly vowed his destruction: and Ahab the king, tho'

not

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not perhaps equally enraged and violent, yet considered him as no better than a public enemy. He was forced to fly into the wilderness for safety; where we find him pathetically lamenting the deplorable state of the nation, and the little success of his own endeavors to reform it, and wishing for death as a deliverance from his misery. Corruption had made such large inroads, that there remained at that time but *seven thousand souls* in that kingdom, who had not *bowed the knee to Baal*. And from that time all the denunciations uttered by the prophets of the approaching ruin and captivity, seem to have had but little effect. Both the court and people listened to the tales of dissembling flatterers, who pretended to be prophets, and who uttered smooth things, and foretold national safety and prosperity. The kingdom of *Judah* preserved its government and religion for some time longer: but afterward, the like corruptions were introduced into that state: then the prophets and reformers  
that



that arose in it were exposed to the like injurious treatment, and their endeavors to save the state from ruin were equally ineffectual, notwithstanding the recent example of the destruction of the other kingdom. In both, the *false* prophets lived in high credit and affluence, while the *true*, whose speeches and transactions are recorded, were hated by the people, and persecuted by the government. Jeremiah suffered many indignities and barbarities upon account of the ungrateful truths which he had the courage to proclaim. And the last prophet, who fell a sacrifice to the tyranny of the ruling powers, is particularly mentioned by our Savior, *Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew*, saith he, speaking to the rulers of his own time,—*i. e.* men of your quality and character, *slew between the temple and the altar*, whither he had probably fled for refuge, hoping in vain, that the sacredness of the place would protect him from their fury and barbarity.

AFTER

AFTER their return from captivity, the temper of the people was happily changed—the spirit of idolatry and corruption was subdued—and by the endeavors of Ezra, Nehemiah, and other excellent reformers, the *Jewish* law and religion regained in some measure their ancient and deserved weight and influence. Upon this foundation, the safety and welfare of the state was established, and preserved for a considerable time. Before the captivity, the law had been neglected and forgot; as we learn from the instance of Hilcaiah, who found a copy of it, as it were accidentally, in the temple, and produced it before the court and the people, who heard it read with great attention and surprize, having all of them lost in a great measure the remembrance of it. But after the captivity, synagogues were erected, copies of the law were preserved in them, and read every Sabbath-day; by which means not only the knowledge of it was preserved, but an habitual veneration of it established

established amongst the people. Yet corruption and superstition again invaded them, and made a vast progress, tho' of a different form and species: they were not imported from other nations, but of a home-growth: yet having once gained root and vigor, they were speedily propagated, and in time established so effectually, that all the endeavors of our Savior and his apostles were not sufficient to eradicate them. The attention and zeal of the people were diverted from the more important and useful branches of the law, and entirely fixed upon those particular injunctions of it, which were merely circumstantial and ceremonial, and consequently of little moment: and a new system of precepts and injunctions were erected upon the foundation of the law and the prophets, (as was pretended) by which they were explained, enlarged, and applied. Those were stiled *the traditions of the elders*, and were inculcated and observed as of equal authority and obligation with

192 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
with any part of the law of Moses. Hence, observing with a particular strictness the Sabbath—paying tithes—making oblations—fulfilling vows—repeating prayers and parts of the law—going up to worship at *Jerusalem*—keeping fasts and festivals—washing hands and cups—abstaining from certain meats—and the like, were considered as the principal parts of the religion of a *Jew*. And in order to the more careful study and support of such observances, there arose a particular sect, which became very numerous and powerful, called the *Pharisees*; who by these observances gained the highest reputation for sanctity throughout the nation; of which sect were most of the rulers and chief priests. By these means they became indeed less infected with the idolatries and vices of the neighboring nations than ever their ancestors had been; and upon this pretence were ready to boast of themselves as more pious and religious, saying, *If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would*

*not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*: but they had vices of their own, as bad, or worse than those of other nations, or of their own forefathers—Pride, hypocrisy, superstition, selfishness, inhumanity, a presumption upon the special favor of God to themselves, and a hatred of the rest of mankind, were the characteristic qualities of that generation: and these vices were the more incurable, as they had contrived to make them seem consistent with a profound reverence of, and zealous attachment to the law of Moses. This law might have been urged with its whole strength against the idolatries and corruptions of former times; but they had found means to evade the force of it, and to connect an apparent zeal for it, with the most malignant spirit, that ever prevailed, to such a degree, in any nation. The leading pharisees, chief priests, and rulers, were not only possessed of this spirit themselves, but thought it the best policy, as well as piety, to diffuse, cherish,

194 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
and inflame it throughout the nation. Persons of this character, and in this state of things, would naturally look with an eye of jealousy and dislike upon any person who should presume to censure the superstition of the people, or the haughty and bitter spirit of their rulers, and to shew the expediency and necessity of a reformation. When *John the Baptist* therefore appeared, and proclaimed the necessity of repentance to men of all ranks, in order to preserve the nation from destruction, they spoke of him in terms of contempt, and stiled him a madman and enthusiast: tho' there does not appear, from what is recorded of his language and instruction, the least tincture of enthusiasm or extravagance. When our Savior succeeded him, and urged the people in like manner to a reformation, and moreover supported his doctrine and authority by miracles, the governing party were much more alarmed, and in proportion to the progress he made, thought it the more necessary to bestir themselves

themselves in opposition to him. For if *John the Baptist* gained an influence amongst the people by the austerity of his morals and integrity of his character, how much more likely was our Savior, who besides a greater dignity, and more engaging manner of instruction, shewed the power also of frequent and astonishing miracles? They thought it high time then to take all such measures, as might tend to destroy the peoples attention to his doctrine, and reverence for his person, and render him the object of public contempt and hatred. For they found that his discourses, actions and influence, were directly levelled to overthrow that scheme of superstition, and to eradicate out of the minds of the people that spirit of bigotry and bitterness, which were the basis of their own reputation and authority; and which therefore, from motives of policy, as well as inclination, they endeavored to support. According to the method therefore before-mentioned, they began with attacking his

196 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
character. To this end they laid several  
snares for him—tempting him at one time  
to usurp the office of the civil magistrate,  
as in the case of the woman taken in  
adultery—at another, to encourage sedi-  
tion, by forbidding the people to pay tri-  
bute to Cæsar. They took all possible ad-  
vantage also, from his own discourses and  
conduct, to defame him. From his draw-  
ing a concourse of people around him to  
hear him; his endeavoring to humanize  
the temper of the *Jews*, repress their na-  
tional vanity and bigotry, and inspire  
them with benevolence, not only one to  
another, but to mankind in general; his  
describing the corrupt state, and predicting  
the ruin, of the nation; his paying tribute  
himself, and requiring his followers to do  
the same, to the *Roman* government: they  
represented him as an enemy to his coun-  
try; and at the same time would have per-  
suaded *Pilate* the *Roman* governor, that he  
was an enemy to *Cæsar*. From his disre-  
garding the traditions of the elders, con-  
demning



demning the licentious practice of repudiation, performing miracles on the Sabbath-day, and commanding or permitting his followers to do many works of usefulness or expedience on that day, and excusing them from fasting, whilst the disciples of the pharisees fasted; they accused him of impiety, and an intention to overturn all religion. From his conversing with and endeavoring to reform publicans and sinners, and accepting invitations from persons of all ranks, they stiled him a glutton and wine-bibber, a friend and companion of the most profligate persons. They made use of every possible circumstance, in order to persuade themselves and others, that he was a wicked man, void of all principles of piety and goodness. So fully were they determined to fix this character upon him, that when they examined into the miracle of his giving sight to the man born blind, and could no longer find a pretence to deny the reality of it, they said to the man, *Give thanks unto God: for we*

198 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
*know that this man (Jesus) is a sinner: and*  
because he persisted in believing him to be  
a good man, and defending his character,  
they excommunicated the poor man.  
When they found then, that they had at  
length succeeded with a great part of the  
common people, in their artful endeavors  
to destroy his reputation and blacken his  
character, and had wrought them up to a  
sufficient degree of animosity and party-  
hatred against him; they thought it a  
proper time to proceed further, *viz.* to  
seize him by force of arms, and bring  
him to a trial: in the process of which,  
the main point they endeavored to prove,  
was, that he had been guilty of blasphemy:  
and when they had convicted him,  
they asserted, from his own mouth,  
that he had said so. — If we understand  
the nature of things, and the disposition and  
character of his judges, we shall not wonder  
at their conduct, in this dilemma, to  
which they had brought themselves, how  
astonishing

astonishing soever it might otherwise appear. For they had all along opposed him with so much scorn and aversion, and represented him under such characters, of a sower of sedition—a fraudulent impostor—a confederate with Beelzebub—a subverter of religion—a profaner of the Sabbath, and the like; that when they had obtained proof from his own mouth of his assuming the title of *The Son of God*, they must have acted with a most evident inconsistency, and exposed themselves to the reproach of their own party, if they had not proceeded to his condemnation. It was necessary to their credit and interest, to make thorow work of it, and finish as they had begun. And therefore they waited in a body upon the *Roman* governor, without whose permission they could inflict no capital punishment; and represented to him, that they had a law in force, by which *Jesus* was adjudged to death, for assuming the title of the Son of God: and hoped that he would consent to

200 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
the law's being put in execution. But *Pilate* had so much sense of justice, and was so far convinced of our Savior's innocence and virtue, that he would not consent, till he was intimidated, by their threatening to accuse him before the emperor, as a protector of criminal and seditious persons, and an infringer of the laws of their state. Then, after trying a fruitless expedient to release *Jesus* instead of *Barrabas*, by the suffrage of the populace, he left him to their power: but at the same time, to exculpate himself, as far as possible, from the guilt of the action, called for water, and washing his hands in the presence of them all, declared that he meant by that sign, to disown it as his act, and to make them alone answerable for it. They replied, *His blood be upon us and upon our children.* They were too determined at that time to shew the least scruple, and were rather disposed to triumph and exult in their success. For they considered his coming to that miserable  
and

and tragical end, as in itself a confutation of his pretensions, and means of securing their own reputation and authority.—This spirit and conduct of theirs our Savior himself characterizes in this parable, by the *Husbandmen of the vineyard*, who *took the servants that were sent to them, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another: and last of all, when they saw the son, they said amongst themselves, This is the heir—come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.* The correspondence of this figurative description to the history, as well as the prediction of his own death, from the tyranny of these wicked men, may be here left to the observation of every attentive reader.

WE should now proceed to another part of the parable, which describes and foretells the destruction of the *Jewish* state and nation, in these terms. *When therefore the Lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he*

*be*

202 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
*he do unto those husbandmen?—They say unto*  
*him, He will miserably destroy those wicked*  
*men, and will let out his vineyard unto other*  
*husbandmen. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye*  
*never read in the scriptures, The stone which*  
*the builders rejected, the same is become the*  
*head of the corner? And whosoever shall fall*  
*on this stone shall be broken; but on whomso-*  
*ever it shall fall, it will grind him to pow-*  
*der.*—These terms are strongly expressive  
of the terrible catastrophe of the Jewish  
state, which was the consequence of that  
malignant spirit in the majority of the na-  
tion, especially in the rulers, which they  
discovered principally in the cruel murder  
of our Savior, and persecution of his fol-  
lowers.—But I shall defer the considera-  
tion of it to my discourse upon the next  
parable, as that contains a more explicit  
prediction of the same event.

IN the mean time, we may justly ob-  
serve, (by way of reflection upon the pre-  
ceding parable, and application of it to  
modern

modern times) that the state and disposition of the *Jewish* rulers and people may be considered as similar to that of many Christian nations. As in our Savior's time, the *Jewish* religion was turned into superstition, and corrupted by human traditions—as the power and authority of their priests and rulers was entwisted with, and supported by that corruption—as the spirit of hypocrisy, bigotry and malice, of arrogating the favor of God to themselves, without any charity for the rest of mankind, and of persecuting and destroying all those who attempted a reformation, prevailed amongst the *Jews*;—so in like manner, and to an equal or greater degree, has the Christian religion been perverted, or indeed exploded, to make way for human traditions; and even idolatry itself been introduced and established in the room of it.—The spirit of the *Jews*, and of their priests and rulers, hath revived, and reigned, with vast accessions of power and empire, in the minds of Christian

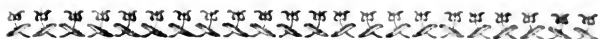
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204 *The Husbandmen of the Vineyard: Or,*  
tian people and potentates, secular and ecclesiastic.—And they who have most vigorously opposed it, endeavored to reform the age they lived in, and promote true Christianity, have been persecuted with unrelenting animosity, and often destroyed without mercy. Infomuch, that were our Savior and his Apostles to appear again in some countries, which are called Christian, not all the miracles they wrought, added to their perfect integrity and goodness, would preserve them from the like hatred of the people, and persecution of the ruling powers. This spirit, which has prevailed so much in the Christian as well as *Jewish* world, reconciles and unites, in appearance, things most opposite in their own nature, *viz.* piety with inhumanity—a zeal for God with a hatred of men—the welfare of the church with the slavery of the people and ruin of the state—the most solemn devotion with the worst immorality—holiness of character with wickedness of heart.—It is this spirit, with  
its



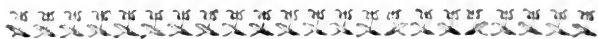
its operations and effects, that the apostle styles, the *Mystery of Iniquity*—a dark, concealed, mysterious spirit of guile, enmity, avarice, and ambition, which is ready to assume every popular form of devotion and religion, and to serve its own passions and views, under the most solemn disguise and plausible pretensions. This began to work amongst Christians, even in the days of the apostles——rose to the most enormous power and influence in some late ages ——and has still the ascendancy in many powerful states. But we hope and trust in the divine providence, and the predictions of the New Testament, that it will at length come to an end; and that the spirit of true religion will universally prevail, and become the strongest support of humanity, and of all social virtue and happiness: which God grant of his infinite mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.





## DISCOURSE IX.

The King punishing his barbarous  
Subjects: Or, the Destruction  
of *Jerusalem*.





## MATTHEW XXII. I.

*And Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated*

210 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
*them spitefully, and slew them. But when*  
*the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and*  
*he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those*  
*murderers, and burnt up their city.*

**T**HIS parable, in the part which I have selected for the subject of the present discourse, bears a near resemblance to the foregoing, both in its description of the character and manners of the *Jews*, and its prediction of their destruction. In the former, the conduct of divine providence towards the *Jewish* nation is represented by that of the Lord of a vineyard, who let it out to husbandmen, and sent his servants, and last of all his son, to demand the revenue:—The character and manners of the *Jews* are represented by the injurious and inhuman behavior of those husbandmen to the son as well as the servants:—and their ruin is expressed in the answer which some of the audience made to the question, what the Lord of the vineyard would do to those husbandmen; *They say*  
*unto*

unto him, he will miserably destroy these wicked men: and by the following words of our Savior, *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner— And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* In this parable, the conduct of divine providence to the Jewish nation is represented by that of a King, who made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding. The character and manners of the Jews are described by the behavior of the persons invited, who insolently despised the honor of the invitation and the entertainment offered, and went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandize: nay, many of them added cruelty to their folly and insolence, by abusing and murdering the servants sent to them. And the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold in these terms; *When the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his*

P 2 armies,

212 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects, armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.*—Thus much is sufficient to shew the likeness and affinity between the two parables.

THERE is at the same time a remarkable difference to be observed. For in the *former*, he introduces *himself* as a principal figure, viz. *the Son of the Lord of the vineyard*: in *this*, he makes no mention of himself. For though it is said of the *King*, that he made a marriage for his *Son*; this, I apprehend, will appear to a judicious observer, to be a mere circumstance, thrown in for the sake of propriety and embellishment; as it serves to enhance, by so signal an occasion, the splendor and honor of the entertainment; and consequently to aggravate the absurdity and folly of those his subjects, who rejected the invitation; and the malice and guilt of those, who abused and murdered the servants who brought it. In the *other*,

ners



ners of the *Jewish* rulers, from the times of the preceding prophets to his own death: but in this he seems to confine his view to their behavior after the publication of the gospel or the commencement of Christianity. In the *former*, he intimates their destruction, as a just consequence of the indignity and barbarity, with which they had treated, first, the preceding prophets, and finally, himself. In this, he describes the ruin of the city of *Jerusalem*, as a judicial consequence of the contempt with which the inhabitants had rejected the gospel, and the inhumanity which they had shewn to the *messengers* of it, sent to persuade them to their own salvation.

THE glad tidings of the gospel, or the tenders of divine favor, and of the rewards of the world to come, he compares to the *messages* sent by a *King* to his *Subjects*, inviting them to partake of the honor and splendor of a *royal and nuptial entertainment*.

214 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
*ment.* Such are the familiar and pleasing  
figures, which our Savior thought fit to  
make use of, to convey to his audience  
some proper ideas of the divine benignity  
and liberality, and of the honor and hap-  
piness of the kingdom of Heaven. But  
the *Jews*, instead of accepting, with joy  
and gratitude, the noble offers of divine  
favor, and complying with the gracious  
*invitations* sent to them, despised them.  
*One went to his farm, and another to his mer-*  
*chandize :* and *the rest*, who were still more  
ungrateful and barbarous, seized the *mes-*  
*sengers*, the apostles of our Savior and pro-  
pagators of the gospel, exercised their ma-  
lice upon them, and put many of them to  
death. We may conjecture, that by them  
who went to their farms and merchandize,  
our Savior meant to describe those *Jews*  
chiefly, who inhabited the more distant  
parts of *Judea* and *Galilee*; and by the  
*rest*, who took the servants, and entreated  
them spitefully, and slew them, the inhabi-  
tants of *Jerusalem*. For it was there the  
priests

priests and rulers had the greatest influence; and there the people were most exasperated against him and his followers. He himself expressly ascribes this character to that city—saying, *It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* And again—*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee.*—The same spirit of superstition, bigotry and inhumanity, which prompted the chief priests, rulers, and common people of that city, to conspire against the life of our Savior, and expose him to the horrible death of crucifixion, not only continued among them after his death, but increased to the very last. And it is worthy of our observation, that he does not impute the dreadful fate, which that city underwent, to the guilt derived upon the inhabitants from the mere act of putting him to death; tho' that act had every circumstance which could aggravate the crime: but (as we may evidently see, by comparing the two parables together) to

216 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
that wicked spirit by which they were actuated in their whole conduct, in rejecting the gospel, and persecuting to death his apostles and followers, as well as himself. To this effect are his own words, spoke at the temple in *Jerusalem*, and recorded in the following chapter. *Wherefore behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.*—The meaning is, not that they were to be punished for the wicked acts of their ancestors; but that they would exceed the examples of former times, both in their wickedness, and in their consequent calamity and ruin, in so accumulated a measure, as if they had been guilty of the  
murder

murder of all the prophets and righteous men, who suffered in former times, and whose names are mentioned in Scripture. —It is evident, that in this passage he imputes the ensuing destruction, not to their guilt in putting himself to death, but to their incorrigible wickedness, in proceeding to persecute and destroy the *prophets, wise men, and scribes*, whom he should send to them, meaning his apostles, and other first propagators of Christianity. Thus they *filled up the measure of their fathers*, as he expresses it. *Ye bear witness to yourselves, that ye are the sons of them which killed the prophets; and ye are filling up* (so it should be translated) *the measure of your fathers: i. e.* they were not only acting in like manner as their ancestors had done, but would exceed them, and fill up the measure of wickedness to the full, by not only putting him to death, but also persecuting and destroying his servants, sent by him to convert and reform the *Jewish* people. This disposition and conduct of theirs,

218 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
theirs, and the general temper of the nation in respect to the gospel and its propagators, are thus expressed in our parable: *They, i. e. the Jews in general, made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandize, and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.* The ensuing punishment and destruction of the Jews is thus expressed—*When the King heard thereof, he was wroth, and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.* The same event is expressed in the former parable in these terms:—*He will miserably destroy those wicked men—And, whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*

How fully these memorable predictions of our Savior were accomplished, cannot indeed be learned from the books of the New Testament, as they were all wrote before those events, and none of the  
Apostles,

Apostles, except *John*, lived to that time. But we have a history of those calamities wrote by a cotemporary author—a *Jew*—a pharisee—of a noble family, who was elected governor of *Galilee*, commanded a *Jewish* army against the *Romans*, was taken prisoner, and was present with the *Roman* general at the siege of *Jerusalem*. His testimony therefore to the character of his countrymen, and the calamities they underwent, is unexceptionable. For as he was not a Christian, it could be no part of his design to shew the truth of our Lord's predictions, or support Christianity: and as he was affectionate to his nation, and zealous for its honor, he could not be disposed to aggravate, but rather to extenuate its wickedness and infamy.

Now, as in explaining and commenting upon our Savior's parables, we have been led by the tenor of them to expatiate upon the character of the *Jewish* nation, and the spirit and conduct of its rulers;  
it

220 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
it will not be thought improper, if we here make use of the forementioned historian's testimony, as evincing the truth and propriety, both of his descriptions of their temper and character, and his predictions of their calamity and destruction. An impartial and sensible reader, who will take the pains to make the comparison, may be surprized to find so perfect a consistence and correspondence between the author's historic and our Savior's prophetic description of their conduct, character and calamities; excepting that the historian draws the picture in blacker colors, and without those expressive strokes and animated figures, which are peculiar to our Savior's stile.

HE asserts of his countrymen in general,  
“ That they were at that time abandoned  
“ to all manner of wickedness—That it  
“ was impossible to invent any villany  
“ that was not commonly practised—  
“ That they seemed to strive one with an-  
“ other,



“ other, which could exceed in impiety  
“ and injustice—That the powerful op-  
“ pressed the weak, and the meaner sort  
“ massacred the rich, and plundered their  
“ possessions.”—He describes the two  
factions, who shared the dominion of the  
city at the time of the siege, as the most  
execrable villains that ever were heard of;  
and declares,—“ That it surpassed his  
“ ability, to relate all the proofs of their  
“ wickedness—That in his opinion no  
“ other city ever suffered so much misery,  
“ nor any people ever existed so barbarous  
“ and inhuman—That he could not for-  
“ bear expressing, tho’ with pain and re-  
“ luctance, his belief, that if the *Romans*  
“ had not come, yet the city would have  
“ been destroyed some way or other, by  
“ an earthquake, or deluge, or, like *Sod-*  
“ *om* and *Gomorrab*, by lightning; for  
“ the inhabitants were far more wicked.”  
How much they presumed, notwithstanding  
their wickedness, upon the special  
protection of God, and his interposition  
for

222 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
for their deliverance, in the midst of their calamities, and even when their situation was the most desperate, we may learn from the same author. For he tells us, “ That when he himself addressed the  
“ commander of one of the factions, persuading him with entreaties and tears to  
“ surrender the city, he replied in the  
“ most insolent and reproachful terms,  
“ and concluded with saying, That there  
“ was no reason to fear the ruin of the  
“ temple and city, because they belonged  
“ to God.”—And after relating the destruction of a great number of the citizens, men, women, and children, in one of the porches of the temple, which was set on fire, he observes, “ That a certain  
“ *false prophet* was the cause of their death,  
“ who the same day preached in the city,  
“ and exhorted them to go into the temple,  
“ and see *signs* for their deliverance. For  
“ *many false prophets* were then suborned  
“ by the tyrants, to persuade the people  
“ to rely on assistance from Heaven.” In  
another

another place he observes of the nation in general, “ That what chiefly encouraged  
“ them in the war, was an ambiguous  
“ prophecy found in the Holy Scriptures,  
“ *viz.* That some person of their country,  
“ and at that time, should rise to be mo-  
“ narch of the whole world.”—These passages, beside others, serve to shew the arrogant presumption of that wicked people upon the special favor of God to them; and to attest the truth of our Savior’s prophetic words to his disciples, *Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And again, There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect, i. e. the Christians. Behold I have told you before.*—In short, the determined obstinacy, with which they refused to submit to the *Roman* power, even when all hope of safety was gone—the inextinguishable hatred and rage  
\* which

224 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects;*  
which possessed their minds, against each other, as well as the *Romans*, and which swallowed up every humane affection—the utter insensibility with which they beheld the horrible effects of war, famine and disease within their own walls—the cruelties they practised upon their fellow-citizens—the vain confidence with which they expected deliverance and protection from Heaven, on account of the nominal holiness of themselves, their city and temple; might surpass all belief, if we had not so authentic an account of these particulars. The various facts, related also by our historian, which shew to what an extremity of misery, the nation in general, and especially the city of *Jerusalem*, was reduced, are too many and too tragical to be recited. If any person is desirous of fuller information, it is proper to refer him for satisfaction to the history itself. It may be thought sufficient to quote a single passage, as a summary of the whole.  
—“ That many fled out of the city by all  
“ the

“ the private ways they could invent, tho’  
“ they expected to be taken by the enemy  
“ —That every day 500 *Jews*, or more,  
“ were taken—and the *Roman* soldiers,  
“ thro’ the hatred they conceived against  
“ the *Jewish* nation, tortured and at last  
“ crucified all they took, in various ways  
“ expressive of contempt and derision—yet  
“ the cruelties and miseries endured by  
“ these wretches without the walls were  
“ not greater than those of the inhabi-  
“ tants within, by rapine and famine—  
“ So that some, tho’ they knew what  
“ treatment their fellow citizens had met  
“ with, yet went boldly to the *Romans*, as  
“ thinking torment and death from the  
“ hands of the enemy preferable to the  
“ misery they already endured.”—If this  
account be not exaggerated, as there is  
little reason to suppose, if we consider that  
the author was present with the *Roman*  
army during the siege, the prophetic words  
of our Savior, Mat. xxiv. 21. will appear  
to have been fulfilled even literally—*Then*

226 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
*shall be great tribulation, such as was not*  
*from the beginning of the world to this time,*  
*no, nor ever shall be.—And we may hence*  
observe also the strong import of another  
prophetic passage, when he was himself  
led through the streets of *Jerusalem* to be  
crucified: and turning about, said to the  
multitude of women who followed him  
weeping, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not*  
*for me, but for yourselves, and for your chil-*  
*dren. For behold, the days are coming, in*  
*which they shall say, Blessed are the barren,*  
*even the wombs which never bare, and the*  
*paps which never gave suck. Then shall they*  
*begin to say to the mountains, fall on us, and*  
*to the hills, cover us.—At last the Romans*  
entered the city by force, and in the  
height of their fury destroyed it by fire and  
sword, notwithstanding the earnest desire  
of the general to save both the inhabitants  
and the noble edifice of the temple. Thus  
were accomplished the words of my text,  
*And when the King heard thereof he was*  
*wroth, and sent forth his armies, and*  
*destroyed*

*destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.*

Now, from all that hath been said, concerning the character of the Jews, and the horrible miseries and total ruin they brought upon themselves by their wickedness, we may see the force and propriety of the address, which *John the Baptist* made use of, when he saw a multitude of people, and among them many pharisees and sadducees, coming to his baptism. *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: i. e. presume not upon the protection and favor of God, because you are Jews. For God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now the ax is laid to the root of the tree: and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the fire: i. e. ruin is near at hand; and all*

228 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
the wicked and impenitent *Jews* shall be destroyed by fire and sword—and of the speech of our Savior also, when he made his public entry into *Jerusalem*. For when he was come near the city, he beheld it, and wept over it, saying—*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace—but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another—because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

I SHALL conclude with the following reflections:

(1.) THAT from the whole of our Savior's parables and predictions relative to the *Jews*, we may infer both his prophetic wisdom, and singular humanity: as it appears,



pears, that he not only understood perfectly the temper and spirit of the nation in general, and of the rulers in particular, but foresaw clearly the effects and consequences of it: and tho' he knew their hostile and malicious disposition, and the indignity and cruelty with which they would treat both himself and his followers, yet lamented their approaching misery and ruin in the most pathetic terms, and with tears of unfeigned sorrow and compassion.

(2.) THAT the *Jews* were under a peculiar oeconomy of divine providence, and were more directly, immediately and judicially rewarded with national prosperity, or punished with national calamity and ruin, in proportion to their piety and virtue, or impiety and wickedness, than any other nation.—For tho' the vices which prevailed among *them* would have a natural tendency to the ruin of *any* nation, and tho' their prosperity and adversity were the natural consequences resulting from

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their

230 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
their temper and conduct, taken together with their situation, government and religion; yet whoever attends to the whole history of the several events befalling that people, through so long a course of time, and compares it with the several descriptive and prophetic accounts of them, throughout the Old and New Testament, will naturally conclude, that their case is singular, and not to be paralleled (as indeed it is not) by the history of any other nation. He will be surprized to find the most remarkable and calamitous events that have happened to them, and even their *present* condition, as a dispersed and vagabond people, *foretold* in terms of so much significance and precision, so many thousand years ago, by their first and great law-giver *Moses* \*. And particularly, he will be convinced, that no human prescience could foresee the very time and

\* See the 29th and following chapters in Deuteronomy.

manner, and singular circumstances, predicted by our Savior, of their last and great destruction by the *Romans*.

(3.) THAT the spirit of pride, malice and revenge, with which the *Jews* were possessed and instigated to their own destruction, is the worst that can possess the human breast, most injurious to society, and pernicious to them who are actuated by it.—That when once it gains possession of the minds of any people, it is apt to increase in malignity, and to spread its baneful influence further and wider, till it ends in their ruin; notwithstanding any endeavors, by argument, persuasion, or even *miracles*, to subdue its force and stop its progress.—That when it is disguised under the appearance of piety and zeal for religion, and is joined to a presumption of the singular protection and favor of God, it then rises to its utmost height of wickedness and madness.—And that a people are then ripe for destruction, when they

232 *The King punishing his barbarous Subjects,*  
give a ready ear to boasters, flatterers, and  
dissemblers, and at the same time calum-  
niate, persecute and destroy, the faithful  
preachers of righteousness, who warn  
them of their wickedness and danger,

*Finally,* THAT we ought to congratulate  
ourselves, and be thankful to the provi-  
dence of God, that we live in an age and  
nation, wherein this malignant spirit,  
which has been seen to prevail so much,  
and produce so terrible effects, not only  
amongst *Jews*, but *Christians* also, is hap-  
pily abated, tho' not entirely extinguished.  
Let us endeavor to suppress it to the ut-  
most of our power in every instance, as  
the greatest enemy to the safety, peace and  
happiness, of all societies, whether larger  
or smaller. Let us admire and cherish the  
contrary spirit, which is that of Christi-  
anity—of social justice, humanity and  
fidelity—of religion without superstition,  
piety without presumption, patriotism  
without faction, fortitude without fero-  
city,

city, submission to government without slavery, kindness to our neighbor without dissimulation, and universal benevolence without the least tincture of malice or bitterness.—That such may be the character of these nations, God grant through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## DISCOURSE X.

The King surveying his Guests: Or,  
the false Christian detected and  
punished.







## M A T T H E W XXII. 8.

*Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hitber, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speecblefs. Then said the King to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darknes:*

238 *The King surveying his Guests : Or,*  
*darkness : there shall be weeping and gnash-*  
*ing of teeth. For many are called, but few*  
*chosen.*

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**I**N the former part of this parable, as well as in the preceding, our Savior describes, in his figurative manner, the conduct of the *Jewish* nation, in their rejection of the gospel, and inhuman treatment of its propagators. He predicts also the destruction of the city of *Jerusalem*, in consequence of that spirit of bigotry and malice, by which they were instigated. It was then, that *the stone which the builders rejected*, and which was a *stumbling-block* to the nation in general, *fell upon them, and ground them to powder* : or, which is the same thing differently express'd, *Then the King sent forth his armies, and destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city.*

IN this part of the parable, he extends his view further, to the state of things after the ruin of *Jerusalem*, and the recep-  
tion

tion which the gospel, after being rejected by the *Jews*, would meet with from the world in general. For notwithstanding the contemptuous and injurious conduct of the *Jews* with regard to it, it was not to be deprived of its proper effect in the world. There were others, who would gratefully accept of that royal invitation, and munificent entertainment, which the *Jews* despised. Therefore our Savior, preserving the consistency of his figure, represents the King as saying to his servants, *The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden* (meaning the *Jews*) *were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.*—The best explanation of this figurative passage may be given in the very words of our Savior's commission to his apostles: *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations*—Or as St. Mark has it—*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*—Yet it appears from the Acts of the Apostles, that, notwithstanding this unlimited com-  
mission,

240 *The King surveying his Guests : Or,*  
mission, which our Savior had given them, they still imagined that the gospel was to be confined to the *Jews*. So great was their national and religious prejudice, that they thought the *Jews* alone were worthy of it, and the heathens to be excluded from it as unworthy : whereas our Lord plainly intimates in this parable, that the *Jews*, tho' first *invited*, were *not worthy* of it; and therefore it was to be offered to the Gentiles or *Heathens*, who would accept it.—At length, the Apostles were convinced of this, to their no small surprize, by the vision of *St. Peter*, which taught him to call no man common or unclean ; by the conversion of Cornelius a Roman officer ; and by the effusion of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and those which were with him. —It is expressly said, that this event *astonished them of the circumcision, who believed, as many as came with Peter : because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.*—It is evident then, that  
before

before this time, the Apostles *themselves* did not clearly understand, either this parable of our Savior, or many other of his expressions and figures, in which he predicted the conversion of the Gentiles. But now they comprehended more fully his doctrine, and the extent of his design; and knew that their commission and office were, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, no less than to the Jews. They were to *go out into the highways*, as it is expressed in the text: *i. e.* all the world over—and *gather together all as many as they could find*. And they acted accordingly, and began to travel into remote countries, and to diffuse Christianity wherever they could find admission; especially the Apostle *Paul*, who was himself converted by an appearance of our Savior from Heaven, and was expressly deputed by him to convert the heathens: consequently, of all the Apostles, he became the most industrious and successful propagator of Christianity. He neglected indeed no opportunity of ad-

242 *The King surveying his Guests: Or,*  
dressing the Jews, in order to *their* conversion; but met with more opposition and ill treatment from *them* than from the *heathens*. We find an occasion of this kind mentioned in the 13th of the Acts, when the Apostle was at Antioch, and *almost the whole city came together to hear him. But when the Jews, it is said, saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary, or fit, that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* This passage corresponds to our Savior's language in the parable: *They which were bidden or invited (i. e. the Jews) were not worthy.*—When the Apostles began to apply to the heathens, who were not actuated by such a spirit of bigotry and malice, nor labored under such insuperable prejudice, as the Jews, they proceeded

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ed with singular success, and gained great numbers of converts, in the principal cities of the world, Antioch, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, and Rome. The *gospel-invitation* was accepted by these heathens, and there appeared a multitude of *guests*, willing to partake of the spiritual entertainment, and to enjoy the honor and happiness of the kingdom of heaven. The proposals made by the Apostles were so fair, the conditions so just and equitable, the manner so disinterested and generous, the design so great and noble, they could not refuse their compliance. Convinced of the veracity and probity of those faithful messengers, astonished by the miraculous gifts they displayed, won by the simplicity and candor of their behavior, charmed with that divine benignity and liberality which the message brought by them imported, they received it with a cordial satisfaction, and became professed candidates for glory, honor and immortality. Christianity continued to gain credit, and to spread fur-

244 *The King surveying his Guests: Or,*  
ther in the world, till it prevailed even at  
the court of Rome, and became the po-  
pular and fashionable profession. Thus,  
according to our Savior's figure, *the mar-*  
*riage was furnished with guests.*

BUT as our Lord foresaw, that, in those  
succeeding times, many would conform to  
his religion, not from any conviction of  
mind or good disposition of heart, but  
through hypocrisy, and from worldly mo-  
tives; he therefore extends the allegory  
further, so as to make it comprehend one  
important point more, namely, the differ-  
ent *habit* of those guests, and the treat-  
ment they met with according to it from  
the king—*i. e.* (throwing aside the figure)  
the different *qualifications* of professed  
Christians, and their final acceptation or  
rejection according to them, from the So-  
vereign of the world. Many persons fol-  
low the multitude, and are always of the  
party that is uppermost: which-ever way  
the current sets, they go along with it, as  
believing



believing it to be for their own worldly ease, reputation and advantage. They croud in along with the rest, though utterly destitute of those qualifications, which are absolutely necessary to enjoy such company and entertainment. But they will be infallibly detected by the *eye* of the *Sovereign*, whenever he shall think fit to take a survey: they will not be able to bear an examination; but as soon as the question shall be put to them, what pretensions they have to the honor and happiness of the kingdom of heaven—and how they can presume to hope for it without the necessary qualifications? they will be confounded and *speechless*—they will be filled with fear, horror and anguish, whilst the sentence is passed upon them, of expulsion from the society and mansions of the blessed into a region of darkness and lamentation.

HAVING so far explained this part of the parable, I shall now add some remarks on it.

(1.) THAT it is the usual manner of our Savior, in his discourses and representations, to pass directly from the state of things in this world to a future state, as if there was no interval or interruption. Death is a mere circumstance: and therefore our Savior never exhorts us to prepare for death, but for his *coming*, his *inspection*, examination, and *judgment*. So in the 24th Chapter, after describing the confusion and desolation that was coming upon the land of *Judea*, he proceeds to exhort his disciples in the following manner:—*Watch therefore; for ye know not in what hour your Lord will come.* And again—*Be ye ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.* The expression is not, Death will overtake you; and therefore you are to be ready for that event. In strict propriety of language, it is not *death*, but the *judgment* that will follow, the state of things in another world, the immediate inspection, cognizance, and government of our Savior, for which it is so necessary  
to

to make preparation.—*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing: Verily I say unto you, He shall make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of: and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites—there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.—Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.—Here we may observe, that he makes use of the same image with that in our parable—figuring the honor and happiness of the future state by the joyful solemnity of a magnificent marriage-feast: and likewise that he connects*

248 *The King surveying his Guests : Or,*  
the other state and this immediately together, silently passing over mens *dying*, as if that was a mere circumstance, and in itself of no moment.

(2.) WE may observe, that he figures the *internal habits* of the mind by the *external dress*. Other excellent authors have made use of the like figure: but there is evidently a peculiar propriety in our Savior's use of it in this parable. For when he had compared the honor and happiness of the future state to a *royal nuptial feast*, it became requisite, in order to preserve the propriety and consistency of the allegory, that the moral qualifications of those who were admitted to that state, should be signified by the decorum of their *vestiture*; and on the other hand, the want of suitable qualifications, by the sordid and indecent apparel, in which some of the guests were supposed to intrude.

(3.) THE

(3.) THE benignity of the Sovereign is strongly marked, by the manner of his address to the presumptuous and unworthy intruder. *Friend*, saith he, *how comest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?* and the tacit acknowledgment made by the intruder of his own presumptuous and unjustifiable behavior, is signified with equal strength and propriety, by observing that *he was speechless*.—He was conscious that he had nothing to alledge in vindication of his own conduct; and therefore was struck dumb with confusion.—Such will be the equity, mildness and lenity, with which even the worst of criminals shall be treated, in the day of judgment—such the home-felt conviction of their own guilt, and silent acknowledgment of the justice and propriety of the sentence passed upon them, and of the punishment to which they are adjudged.

(4.) We may consider and admire the comprehensiveness of our Savior's mind, and

250 *The King surveying his Guests : Or,*  
and the immense extent of those ideas, which he hath comprised in so short a narration, and expressed by so familiar and intelligible figures. Hence it appears, that the greatest subjects, and the largest and remotest scenes, were familiar to his mind, and present to his perspective view. In the preceding parable, he looks back to former times, and defines the state, character and manners of the *Jews*, from the commencement of their nation and government to the end of it, concluding with their destruction. In this, he begins with the present time, and the conduct of the *Jews* to himself and his apostles: and after marking in significant terms, their disposition and character, and describing the ruin of the city of *Jerusalem*; he looks beyond that event, and comprehends the future propagation and establishment of Christianity in the world—defines the different qualifications and merits of profess'd Christians—marks the false profession and appearance of the pretended Christian—  
and

and concludes with the discriminating judgment and sentence which will be passed upon him, and his exclusion from the honor and happiness of the kingdom of heaven.

(5.) Our Savior adds this moral reflection, resulting from the whole parable—*For many are called but few are chosen*—applying that proverb to the state and progress of Christianity in the world. The *Jews* were called, i. e. invited to accept the offers of the gospel, and to partake of the privileges, honors, and rewards, designed for all the worthy subjects of the kingdom of heaven. But most of them shewed themselves *unworthy* of so gracious an invitation, and discovered upon that occasion the greatest folly, ingratitude and barbarity. Yet there were a *few* among them, who were not only called but chosen: were selected from the rest of the *Jews*, and became the faithful and approved disciples of our Savior. The proverb,

252 *The King surveying his Guests: Or,*  
verb, *Many are called, but few chosen,* seems to be derived from the *military* custom of that time. For when a body of troops was to be raised for any signal enterprize, *many* were summoned to appear in the field; but those *only* were *chosen*, who upon examination were found to be *qualified* for the military service, and for the intended enterprize, which was supposed to be of an important and honorable nature. Hence we find, that the first Christians are distinguished by the epithet, not only of being *called*, but *chosen*, or *elect*, so long as they maintained their fidelity to the Christian profession and service. Hence the author of the book of Revelations, after stiling our Savior the *Lord of Lords and King of Kings*, and describing him as *making war*, adds, *And they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful*—called to the field of exercise, *chosen* as qualified for the service, and *faithful* to their engagements. As then the *Jews* in general, and many heathens, who were *called*, yet  
rejected



rejected the gospel-invitation, and shewed themselves to be unworthy of the honor and happiness proposed to them; so amongst those in every age, who have appeared to embrace Christianity, and make an open profession of it, many are only nominal, not real Christians: tho' they may for the present pass under the general denomination of the *Elect of God*—the *Holy People*—the *Saints*—the *true Church*, and the like; they will be detected at last, excluded from the real church and kingdom of Christ, and exposed to eternal disgrace and ruin. The *tares* grow up at present in the midst of the *wheat*; and no human skill or power is sufficient to separate them: nor is this life the proper season of separation. But in the *conclusion*, and at the proper season, *the Lord of the harvest will say to the reapers, Gather ye first the tares, and bind them in bundles, and burn them: but gather the wheat into my garner.* The same judicial procedure is represented by *this* figure in our parable: *Then the*  
King

254 *The King surveying his Guests: Or,*  
*King said unto his servants, Bind him hand*  
*and foot, and take him away, and cast him*  
*into outer darkness: there shall be weeping*  
*and gnashing of teeth.*

IT now remains, that we examine, each for himself, with what attention and disposition of mind we receive the overtures of the gospel—with what sentiments and views we make a profession of Christianity—or from what motives we either openly, or secretly, despise and reject it.—The *Jews* in general *made light of it.* One went to his farm, and another to his merchandize: and the remnant took the servants, who brought the gracious message, and treated them *spitefully, and slew them.* And many pretended Christians have acted in a manner equally foolish and barbarous, under the color and disguise of Christianity itself. It is of the greatest importance then, that we distinguish, especially in ourselves, the reality, from the mere name and profession of a Christian: and in order to this,

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we ought to understand thorowly, what temper and spirit we are of. For if notwithstanding our profession of Christianity, we bear a resemblance in our real temper and character to the *Jews* of old; if we are superstitious, bigotted, fierce, vindictive, cruel, insensible to the calls of justice and humanity, calumniators or persecutors of better men than ourselves, even the true servants of God; the *cloak* of our profession will by no means be allowed to pass for the *wedding-garment*; for the robe of innocence, truth and righteousness: and though we may confidently aspire to a place in the *palace* of our Sovereign, and to partake of *his entertainment* as welcome *guests*, we shall find ourselves disappointed to our inexpressible confusion, and banished to a region of inconsolable horror and distress.

THE gospel is a proposal or offer of eternal honor and happiness in a life to come, and in the kingdom of our Savior,

256 *The King surveying his Guests : Or,*  
as the reward of Christian integrity and  
virtue. In proportion as this belief and  
expectation influenceth our minds, and  
engageth us, not to mere forms and ap-  
pearances, but to real and extensive good-  
ness, to justice, equity, humanity, and  
sincerity, to temperance and patience, to  
innocence and usefulness of life ; so far we  
are genuine Christians, and shall be ap-  
proved as such by the judge of the world.  
But if we *make light* of this doctrine, de-  
spise the happiness proposed to us, and  
give an undue preference to the base inte-  
rests and pleasures of this life, we stand  
chargeable with extreme folly and ingrati-  
tude : and if we add to such folly and ne-  
gligence, acts of fraud and hypocrisy, op-  
pression and cruelty, our final exclusion  
from the celestial mansions will be the  
more certain, and our punishment the  
more dreadful. For as the *Jews* suffered  
the most terrible calamities that ever any  
nation underwent in this world ; so every  
one who is guilty of the like crimes, not-  
withstanding his Christian profession, shall  
be

*the false Christian detected and punished. 257*  
be sure to suffer in another world the righteous judgment of God. To them that are contentious, and who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil: but glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good—of whatever nation or profession. For there is no respect of persons with God.





## P A R T IV.

Containing the Apostolic Parables:  
Or, those which were intended  
for the Conversion of the first  
Disciples, especially the Apostles,  
and to qualify them for their fu-  
ture Office.



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent data collection practices and the use of advanced analytical techniques to derive meaningful insights from the data.

3. The third part focuses on the role of technology in enhancing data management and analysis. It discusses how modern software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and processing, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

4. The fourth part addresses the challenges associated with data collection and analysis, such as data quality issues, incomplete information, and the complexity of large datasets. It provides strategies to overcome these challenges and ensure the reliability of the data used for decision-making.

5. The fifth part concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It stresses the importance of a data-driven approach and the continuous improvement of data management processes to support the organization's strategic goals.



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## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**M**ANKIND are generally more attentive to speculative notions, and desirous of knowing what does not belong to them, than willing to be convinced of their practical errors, and persuaded to the performance of important duties. But this latter was the design of our Savior in all his instructions to his disciples. He never explained or foretold any thing to them, but with an intention to apply it to some moral end, and so far only as the knowledge of it would be useful to them. Many questions were put to him, to which he returned either no answer, or such a one, as instead of gratifying the vanity or curiosity of the enquirer, tended to impress some useful sentiment on the minds

of his followers. Thus, when the question was asked him, *Are there few that be saved?* his answer was, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate. For many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* As if he had said, If it be my prerogative to know the number that shall be saved, it is not yours. Your business is not to enquire of me how many shall be saved, but to take care that yourselves be of the number; and to this end to arm yourselves with resolution sufficient to overcome the difficulties that lie in your way. He appears to have confined his instructions wholly to the things proper to his own office and character, and the moral improvement of them that heard him. There is no instance of his correcting any error, or teaching any truth, of a merely civil, political, physical, or metaphysical nature. He seems to have thought it not worth his while, or not belonging to his character, to correct the erroneous apprehensions of his disciples, concerning dæmonism and possessions: probably be-

cause he considered the subject, as more of a physical than moral nature. Such was the perfect propriety of his conduct and discourses, that notwithstanding the curious expectation of his friends and followers on the one hand, and the artful snares laid for him by his enemies on the other, he never gratified either party, by deviating in the least from the province to which he was appointed.

His Apostles, notwithstanding the veneration due to their memory and character, yet were originally persons of no education, and very little understanding. They were at first, and for some time after they became his disciples, very dull of apprehension—often making mistakes—full of such conceits as spring from ignorance and superstition; and instead of being chiefly intent upon the business for which he designed them, were dazzled with delusive hopes of rising to wealth and grandeur. Yet he never censured any of  
S 4 their

their mistaken notions, but such as were hurtful to their morals, or tended to disqualify them for the duty and office of his apostles: and even these he corrected gradually, and with the most admirable lenity and tenderness. All his instructions were adapted to rectify their moral sentiments—to wean them from their worldly prejudices—to inspire them with good dispositions—and prepare them for their future service.

If we understand human nature, and consider how slow and difficult a work it is, to conquer the strong holds of ignorance, prejudice, superstition, and worldly affection; it will excite our admiration and astonishment, to observe in how short a time, not exceeding four years, our Savior converted such a number of followers into men so different from what they were before. The difference between Peter the Jewish fisherman, and Peter the Christian apostle, was perhaps almost as great as  
 between

between any two men that ever lived. To open the understandings of the most ignorant—to eradicate prejudices most deeply rooted—to subdue the strongest inclinations—to change entirely the minds and tempers of men—is an effect which can hardly be produced by any human skill, in the longest time, and with the utmost application. This hath been found by the experience of the ablest instructors and legislators in all ages and nations. The whole series of our Savior's instructions to his disciples was contradictory to their most favorite opinions, inclinations and hopes. It is not possible to account for his success, if they had not been convinced by a power, instructed by a wisdom, and won by a goodness, more than human. They were often upon the point of deserting him, (for instance, when he put the question to them, after many others had left him in high disgust, *Will ye also go away?*) till by some new instance of his miraculous power, or condescending goodness, or inimitable

imitable address, he reclaimed them, and they took a fresh resolution to adhere to him. Notwithstanding all they had seen and heard, during the time of his ministry, yet, when they saw him apprehended, their resolution sunk at once, and they all forsook him and fled. Even Peter, who had been the most forward in his professions of courage and constancy, and that very day had vowed he would die with his Master rather than desert him, yet was seized with such a pannaic, upon finding himself mark'd and challenged as one of his disciples, that he denied with oaths his having any knowledge of him. And all of them, when they saw him condemned to death, not remembering, or not believing, his predictions of rising again, abandoned themselves to despair. How then can we account for it, that these men, who were at first, and for some time after they conversed with our Savior, so ignorant, so bigotted, so worldly-minded, so timid and irresolute, became afterward so  
courageous,

courageous, so disinterested, so wise, so free from *Jewish* error and superstition. It can be accounted for no otherwise than by allowing, that their faith in him was thorowly re-established, by the astonishing fact of his resurrection, and their minds and tempers changed, by a remembrance of and attention to the instructions which he had given them.

WE are going to take into consideration, some of those admirable instructions, which in conjunction with other causes, produced so great an effect.—Instructions which had not the least tendency to heat their minds with an enthusiastic passion, but were adapted to take hold of their understandings—to convince their judgment—to lead them to reflection—and to produce the most serene, dispassionate, attentive and candid disposition. Comparisons, fables, and allegories, the most familiar and entertaining, were often the means by which he engaged their attention,

tion, and the channels through which he conveyed to them the most important and sublime truths. These were brought to their perfect remembrance by the effusion of the Holy Spirit; and hence they were enabled to commit so many of them to writing. It may be wished that we had much more of our Savior's actions and conversation recorded. But we ought rather to suppress such a wish, and consider it as no better than a vain curiosity. The Evangelists appear to be so far from having a design to make the most of every thing, that it is evident their intention was, to relate only such a number of facts, and such specimens of our Savior's conversation and doctrine, as would be a sufficient foundation for our belief and practice. This they have done with the utmost conciseness and simplicity—leaving the reader to make his own remarks and reflections on every passage. They expose to view, without the least disguise or palliation, their own mistakes and failings, as  
well



well as relate those actions, arguments and instructions of our Savior, by which they were converted into quite different men.

WE shall not clearly understand the following parables, if we do not consider them as calculated for the conversion and improvement of his own apostles and first disciples; the more we attend to their capacity, temper and situation, the more will the propriety and excellence of these parabolic instructions appear, as intended to correct their errors and failings, and endue them with those qualifications, which were requisite to the discharge of the apostolic office.





## DISCOURSE I.

The rich man laying up his Goods :  
Or, Selfishness and Voluptuousness exposed.



4. 1994年10月1日以前に建設された建築物の耐震補強に関する規定

1994年10月1日以前に建設された建築物の耐震補強に関する規定は、

1. 建築物の耐震補強に関する規定は、建築物の構造、用途、規模、所在地等に応じ、建築物の耐震補強に関する規定を定めることとなる。

2. 建築物の耐震補強に関する規定は、建築物の構造、用途、規模、所在地等に応じ、建築物の耐震補強に関する規定を定めることとなる。

## L U K E xii. 16.

*And he spake a parable unto them, saying—  
The ground of a certain rich man brought  
forth plentifully. And he thought within  
himself, saying, What shall I do, because I  
have no room where to bestow my fruits?  
And he said, This will I do: I will pull  
down my barns and build greater; and  
there will I bestow all my fruits and my  
goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul,  
thou hast much goods laid up for many years;  
take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.  
—But God said unto him, Thou fool, this  
night thy soul shall be required of thee: then  
whose shall those things be which thou hast  
provided?—So is he that layeth up treasure  
for himself, and is not rich towards God.*

**T**HIS parable, like many others, took its rise from a particular incident. While our Savior was encouraging his disciples to an undaunted profession of the gospel, instructing them how to act, and assuring them of proper assistance in the most important conjunctures, he was interrupted by one of the crowd preferring a petition to him, to this effect; That he would please to act as judge, or umpire, in a cause between himself and his brother, concerning a contested estate, to a share of which he thought himself entitled; and that he would use his authority in obliging his brother to consent to a division. But our Lord refuses to take any cognizance of the affair; alledging that he had no authority to determine such matters. It appears from his whole conduct, as well as this passage, that he did not consider himself as having any jurisdiction in civil causes. And tho' his enemies often laid snares for him, tempting him, with much artifice, to assume civil power, yet he always,

ways, with superior wisdom, avoided it. But knowing that in this case, the wrong or injustice, on which soever side it lay, sprung from a motive of avarice or selfishness, he begins a new series of instructions to his disciples and the rest of his audience, by saying, *Take heed and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*— Then he introduces the parable of the text, as an illustration of the foregoing proposition, and adds to it this moral conclusion: *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, but is not rich towards God.* As if he had said, this is the description or picture of a covetous, selfish, voluptuous man, destitute of the sentiments of piety, virtue and humanity. There are but few of our Savior's parables, and this is one, in which the moral design is expressed previous to the parable itself: the reason of which peculiarity seems to be this, that it is inserted in the midst of a discourse, and was intended to give spirit and force both to the

276 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
preceding and following admonitions, so  
as to render them more impressivè upon  
the minds of his audience. But tho' the  
design is previously suggested, it is more  
largely expressed and applied, in the sub-  
sequent exhortations. We shall therefore  
consider the parable, or the character de-  
scribed in it, (1.) In its natural propriety  
and consistency. (2.) In a moral and re-  
ligious view. (3.) As illustrating the  
proposition preceding. And (4.) As in-  
trodutory to the exhortations following.

(1.) WE shall consider the natural pro-  
priety and consistency of the character de-  
scribed.—There was a man (saith the pa-  
rable) possessed of an ample estate, whose  
lands proved so fertile, that they yielded  
him a return, for the culture he had be-  
stowed upon them, beyond his expecta-  
tion. In a few years, the produce was so  
very large, that he was at a loss how to  
dispose of it. This occasioned him much  
perplexity and study, in devising by what  
means



means he could best secure all the advantage and enjoyment of it to himself. At length, he resolved upon this method, as the most expedient,—to pull down his old scanty barns and storehouses, and to build such as would contain and preserve the vast increase of his goods. Having settled this plan in his mind, he thought that as soon as he had executed it, all the trouble of life would be over, and he should then have nothing to do, but to regale himself, without controul or molestation. It gave him much satisfaction to have determined upon so prudent a scheme: and he was still more delighted with the prospect of so much ease and enjoyment, after he had finished the troublesome and laborious part. He could not forbear congratulating his own soul with the highest self-complacency, upon the full expectation of being completely happy. He was well assured, that his treasures and magazines would not fail him; and therefore had every thing within his immediate reach,

278 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
that he thought requisite to that end. This plan, which he had projected for the remaining part of his life, pleased his imagination, and occupied his mind so entirely, as to exclude all thought of any accident that might intervene to disconcert it. Most persons are very credulous in believing what they earnestly wish to be true; and are very loth to admit the idea of such events, as may disappoint their fond hopes, and demolish the scheme of happiness, which their fancy hath erected. Such was the temper and situation of our wealthy proprietor, in the midst of his contrivances how to dispose of and enjoy his superabundant property. He pleased himself with the prospect not only of *much goods laid up*, but also of *many years*, in which he should enjoy them, in the indulgence of all his appetites and desires: and to make his scheme complete, he resolved to live for himself alone, and to give himself no concern about the affairs or condition of others. By all these means

he thought himself secure, and that nothing was wanting to the certain accomplishment of his views. But where he seemed to himself to be most wise, he was most foolish; and his confidence was the mere effect of his folly. For the providence of God soon detected the vanity of his projects. A single accident, which he had least of all suspected, blasted his hopes, and ruined his scheme, in a moment. He who had firmly promised himself many years of voluptuous indulgence, did not live to another day. That night he was removed from his dwelling on earth, to the place from whence there is no return. Whose then were those things which he had provided?—For whom was he so careful to treasure up all his goods?—Not for *himself* it is evident;—tho' all his care and concern had been for *himself alone*.

WE shall now consider some distinct properties of the character here described,

280 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
as copied from human life.—His ruling passion or predominant quality appears to have been the love of pleasure, even in the lowest sense of the word. His supreme happiness was that of 'an Epicure'—to regale himself with delicacies; to pamper his appetites to the full, and to pass his whole time in such amusements, as might best contribute to dissipate thought and recreate his spirits with mirth and gaiety: or, as it is expressed in the text in few words, *to take his ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*—Now, wherever this scheme of indolence and voluptuousness lies uppermost in the mind, other desires and passions will naturally follow in subservience to it: as particularly, the desire of gain, which will spring up and grow, in proportion to it; because it is wealth only that renders it most practicable, and impowers men to pursue and gratify such inclinations. This then of course becomes the second prevailing passion in the mind of such a person; and this is properly styled *Covetousness*. For tho'

tho' in such a character it is not always known and distinguished by that name, yet in fact luxury and *avarice* are not only compatible, but naturally connected. Whoever considers the gratification of his own fancy and appetites, in a state of ease and independence, as the happiest kind of life, will naturally become greedy of acquiring the means of placing and supporting himself in such a state: and tho' his disposition to expence may be equally powerful and more apparent, and by concealing his avarice, save him from the imputation of it, yet he will be found, upon examination, to have a stronger passion for wealth, than is consistent with honor and generosity, if not common honesty. It is not the penurious hoarding miser only, who deserves the name of *covetous*: one man may be as greedy to acquire with a view of spending, as another, of hoarding: and consequently the luxurious prodigal may harbor in his mind as sordid and insatiable avarice, as he who defrauds himself

282 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
himself of the conveniencies and even necessaries of life, to save expence. The latter are indeed the most remarkable, and therefore most exposed to common censure : but if a man scruples not to take the methods of falshood, fraud or oppression, in order to gain wealth, or if he refuses to discharge obligations, to relieve the indigent, to support those that depend upon him, or to contribute his share to public services ; what difference does it make, whether it is for the sake of expending, or accumulating ?—The greedy desire and insatiable temper is alike in both cases. If indeed one of the former species should find himself in the like circumstances as those of the rich man in the parable ; if by any means his fortune should be augmented beyond his hopes, so much as to appear sufficient for the purposes of luxury and self-indulgence, he will then be under little or no temptation to acquire more property by unjust methods ; and consequently his covetousness will not appear in  
acts

acts of fraud or extortion, but only in withholding his substance from all the uses of charity and beneficence, and devoting it entirely to the aforesaid selfish purposes. —Hence we may discover another quality of the character described in the parable, *viz.* inhumanity: by which I do not mean downright cruelty or injuriousness to others, but only a want of social affection, of tenderness and compassion, charity and generosity. That this was a part of the character intended plainly appears from the language which the wealthy person uses with himself. For when persons are alone, conversing, proposing and debating with themselves, for their own future conduct and condition in life, they give vent to the genuine purposes and inclinations of their hearts, and express themselves without disguise. When the wealthy person therefore had taken a view of his augmented stores, and resolved upon his measures for preserving and securing them, his mind naturally ran forward to  
the

284 *The rich Man laying up his Goods: Or,*  
the use and enjoyment of them; and he  
makes to himself such propofals and pro-  
mises, as were most agreeable to his tem-  
per and inclinations. Let us observe then  
his manner of thinking upon this occa-  
sion. Does he reflect thus with himself—  
“ That the providence of God had been  
“ exceedingly liberal to him, far beyond  
“ his deserts or expectations, and even  
“ overcharged him with abundance.—  
“ That he would therefore shew his gra-  
“ titude to Heaven, by his generosity to  
“ his fellow-creatures. That the indi-  
“ gent and miserable should find relief  
“ from the amplitude of his stores.—That  
“ he would employ himself and his wealth  
“ in discharging useful and important of-  
“ fices for the welfare of his country, or  
“ in making public endowments, for the  
“ service of religion, or the support of the  
“ widow, the orphan, the aged, the dis-  
“ abled, the diseased, or lunatic.—That  
“ his soul would rejoice in the honor and  
“ happiness of exercising the noble prero-  
“ gative



“ gative of doing good, and being the  
“ common friend and benefactor of man-  
“ kind around him.”—Such would have  
been the sentiments of a man of true  
worth in the midst of his abundance: but  
how different from the language of the  
worthless Epicure in the parable: *I will  
say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods  
laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat,  
drink, and be merry.*—Thus he expresses  
the only purpose for which he was desirous  
of acquiring and preserving wealth, and  
to which alone he was fully resolved to ap-  
ply it. He is so far from thinking of the  
fatherless, the stranger, the diseased, and  
the destitute; as deriving any benefit or re-  
lief from his abundance, that he seems to  
have forgot even his friends and kindred;  
as if he had not the least regard for *them*,  
and the only object of his affection and  
kindness was *himself*. For the admirable  
address of “ Take your ease, eat, drink,  
“ and be merry,” is made not to his  
neighbors, nor to his friends, nor to his  
relations,

286 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
relations, no, nor to his family (for indeed it seems probable that he had none, from the question, *Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*)—but to his own soul, exclusive of all the world.—We may sum up his qualities then in one word, which is complete *Selfishness*. His wealth, his faculties, his time, and his thoughts, were all devoted to the service of himself, that base and fordid self, which had no conception of mental entertainments, the satisfactions of piety, or the affections of friendship, humanity, and generosity—no relish for any other enjoyments than those of foolish mirth and voluptuous gratification!

Now, in reflecting upon this character, which our Savior has drawn in few strokes but strong colors, so as to render it uniform and perfect in its kind; we may be apt to look upon it as very extraordinary and singular, such as scarce ever existed in human life. And it is to be hoped, for  
the

the honor of human nature, that such *finished* characters are but seldom to be met with. Yet there are too many in the world, who bear a strong resemblance to the picture here exhibited, tho' the likeness may not be perfect, nor perhaps clearly discernible at first view. For our Savior adds, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, but is not rich towards God.* Every person, whose main study in life is to enrich and gratify himself with external possessions and sensual enjoyments, and who consequently neglects to acquire the internal endowments of piety and virtue, is in proportion comprehended in the foregoing description. A consistent and perfect character of any kind is rarely to be found, if ever, in human life. Wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, selfishness and generosity, are mixed together in the same person; and the character takes its denomination from that which appears to be prevalent. But it is incumbent upon every man to consider, to which kind his own character

288 *The rich Man laying up his Goods: Or,*  
character belongs, or what are his governing dispositions and views: and particularly, whether the selfish, or the humane and liberal dispositions prevail. And let it be remembered, that under the character of selfishness are comprehended vanity, luxury, and sensuality, no less than the spirit of penuriousness, or the desire of hoarding and accumulating. For as we before observed, avarice is as often joined to prodigality as to parsimony, and more frequently in the younger part of life, while the senses and appetites retain their vigor. If the supreme object of our view be not to serve and oblige others, to relieve the wants of the needy, or add to the welfare of the community, but merely to please ourselves, exclusive of our fellow-creatures and the happiness of society: it does not at all diminish the selfishness, whether our pleasure consists in lessening our expences in order to grow richer, or increasing them by intemperance and luxury. For it is plain, that in either case

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we are equally laying up or appropriating treasures for ourselves, without becoming *rich towards God*, i. e. without acquiring one mite of real worth or goodness.

LET us in the next place contemplate the character described in a moral and religious view, *i. e.* take the measure, not of its excellence and worth, but its deformity and worthlessness. For if there be a character in the world thoroughly despicable—if there be a person who does not deserve to be regarded as a *fellow-creature*, it is undoubtedly the man whose heart is thoroughly *selfish*. For tho' this temper does not necessarily imply such dispositions and actions as are of the most injurious and criminal nature, yet it is evident, that whenever the temptations of profit or pleasure occur, he will not be restrained from committing the very worst of crimes, by any motives except such as are purely selfish, or which arise from a regard to his own interest, ease or safety. As he has no

290 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
concern for the welfare of others, but makes his own will the supreme rule, and his own pleasure the ultimate end, of all his actions ; so if he does not violate the rights of society, or of particular persons, by acts of injustice or oppression, they are not in the least obliged to him for his seeming moderation, nor is there any thing virtuous or praise-worthy in it ; because he is not withheld by any affections of generosity, or humanity, or piety, but only by the fear of some detriment or inconvenience to himself. But where he is not apprehensive of trouble or danger ensuing to himself, he will not be in the least scrupulous of serving his own interest, or gratifying his own inclinations, at the expence, hazard or ruin of any other person, or of the whole community. The few good qualities he may seem to be possessed of, are mere effects of his prudence, or rather *cunning*, in discerning and avoiding those injuries and excesses, by which he would hurt himself. And therefore, tho' he

he may not be guilty of any notorious breach of the laws either of God or man, yet his heart is destitute of goodness, and of every quality that can be thought to deserve, either the approbation of heaven, or respect from men. It is possible that another person may be transported, through negligence or surprize, by the sudden impulse of passion or appetite, to some particular action more culpable in itself, than any which the man of selfish prudence is known to be guilty of; yet may be possessed of much goodness of heart, and many excellent and valuable qualities. It is a very false way of estimating the characters of men, to judge of them by a single action, without attending to the usual tenor of their conduct, and comprehending the principles and motives, upon which they form the general plan and course of their lives. Nor is it to be expected, that men of the former character will always preserve themselves from the most flagrant crimes. For op-

292 *The rich Man laying up his Goods: Or,*  
portunities will probably occur, sooner or later, of serving their selfish ends by dishonest means, without endangering themselves, or at least with a flattering prospect of security: in which case, no principle or motive will remain in their minds sufficient to resist the temptation. Fear, the only barrier, being removed, they will transgress without scruple, and run the utmost lengths of wickedness. Such a temper then is absolutely inconsistent with every degree of virtue or moral goodness, and it is equally incompatible with true piety or devotion. Whatever pretensions a selfish man may make to religion, he can have no other meaning, than to serve his own ends more privately and effectually, under such a disguise. He can have no esteem, nor hardly the least conception, of that divine character, that most sublime glory and happiness, which consists in the infinite exertions of power and wisdom to the purposes of goodness and beneficence. The only impression which he is capable of,  
from



from the belief or apprehension of a Deity, is that of a slavish fear, or the terror of future and unknown punishments. Such a terror may probably haunt his mind, and sometimes gain a strong possession of it: but he will endeavor to dispossess it, either by the cares and pleasures of the world, or by substituting the formalities of superstition instead of virtue and true religion. His affections and conduct will turn upon the same hinge with respect both to God and his fellow-creatures. In all the appearances he may put on, either of piety or humanity, his only view will be, to secure himself from the formidable consequences of human or divine resentment; that he may gratify his own avaricious and voluptuous inclinations, free from molestation and the dread of punishment; without any real value either for the approbation of heaven or the goodwill of men.

HAVING thus weighed the character described, in the balance of religion or morality, let us in the next place attend to the parable as an illustration of the preceding proposition, *That man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* How many are there who think and act upon the contrary maxim! *viz.* that man's life does consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. But the error and delusion of such a person's mind, and his want of a right judgment as well as virtuous disposition, may be easily made to appear. He makes a false estimate of human life in the most important respects. In the first place, he mistakes in supposing that the main happiness of life consists in the enjoyment of ease and pleasure, and the possession and application of wealth to that end. Having no experience or relish of more substantial and lasting satisfactions, he knows not what a loss he sustains of all those delights which arise from tranquility

quility of mind, from a sense of virtue, honor, and friendship, from a confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, and from the hope of a future and eternal life—considers not, that the cultivation and exercise of the higher faculties of the mind, and worthier affections of the heart, are essentially requisite to the best enjoyment of life—nor is aware how mean and fugitive his good things are, how little capable of yielding a lasting contentment, even in the most prudent use of them, or how certainly vicious indulgences will terminate sooner or later in uneasiness and remorse. In the next place, he shews his error and folly, by not taking into his view a future state. His affections and desires are confined by the very nature of them to the limits of this life, and often to much narrower limits: since, exclusive of death, want of health, or the approach of old age, will destroy all the pleasures of voluptuousness. And then, the passion of avarice alone will remain in the can-

296 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
kered heart, and continue increasing to  
the end of a miserable life. During this  
whole course of voluptuousness and avarice,  
the idea and expectation of another  
life becomes fainter, and is absorbed in  
sensual and worldly passions: the heart be-  
comes dead, and the eye closed to every  
prospect of this kind. But if there be a  
life to come, and eternal state, it is evi-  
dent that such persons take in but a very  
contracted view of their own existence,  
entirely forget the principal part, and all  
their prudence and foresight fall infinitely  
short of that which is their only study, and  
which they fancy themselves to pursue  
most effectually; their own ease, safety,  
interest, and happiness.—A third instance  
in which they deceive themselves, and  
make a false estimate of future events, is  
in regard to the duration of their own  
lives. Their thoughts are continually  
employed either upon the sensual and  
worldly ends they propose to themselves,  
or the means of obtaining them. No room

is left in their narrow minds for ideas and views of a different kind : or if such ideas accidentally intrude, they are industriously expelled. Particularly, the continuance of their own lives is so absolutely necessary to the execution of their designs, and the enjoyment of their hopes, that the contrary supposition is either never admitted, or else immediately rejected, as unreasonable and offensive, or utterly impertinent and foreign to them. The slenderest probability passes in their imagination for a certainty, merely by excluding all apprehensions of the contrary. *I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.* What then? When he had lived to execute this part of his scheme—then—*I will say to my Soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.*—That he had *much goods*, appears from the story ; but how came he to be so positive that he had *many years* before him?—He was resolved to take it for granted, as a thing not to be questioned.

For

298 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
For *then* the most pleasing part of his  
scheme was to take effect; and he would  
come to the full enjoyment of all he had  
so carefully laid up. “ Then, said he,  
“ my soul shall take her fill, and all shall  
“ be ease, pleasure and joy.”—But the  
wisdom of providence thought fit to order  
otherwise. At the very time, that his  
mind was thus wrapt up, in the confident  
hope, of so much sensual felicity, the  
messenger of death was at hand, to dissi-  
pate his projects, like smoke in a whirl-  
wind, and hurry his soul away, he knew  
not whither. With how much meaning  
and propriety then is the appellation given  
to him, of *Fool!*—*this night thy soul shall  
be required of thee?*

NOTHING could more thorowly expose  
the vanity and folly of such worldly pre-  
sumption than the parable, as introduced  
in the context; especially the striking cir-  
cumstance of *his soul* being required of  
him *the very night* of *that day* which he  
had

had employed in contriving and determining how to enjoy life for *many years* to come. But had his life been spared for many days, or even years, the same event would have awaited him at last, and the difference might not have been so much in his favor, as human fancy is apt to imagine: on the contrary, it is more than possible that the sentence of immediate death might be an act of clemency to him; and that it was better for him to be cut off in the midst of his days and projects, than to have lived longer; as he would probably have laid up for himself, in the enjoyment of his much goods for many years, accumulated stores of misery and anguish, if not for the remainder of this life, yet for that which is to come.

THE last thing we proposed was to consider the parable as introductory to our Savior's following exhortations to his disciples.—*Therefore I say unto you, take no thought* (or be not anxious) *for your life,*  
*what*

300 *The rich Man laying up his Goods : Or,*  
*what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what*  
*ye shall put on. The life is more than meat,*  
*and the body is more than raiment. Consider*  
*the ravens : for they neither sow nor reap,*  
*which neither have store-house nor barn ; and*  
*God feedeth them. How much more are ye*  
*better than the fowls ? And which of you*  
*with taking thought can add to his stature*  
*(or age) one cubit ? If ye then be not able*  
*to do that which is least, why take ye thought*  
*for the rest ? Consider the lilies, how they*  
*grow—they toil not—they spin not—and yet*  
*I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory*  
*was not arrayed like one of these. If then God*  
*so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field,*  
*and to-morrow is cast into the oven ; how*  
*much more will he clothe you, O ye of little*  
*faith ?—And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or*  
*what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful*  
*mind (or elevated with vain hopes.) For*  
*all these things do the nations of the world seek*  
*after : and your father knoweth that ye have*  
*need of these things. But rather seek ye the*  
*kingdom*



*kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

THESE exhortations have a manifest connection with the parable, and are a natural and just application of it, as addressed to the Apostles, and first disciples. In this view, they have undoubtedly a peculiar propriety. But the general sense and argument contained in them are applicable in proportion to all mankind. For if life and health (the most necessary and valuable things) cannot be secured or prolonged by much thought and constant sollicitude, how vain is it to be depressed with care and anxiety, or elevated with flattering ideas and hopes, about other inferior matters?—such as—possessions—ornaments—cloathing—diet. Of what use, for instance, are splendid garments to the body that is decaying and moulding into dust? or the most exquisite food to the sickly and loathing appetite? or immense possessions to him that must quick-

302 *The rich Man laying up his Goods: Or,*  
ly leave them, never to return?—But if  
men place their chief honor and happiness  
in the endowments of the mind, in the  
possession of knowledge and wisdom, and  
the exercise of virtue and goodness; these  
are indeed valuable goods, and are truly  
*laid up for many years*: they afford pleasure  
and satisfaction superior to all other; and  
men may promise themselves the enjoyment  
of *this kind of wealth*, not only through all  
the stages of this life, but to the boundless  
ages of eternity.

It seems almost superfluous to observe,  
that the parable and subsequent exhorta-  
tions were not intended to restrain men  
from a prudent and diligent prosecution  
of their worldly affairs, or from making  
provision for the due support of themselves  
or their posterity, or from encreasing their  
substance by lawful and honorable me-  
thods, or enjoying it in innocent enter-  
tainments, and with a social liberality.  
Neither the prudent oeconomist, nor the

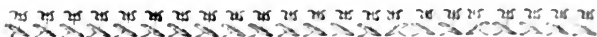
industrious and provident husband, nor the wealthy proprietor, nor even the increaser and accumulator of wealth, nor yet the expender of it, in plentiful and hospitable living; none of these, separate or united, considered merely as such, come up to the character described in the parable. He is represented indeed as thoughtful, careful, prudent, provident—but to what end?—*only* for the gratification of *himself*, in ease, mirth, and sensual pleasure—as making provision, *only* for the ignoble, worthless, precarious, and perishing *part of himself*. On the other hand, the wise and virtuous, along with all their worldly cares, pursuits and amusements, attend to, and cultivate the more excellent and valuable *part*—and, by doing good to others, provide for *that self*, which will not perish, but live and flourish for ever, in increasing dignity and happiness.





## DISCOURSE II.

The Widow's Affiduity: Or, the  
Benefit of Perseverance.





## L U K E xviii. 1.

*And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not faint : saying, There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself—Tho' I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you*

*that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

**T**O understand this parable, we must take it in connection with the latter part of the foregoing chapter; in which our Savior foretells and describes the situation his disciples would be reduced to after his death, and before the destruction of Jerusalem. He appears to have had two principal points in view: one to preserve his followers from being involved in that general ruin, which was coming upon the *Jewish* nation—the other, to establish them in their Christian faith and piety. These two views were so far coincident, as their remembering and observing his instructions would be the means of their safety. The warning and advice which he gives to this end, is to make a timely escape out of the city of Jerusalem and the neighboring country; and, as soon as they perceived the signs  
which



which he describes, to use all possible speed, without attempting to save their goods, or so much as to *look behind them*; lest, like *Lot's wife*, they should be surprized and perish in the attempt: for the ruin would be spread over the whole country, like the *lightning* which fills the whole atmosphere. If then they suffered themselves to be deceived by appearances, and because they saw their neighbors feasting and marrying, as in full peace and security, should conclude that all was safe; or if, when the danger became visible, they listened to the tales of credulous and confident persons, pretending that a savior or deliverer was risen up, in this place or the other; the mistake would be fatal, and they would perish, like the rest of the *Jews*, through their own negligence and unbelief: but if they steadily confided in his predictions, and pursued his instructions, they should be saved. Some of them, upon hearing this prophetic description and warning, were desirous to know

where the storm would chiefly fall, or what particular part of the country would be so certainly and suddenly exposed to ruin. He answers by a proverbial expression, *Wherever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* Wherever the prey is, there will be the birds of prey: i. e. wherever the body, riches and strength of the *Jewish* nation lay, there will the *Roman* armies be assembled.—But beside this common calamity and distress, the disciples, or Christians, would suffer peculiar hardships and discouragements; as they would be at the same time hated and persecuted by all men, especially by their countrymen the *Jews*, and would find no redress for the injuries they sustained; neither the Jewish nor the heathen magistrate being then disposed to do them justice, and grant them protection. Nay, it would seem as if divine providence itself had abandoned them to the power of their enemies, and left them in circumstances the most distressed and hopeless, in consequence

quence of their Christian profession. In this dark and melancholy prospect therefore, their faith, piety and patience would be put to the severest trial, and they would be under strong temptation to desert Christianity, from an absolute despair of finding any protection or safety in the profession of it. Our Savior foreseeing this extremity, and intending to fortify their minds against it, adds to the prophetic description and advice which he had given them in the foregoing chapter, the parable of the text, “ of a judge in a city, “ who feared not God, neither regarded “ man; and a widow in that city, who “ came to implore his protection, and in- “ treat him to compel her adversary to “ make reparation for the injury she had “ received, and who at length obtained “ redress merely by persevering in her ap- “ plication.” And hence he teaches his disciples to infer, that if this oppressed widow did obtain, at length, by her constancy and patience, a redress of her grie-

vances, from a judge, who had no awe either of divine or human authority, and so little disposition to justice, or compassion for the injured, that her importunity was more prevalent with him than the right of the case; how much more certainly might they expect protection and deliverance from the all-righteous judge of the world, tho' he might seem to delay it for a long time.—*Hear, saith he, what the unjust judge saith: and shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry unto him day and night, tho' he bear long with them?— I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily.* The meaning is, that tho' his disciples would think the season of trial and affliction very long, yet if they persevered, the providence of God would certainly in due time grant them deliverance, and would soon avenge them, or vindicate their cause, upon their enemies the persecuting Jews.

OUR Evangelist observes, that he spoke this parable to the end, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* The word *Men* is not in the original, but that they (his disciples) ought to pray always, and not to faint: *i. e.* not be tempted to despair in those seasons of trial and distress, but to maintain a steady confidence in the justice and protection of divine providence. We find another parable to the like purpose in Chap. 11. ver. 5. *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.—And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not—the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed—I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Tho' he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.—* This parable follows, and appears to have

a reference to, the petition of prayer, *Lead us not unto temptation, but deliver us from evil:* and by both our Savior intended to exhort his disciples to constancy and an unwearied perseverance, in the midst of temptations and discouragements. To this end, he represents both petitioners as obtaining their ends merely by constancy of application.—It is, then, a wrong construction of these parables, to suppose, that he intended to represent to his disciples the character and disposition of the supreme Being—or to recommend frequency and importunity in verbal acts of devotion: both these views were foreign to his purpose; which was only to convince his disciples, by such familiar examples, of the importance of perseverance, and the benefit and success which they might certainly expect from steadiness and constancy in their Christian piety. On the other hand, nothing could be more to his purpose, than to produce examples of success, in cases where it was derived, not so  
much

much from the disposition of the persons, to whom the application was supposed to be made, as from the unwearied patience and constant endeavors of the applying parties. The injured widow gained her cause—the friend in need succeeded in his design—merely by their own patience and constancy. Had they despaired of success, and desisted from their purpose—had their patience been exhausted—had they been tempted to indolence and negligence, they would have failed of success, and lost all the fruit of their former attempts. But they were resolved not to be discouraged by difficulties, but to do all that was in their power, and to try the effect of patience, assiduity, and repeated efforts, tho' appearances were so much against them; and tho' they were aware, that there was not a sufficient sense of justice in one case, or of friendship in the other, on which to found any certain hope. If this then was a wise and right conduct, in such cases where the success depended upon the disposition

position and good-will of other men—men, whose indisposition and reluctance was to be overcome by mere dint of application; how much more certainly may the greatest advantage and success be expected from constancy in the cause of virtue and piety, when the success depends, not upon the justice, or affection, of a fellow-creature—of an *unjust judge*, or an *unkind friend*—but upon the disposition and conduct of the all-righteous Judge of the World, and friend of good men?—This appears to be the purport and design of our Savior's address to his disciples, and the familiar examples he proposes to them—not to convince them of the character or disposition of the Deity—or lead them to imagine, that they could prevail with him by mere frequency or importunity of petitions—but to inspire them with resolution, with invincible courage, and unwearied perseverance, from a perfect assurance of success, and a firm confidence in the divine justice and goodness. The  
examples



examples which he produces to this end, are such as were best adapted to the capacity, temper, and situation of his disciples: and we have no reason to doubt, but that, in the time of their calamity and distress, the Apostles and other Christians *remembered* these parables, and resumed fresh courage, resolution, and patience, from a reflection upon them.

THE expression of our Evangelist, *To the end that they ought always to pray and not to faint*, is equivalent to that of the Apostle, *not to be weary in well-doing; for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not. And to run with patience the race which was set before you—looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith—lest you should be weary and faint in your minds.* Such expressions are properly understood to denote constancy in the general practice of virtue and piety—not any particular duty, much less the continual repetition of any external action. The very term *praying*, accord-

ing to the sense of it in the New Testament, means, not so much any external action or utterance of words, as the internal disposition of piety, or an habitual confidence in the wisdom, justice and goodness of the supreme Being. In this sense, we are exhorted to *pray without ceasing*—i. e. not to be incessantly pouring out verbal petitions or thanksgivings, but to preserve a religious temper and habit of mind. It is certain, that men may use the most solemn words of devotion, and pour out numberless praises and supplications, with the greatest seeming fervor and zeal, without praying at all, in the proper sense of the word: and on the other hand, may conceive the most sincere devotion of heart, and act from the noblest confidence in the justice and goodness of the Deity, separate from all external signs or expressions of worship.

BESIDE—our Savior expressly and solemnly warns us against the error of imagining,

gining, that we shall be heard in devotion for our much speaking.—*When ye pray, saith he, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do. For they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.* By the specimen of prayer also, which he hath given us to imitate, as well as by the preceding caution, he appears to recommend a simplicity and brevity in our acts of worship.

FURTHER, The circumstances of the disciples, to which these parables, especially that of the text, plainly refer, were those of temptation and distress; when their Christian piety and patience would be put to the proof. Therefore neither of them should be understood as intended to inculcate mere assiduity in external acts of worship, any further than as perseverance in any external duty is a requisite qualification for obtaining the end, for which  
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that duty was appointed. As constancy in the general practice of religion is necessary to our obtaining the general end of religion; so perseverance in any particular duty or virtue, is the way to obtain that benefit or reward which is specifically annexed to it. If then, through impatience or inconstancy of mind, men either abandon the cause of religion in general, or desist from the practice of any particular duty, they so far lose their integrity, and deprive themselves of all the advantages that would result from it. The practice of virtue upon the principles of piety, especially in times of persecution or extraordinary temptation, implies an appeal to the cognizance and judgment of the supreme Being. It is therefore a continual internal exercise of devotion or prayer, or an application of mind to the supreme Being for his protection and favor, and by perseverance in this temper and purpose of mind, without *fainting*, or being overcome by any discouragements, men will  
affuredly

assuredly obtain that divine protection and favor which they hope for. The examples produced shew with peculiar force, how much it is the part of wisdom, not to be discouraged in a good cause, but to persevere with indefatigable patience and industry. The application which our Savior makes of them to his disciples, is, *Ask and ye shall receive—seek and ye shall find—knock and it shall be opened unto you.* And again, *Hear what the unjust Judge saith—And shall not God vindicate the cause of his elect,* (his faithful and approved servants) *who cry to him day and night, tho' he bear long with them—*or, tho' he defer for a long time?—The spirit and meaning of which is, an assurance of success, of deliverance, protection, and reward, at all events, and tho' circumstances appear ever so discouraging; if men will persist in their endeavors, and instead of relinquishing the righteous cause, maintain it with an unshaken constancy, and magnanimous perseverance.

THE effects of the distinguishing justice of the Deity are not always speedy or apparent: on the contrary, the best men, instead of receiving any immediate marks of his approbation and favor, are sometimes exposed to great sufferings, and the prospect of things around them is exceeding dark.—But in such a situation, are men to abandon themselves to despair, give up all hope of divine favor, and think the cause of virtue and religion neglected and forsaken by the supreme Governor of the world?—Ought they not still to confide in his justice and benignity, and by unremitting constancy hope to obtain at last deliverance from evil, and the blessings of his favor?—If perseverance be so powerful a means of success in obtaining human protection, and the assistance and supplies which men bestow one upon another, may ~~we~~ we not with infinitely more reason expect the like success from perseverance in religion, and to obtain at last the favor of Almighty God?—In the ex-  
amples

amples recited, the ground and motive upon which the petitioners persisted in their applications, notwithstanding the first refusals, was a confidence in that sense of humanity, which is natural to mankind, and which was only the more strongly excited by their assiduity and perseverance. But the mind of the supreme Governor of the world needs no excitation to acts of justice or kindness, being immutably disposed to what is wisest and best. How inconsistent then is it, that men should put so much confidence in each other, as to persist in their endeavors to obtain favors and benefits, notwithstanding many difficulties and delays, even from persons of a bad character, or who discover an unwillingness to befriend them; yet have so little faith and confidence in the all-perfect Being, as to despair of his favor, and desert the cause of virtue and religion, upon account of some present discouragements? If he does not see fit to discover his justice and

benevolence, in the time and manner we may desire, are we to give up our religious hope, change our honest and virtuous purposes, and renounce our integrity? Can men shew so much steadiness and patience in the prosecution of their temporal ends, and to gain the good-will and assistance of their fellow-creatures; and is it not much more reasonable—prudent—expedient—necessary—to persevere in virtue and religion, and to wait with patience for the effects of divine approbation and favor! Dare we not trust to supreme wisdom, justice and goodness? or shall we act in respect to the Deity, as if we had no fixed esteem of his character, or confidence in his government? All hope of success in temporal affairs, depends upon the mutable dispositions of men; who, beside their ignorance and weakness, are capable of unjust and malevolent designs—but in religion, upon the immutable counsels of a Being who cannot



not do wrong, neglect the righteous cause, or forget his suffering servants.

Now from what hath been said, the design of the parable sufficiently appears, and its propriety and aptitude to invigorate the minds of his disciples, in the profession of Christianity and the practice of virtue, and to preserve them from *fainting* or being dispirited, during the long scene of oppression and persecution which they were to undergo. For nothing could effectually support their courage, but an entire confidence in the justice of the Deity, and a fixed assurance, that at all events, and notwithstanding the darkest appearances, he would in due time vindicate their cause, and grant them protection and redress—that he would discover, at last, his own righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day. The sum of the argument is this, if men, even unjust men, may be prevailed upon to vindicate a just cause; how much

more will God vindicate his oppressed servants, who cry to him day and night, tho' he seem to delay for a long time? And if constancy and perseverance are found to be so efficacious means of obtaining either justice or kindness from men, how much more from God?—*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?* i. e. tho' men have infinitely more reason to confide in the justice and goodness of the Deity, than in the disposition of the wisest and best of their fellow-mortals, yet how few act steadily on this principle? What is more uncommon than such a *faith*, considered not as a point of speculation, but a ground and motive of practice? How easily are men discouraged by a prospect of difficulties? how hardly persuaded to put so much confidence in the divine justice and benignity, as to forego their worldly interest, and courageously encounter danger and distress for the sake of virtue and religion? Notwithstanding all the experience they have  
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of the injustice and unkindness of each other, yet in fact they generally discover more faith and confidence in the probity, prudence, and good will of each other, than in the wisdom, rectitude, and goodness of the Deity; though they profess at the same time to believe, that he is the best of Beings. But a confidence in the divine wisdom, justice and benignity, is not only in itself a rational principle, but the noblest upon which a rational creature can act, and the only one upon which the practice of virtue can be rationally and effectually supported in the severest trials.

LET us endeavor then to act upon this principle through the whole of life. Whatever discouragement to virtue, or temptation to evil, we may meet with, let us never faint in our minds, or be weary of well-doing; but continue steadfast and immoveable—referring all future events to the providence of God, without the least doubt of his perfect justice—and esteem-

ing ourselves, even in the greatest adversity, or at the visible approach of death, as secure in his protection, and happy in the expectation of his most righteous judgment.





## MATTHEW XVIII. 21.

*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?—Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven.—Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain King which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought before him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and*





*heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

**I**T is not seeing, hearing or reading that makes a man wise; but reflecting upon what he sees, hears, and reads, and understanding it. Men of shallow capacity, or of little attention, or blinded by prejudices, may not understand the language of our Savior, and therefore may suppose, that it hath either little or no meaning in it, or some mysterious meaning which cannot be comprehended. Yet never were any words used in human discourse so significant and comprehensive, and at the same time so intelligible, to those who will give a rational, impartial, and close attention to them. A proper consideration of the whole chapter of which the text is a part, may serve to convince us of the truth and justice of the foregoing observations: the sense of which I shall endeavor to represent, as it is intro-

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ductory to the following parable of the generous and forgiving Prince, and his ungenerous and unforgiving subject and servant.

OUR Savior intending to eradicate from the minds of his Apostles the passions of pride, ambition, and revenge, took the following opportunity of reproof and instruction. They were disputing and striving one with another for pre-eminence—all were aspiring to be uppermost, and enjoy the chief posts of dignity and preferment, in that kingdom, which they supposed, at that time, he would certainly erect and assume to himself, in this world. *Judas*, who was his *steward*, and carried the purse, might probably please himself with the ambitious hope of rising to grandeur, and being the high treasurer in the Messiah's kingdom. But being disappointed in his worldly expectations, and having no relish for the spirituality of our Savior's doctrine and designs, in the height of his  
disgust

disgust and resentment, he went and took a bribe from the chief priests, and betrayed his master; imagining, as we may probably suppose, that he could by this method bring things to an issue, and compel him to assume temporal power, in order to deliver himself from his mortal enemies: he might also flatter himself, that by some artifice he could obtain his master's forgiveness, and regain his favor. The *other Apostles* were men of honesty and sincerity, and were struck with the utmost horror, when our Lord discovered to them Judas's hypocrisy and intended treachery. Yet they were not free from human frailties, and the influence of worldly passions. He therefore found it necessary to apply the most seasonable and powerful remedy, against this epidemic distemper, which had infected their minds. His expressly disclaiming all temporal power, and foretelling his own sufferings and death, were not sufficient to the purpose. Such declarations were so opposite

to their prejudices, that they knew not how to believe him: and our Apostle Peter took him aside and expostulated with him, saying, *This shall not be unto thee, Lord*—as being surprized and shocked to the last degree at such declarations, and taking it for granted that he had some very different meaning from what his words seemed to imply. As then his disciples had so much of this worldly temper in them, and openly discovered it, by disputing and contending one with another, for precedence and preferment, and at last appealing to him to decide the controversy, *Which of them should be greatest?*—he called for a little child, and set him in the midst of them: and assured them, *that if they were not converted,*—*i. e.* if they did not divest themselves of their foolish pride, their vain ambition, and their mutual envy, strife and dissension, and become as free from such worldly passions as *little children*, instead of becoming the *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven, they should *not enter into it at all.*

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But which-ever of them *should humble himself as that little child*, and preserve a mind the most pure and untainted with the passions and desires for worldly greatness and preferment, that man should be *the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. So different would that kingdom be from any of the kingdoms of this world; the dignities and preferments of which are usually obtained, not by being *converted* and becoming as *little children*, but by men's perverting themselves and others, by bribing or compelling their inferiors, by flattering or inveighing against their superiors, by disputing and declaiming, by intrigue and faction, and sometimes by open hostility and rapine.

HE then proceeds to assure them, that if any of his disciples or followers should attain to such a temper and character, as he meant to describe by their becoming as little children, he would esteem him as a person of so much worth, that every act

of kindness done to that person, from a motive of respect to his goodness, he would accept in the same manner, and put an equal value upon it, as if it had been done immediately to himself. *Whosoever, saith he, shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me.* And on the other hand, *Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* i. e. “Whosoever shall abuse, “oppress or persecute any such person, on “account of his Christian piety and goodness, it would be better for that oppressor to suffer the most violent and ignominious death, than to do any such act of violence to one such innocent and worthy person, how poor or mean soever such person may appear in his outward circumstances.” So much will men’s honor and preferment in the future state, or on the contrary their disgrace and punishment, depend upon the humanity

and respect, or the contempt and cruelty, which they shew to the humble, sincere, conscientious, faithful professors of Christianity, tho' in the lowest condition of life: and so widely were the disciples mistaken, when they imagined, that they could rise to be uppermost in their master's favor, and the posts of his kingdom, by the efforts of an ambitious and contentious spirit.

OUR Savior then extending his view forward, and taking a prospect of the oppressions and persecutions which he foresaw would be practised in the world, said, *Wo unto the world, because of offences.* From which, and from the whole passage it appears, that by the term *Offences* he did not mean such petty trespasses, indignities, or affronts, as are frequent in private life, and in every state of human society, and which are magnified into injuries and oppressions, only by pride and undue resentment—but such acts of fraud or force,

as strike at the mind and conscience of another, which tend to enslave his understanding, subdue his integrity, or impair his goodness. The word in the original signified at first a *stumbling-block* laid in the way of any person secretly or in the dark, on purpose that he might fall upon it, and bruise or maim himself: and from thence it came to signify the like action in respect to the mind or conscience of any person. So when the Apostle Paul declares, *that he would never eat flesh or drink wine, rather than offend a weak brother*, he does not mean rather than disoblige him; for it may be our duty in some cases to do things that will not only disoblige, but even provoke and irritate unreasonable men: but he means, rather than be the cause of hurting the mind, and wounding the conscience, of a weak brother. *For it must needs be that offences come: i. e.* “ Such  
 “ is the state of the world, and the per-  
 “ versity and malignity of mankind, that  
 “ such oppressions will certainly be practi-  
 “ fed :



“ sed: and no remedy can be applied sufficient to prevent them: even that religion of peace and love which I came to establish, on the foundation of a divine authority, instead of preventing them, will rather be the innocent occasion of them.” *But too to that man by whom the offence cometh.* “ Whosoever shall be guilty through wantonness, insolence, or malevolence, of offending the meanest Christian; *i. e.* of attacking the peace and integrity of his mind, of exposing him to difficulties and temptations, on account of his honesty and piety, and endeavoring by seduction or compulsion to make him act against his own conscience—whosoever applies the allurements or terrors of this world to corrupt his mind, and alienate his heart from true religion;—that *offender* shall inevitably suffer the most dreadful punishment.”

WHEREFORE if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire: *i. e.* Mens innocence and fidelity are endangered chiefly by worldly hopes or fears, by the prospect either of temporal advantages and rewards on the one hand, or of losses and sufferings on the other: and to such trials the first disciples of our Savior would certainly be exposed. But of such inestimable value are integrity and a good conscience, that it is better, not only to resign worldly advantages, but to undergo temporal sufferings—not only to part with the external appendages of riches, honors and preferments, but even to cut off a hand or a foot, or pull out an eye—*i. e.* part with the dearest possession, whenever it becomes  
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an offence or snare—than, tho' possessed of every other endowment, to suffer a violated innocence and wounded conscience, and to perish for ever, by being thrown at last into the \* hell of fire.

TAKE heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. It may seem to men in power, and who are possessed of the riches of this world, and to many others, a very slight offence, or none at all, to oppress and persecute the simple, honest, conscientious, believing part of mankind, as being poor, obscure, contemptible persons. Specious pretences and arguments may be invented to excuse or justify their treating such persons with indignity and barbarity, and attempting to subdue their integrity, or rob them of their religion. It may be presumed that such actions shall escape with impunity, because the sufferers are low and weak, and apparently destitute of friends, and of every power sufficient for their protection. But our Lord warns his

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\* *ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμεῖς τὰ μικρὰ.*

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disciples

disciples in the most direct and solemn terms, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones.* For I tell you, “That how  
 “ weak and low soever they may appear,  
 “ and destitute of all human friendship  
 “ and protection, they have most power-  
 “ ful friends above, and are under the  
 “ more immediate guardianship of the  
 “ highest angels in heaven, even of those  
 “ who have the most immediate access to,  
 “ and receive the most direct orders from,  
 “ the Sovereign Lord of the universe,  
 “ and protector of all his creatures.”—  
 This I apprehend to be the meaning of the  
 expression, *Their angels do always behold the  
 face of my Father which is in heaven.*

FOR *the Son of Man is come to seek and to  
 save that which was lost: i. e.* such also is  
 the employment and design of the Son of  
 Man, *to seek and to save that which was lost:*  
 i. e. the most obscure, despised, and aban-  
 doned part of mankind; even such persons  
 as are apparently least worthy of all hu-  
 man

man regard. Such is the spirit and design of the Savior of the world—such the temper of Heaven—and such the will and pleasure of the greatest and best of Beings, who is not only the shepherd of Israel, but the universal pastor of mankind. “ For (to bring the subject to a level with your capacity) *What think you? if any shepherd finds that one of his flock is gone astray, does he immediately abandon it—withdraw his care and protection from it—and leave it to perish?—Does he not go in quest of it, and endeavor to recover it—Even so it is not the will of your Father in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*”—We find in 15th of Luke, that our Savior employs this same parable or comparison to illustrate the propriety and goodness of his own conduct, in associating with, and endeavoring to reclaim the publicans and sinners, who were looked upon with the utmost contempt by the scribes and pharisees.

HE proceeds in the next verse, from the more aggravated injuries and oppressions, to consider those lesser provocations and trespasses, which frequently occur in human society, and to give his disciples some instructions concerning them. *Moreover*, saith he, *if thy brother shall trespass against thee.*—The word here translated *trespass*, is translated in the text by the word *sin*—*How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?*—But it is of a far softer import than the word which is before translated *offend* and *offence*: and therefore our Savior is now considering, as we have observed, those lesser faults or trespasses, which men more frequently commit one against another, and which are often termed in English offences, tho' they fall far short of the original word in the New Testament translated *Offence.*—*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*—The first step to be taken then,

in such cases, is by way of private hint, amicable expostulation, and fair representation of the matter. If this proves sufficient to convince and reclaim, it is happy—"you have restored peace and harmony—you have gained a friend, upon the easiest terms and in the best manner." *But if he will not bear thee, then take with thee two or three more; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established:* i. e. "that you may have proper and sufficient vouchers for yourself, that you have fairly represented the matter—that you have added nothing by way of aggravation—that you have truth and justice on your side—and consequently that it is only the refractoriness and ill-temper of the other party that prevents a reconciliation."

*And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church:* i. e. "Make your next appeal to the whole society or body you are connected with, that the matter may be decided by their arbitration."

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The Jews had in their synagogues a kind of court, which had not indeed a compulsive authority of law, but which might be termed in English a court of conscience, or of arbitration, or of advice. It was to this court or assembly (tho' the word is improperly translated *Church*) to which our Savior directs his disciples to make their second appeal. *But if he neglect to bear the church*—i. e. “if the injurious  
 “ party refuse to submit to the arbitra-  
 “ tion of this court or assembly,” *let him be unto thee as a beaten-man or a publican*—i. e. “have no farther acquaintance  
 “ with him—consider him as unworthy  
 “ of your regard—or if the injury be  
 “ such, that it appears requisite to your  
 “ own safety, or the ends of public justice,  
 “ to make an example of him, or reduce  
 “ him to reason by compulsion; religion  
 “ does by no means forbid you from se-  
 “ curing yourselves, or executing justice  
 “ upon him, by carrying your cause be-  
 “ fore the Roman magistrate.” The Jews  
 in



in general held it lawful to prosecute a *Heathen* or a *Publican* in the *Roman* courts. But many of them had a scruple of conscience in regard to prosecuting a *brother Jew* in the like manner, and thought their own courts should decide all such suits; and that no appeal ought to be made, in such cases, to the *Roman* magistrate. But our Savior's determination of the matter was this—That if the injurious party, tho' a brother Jew, should not be reclaimed, neither by private and amicable expostulation, nor by the opinion and consent of two or three witnesses, nor by the arbitration of the assembly—it might then be equally just and right to prosecute him before the *Roman* magistrate, as if he had been a heathen or a publican. The *Publicans*, tho' *Jews*, (as well as the heathen strangers) were under the immediate protection of the *Roman* magistrate; and could not be prosecuted for any misdemeanors, in their office of collecting the taxes, except in the *Roman* courts; nor had  
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the Jews any scruple of conscience about carrying on such prosecutions against them. This seems to be the reason why our Savior expresseth it thus, *Let him be unto thee as an heathen or a publican;* without any design of pointing out either the heathens or publicans as objects of contempt or aversion. On the contrary, many instances may be alledged to shew, that, in some respects, he preferred *them* even to those Jews, who put on the greatest appearance of religion, and were thought most respectable for their quality and character.

IN the following verses, he assures his disciples, that if they were *converted*, and became men of that temper and character which he had described, and consequently qualified to be his Apostles, (for the temper which he had described was an essential qualification of an Apostle) *i. e.* if they would divest themselves of their worldly vanity and ambition, and the pas-  
sions

sions of envy, insolence and revenge, and become, as he expresses it in another place, *wise as serpents and harmless as doves*—or as St. Paul expresses the same thing, *Men in understanding, but children in malice*;—they would not become, in consequence of this temper and character, weak, ignoble and contemptible persons, as they might timorously imagine; but, on the contrary, would attain to real dignity and preferment, and become most truly great and powerful: insomuch that *whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever they should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven*: i. e. Heaven itself would support them in all their designs and determinations.—*Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing which ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven*: i. e. If with the disposition and qualifications which he had assigned, any two of his Apostles should join in offering up any petition to the Father Almighty,

for any power in the execution of their office, it would be granted them. Thus by being *converted*, and *humbling themselves as little children*, they would in fact become the *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven. For he adds, *Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*: i. e. “The miraculous power  
“ and authority with which I am endued  
“ from above, shall certainly accompany  
“ the joint counsels and endeavors of my  
“ faithful Apostles and Disciples.”

WE have thus far endeavored to explain the chapter from the beginning to the text—to which we shall only add one remark—which is, how expressly our Savior assigns the best moral dispositions, as qualifications essentially necessary to receiving the miraculous and apostolic powers. To confirm this remark, we may observe a memorable circumstance recorded in the gospel history; namely, that the Apostles themselves once attempted to work a miracle,

racle, but were not able. For we find in the preceding chapter, that when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered, and said, O faithless and perverse generation, (this he seems to have spoke to his own Apostles) how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil—i. e. the spirit of lunacy, for he is before called a lunatic—and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said—Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. For verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain—Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.—In this passage

he plainly imputes the inability of his Disciples to work a miracle, to their evil dispositions; as being at that time possessed of a worldly temper, and destitute of those moral qualifications, without which he could not impart to them the miraculous power. Those evil dispositions he endeavors to correct by his instructions in this chapter, the sense of which we have been explaining and representing.

To come now to the text. The Apostle Peter was naturally of a more sanguine and choleric temper, more warm in his attachments and resentments, than the other Disciples. Therefore, having listened to his Master's instructions concerning the duty of placability and forgiveness, he was desirous to know thorowly how far our Savior extended that duty: and came to him with this question—*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin or trespass against me, and I forgive him?—till seven times?*—He seems to think that he had extended it to  
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the utmost, in saying *seven times*. But our Savior replied, *I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven: i. e.* no limits are to be assigned to a plausible, reconcileable and forgiving disposition. How much soever trespasses are multiplied or aggravated, yet whenever, and so often as, the injurious party shall appear to be sensible of the wrong he has done, to repent of it sincerely, and desire forgiveness, it always ought to be granted. Then our Lord, to convince his Apostle Peter entirely of the indispensable importance of the aforesaid duty, relates to him and the other disciples the following parable, which will be the subject of the next discourse.







## DISCOURSE IV.

The generous Monarch: Or, the  
Duty of Forgiveness.





## MATTHEW xviii. 23.

*Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain King which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which ought him ten thousand talents, &c.*

**W**ITH a view to convince his Apostle Peter (who had asked him, How oft shall my brother trespass against me and I forgive him?) of the indispensable importance of the duty of placability and forgiveness, our Savior related to him and the other Disciples the following story.

## THE APOLOGUE OR FABLE.

THERE was a certain Monarch, who was resolved to inspect thorowly the state of his treasury. He had a number of servants employed in collecting an immense revenue: one of whom owed him ten thousand talents\*. Being brought into the royal presence, and appearing insolvent, the King commanded that all his possessions should be seized, and himself and family sold for slaves, in order to make good the payment. The receiver of the revenue, conscious of his own negligence and misconduct in his office, threw himself upon his knees, in a terrible consternation, and earnestly entreated the King to allow him *time*, promising that he would fully discharge his obligations. The King, moved with compassion, not only granted his petition, and released

\* Near 200,000 l. Sterling.

him

him from the arrest, but forgave him the whole debt, upon a tacit condition of his fidelity and gratitude, and that he would shew in his future conduct a proper sense of so signal an act of generosity and clemency. But the same servant was hardly gone from his master's presence, when, meeting with one of his fellow-servants who owed him an \* hundred pieces of silver, he violently seized him, and demanded payment. His fellow-servant, with the same marks of submission which the other had shewn to his sovereign, endeavored to soften his rigor, and to obtain some respite. But instead of being moved to lenity, he instantly taw him into prison, till he should pay the debt. The other servants of the court, who were witnesses to this conduct, gave information of it to the King; who immediately summoned him into his presence, and reproached him in the following terms:

\* Value about 5 or 6l. of our money.

“ Ungrate-

“ Ungrateful and wicked servant! I for-  
 “ gave you all that debt, large as it was,  
 “ in condescension to your intreaty.—  
 “ Should not my example then, (if there  
 “ had been no other motive) and the  
 “ large experience yourself so lately had  
 “ of my clemency, have produced a better  
 “ effect upon your mind, and taught you  
 “ to shew some lenity to your fellow-ser-  
 “ vant?” Then, with a just indignation,  
 he revoked his promise of favor, and com-  
 mitted him to the officers of inquest, that  
 they might extort from him the whole  
 debt, or make him suffer deserved punish-  
 ment for the deficiency.—Such is the con-  
 stitution of the kingdom of heaven—such  
 the disposition of the all-righteous Sove-  
 reign of the world—*So likewise will my*  
*heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your*  
*hearts forgive not every one his brother their*  
*trespasses.*

Thus the Savior of the world explains  
 to his disciples, the rule and measure of  
 the

the judicial government of the supreme Being, in respect to human trespasses and offences, by an example taken from human government. To this end he represents the procedure of a King of absolute power, (as most of the eastern sovereigns were and are to this day) but at the same time prudent, magnanimous, just, and merciful. It was the custom of many of those courts, to educate slaves who appeared to have a promising genius and capacity, at the royal expence, in order to qualify them for future employments in the state. The same manner is at this day practised in some eastern governments. Therefore we may observe, that the word translated servants might have been as properly rendered slaves. For tho' they were advanced to important and lucrative posts, such as those of collecting the royal revenue, yet they were entirely dependent on the will of the Sovereign, and immediately accountable to him for every part of their conduct. And our Savior describes  
human

human characters and manners with perfect propriety. Nature, truth, and consistency are to be found in all the figures he exhibits. The fitness and significance of those in this parable appears, as they serve to represent the unlimited sovereignty of God, the entire dependence of his creatures upon him, and their accountability to him for the performance or neglect of every office or duty assigned to them. The divine benignity and clemency is also exhibited in a most engaging view, by the instance of an absolute sovereign on earth, who forgave his servant, or slave, so large a debt, from a motive of mere clemency, tho' he wanted no power to enforce his demand in any manner he thought fit.

ABSOLUTE power is found to be the strongest temptation in human nature to arbitrariness and tyranny, or at least to methods of rigor and severity: yet there have been some examples of despotic sovereigns,  
who



who have ruled with great moderation, and given signal proofs of their generosity and clemency, as well as justice. The highest power on earth may be, and sometimes hath been, united to more than common goodness and humanity. If earthly sovereigns then, tho' absolute in power, may be nevertheless just and merciful; whence comes it to pass, that we should ever apprehend, or suspect, that the Judge of the whole earth will not do right? *Can mortal man be more just than God? Can man be more merciful than his Maker?* His dominion is indeed infinite and his power extends to every thing in nature: but it is impossible that he should have the least temptation or disposition to use his power to any end, or in any manner, that is not worthy of perfect wisdom, justice and goodness. We may rely with absolute safety on the equity and clemency of his government, for this very reason, in conjunction with others, that his power is absolute and unlimited. Mankind, and  
even

even the angels of heaven, are indeed in respect to him of no higher rank, or rather infinitely lower, than the meanest slave in respect to the greatest potentate on earth. But this consideration should be so far from destroying, or diminishing, our affection to him, or confidence in his measures, that it should rather inspire us with the more pleasing hope and stronger assurance, that if a Being so inconceivably great hath any regard (as experience and the voice of nature proclaim aloud that he has) to creatures so weak, imperfect and infinitely beneath him, it can be no other than that of infinite generosity, kindness and mercy. But this very regard includes justice also, or a punishment of those who presume to act in a manner contrary to his gracious will and purpose: and for this very reason, he will chastise, as well as cherish, like a father, his children; will execute laws like a good sovereign, and like a righteous judge cut off incurable offenders; and in all cases shew his favor

or

or displeasure in exact proportion to the grateful improvement, or ungrateful abuse, of his goodness and lenity. Need we any arguments to convince us, that the constitution of nature is kind and friendly to us; and that we live under a divine government, not arbitrary and severe, but good and mild as well as just?—We ought to need no arguments—common sense should teach us—our own experience should inform us—all the enjoyments, hopes and prospects of life, health, and social happiness should convince us, beyond all doubt, that the Sovereign of the universe is not more absolute and uncontrollable in his dominion, than liberal and merciful in his disposition. If the evils and calamities to which human nature is sometimes exposed, be recited as an objection; let the follies and iniquities of mankind, their injustice and perfidy, severity and cruelty, one towards another, be in like manner thrown together, and put into the balance; and we shall find reason to say,

say,

say, that he does not deal with us according to the full measure of our iniquities, and that his strokes are far lighter than the load of human guilt. With respect to individuals who have transgressed, and are become criminals in the eye and presence of their eternal Sovereign, divine justice is so far from being sudden, violent and inexorable, that it is usually slow in its motion, unwilling to strike, accepts the sinner's confession and intreaty, grants him a reprieve, puts him again upon his good behavior, affords him time and means for rectifying past errors, and discharging present obligations. It is from the very *excess* (if I may be allowed the expression) of lenity and patience, intermixed with the justice of divine government over mankind, that some have been tempted to question, whether any divine justice at all is executed in this world, and others to doubt, whether there ever will be any in another world. This is an error in the other extreme: for, in fact, men often  
feel

feel the strokes of the punitive justice of God in the very inmost recess of their hearts, in that secret consciousness of guilt, that fear, shame, and remorse, which penetrate the thinking soul. But still repentance heals the internal wound, and stops the process of divine justice: and an obstinate hardened wickedness alone goes on to utter misery and destruction. In this world, in every system of intelligent beings, and from eternal to eternal ages, *mercy* (according to the noble expression of the Apostle James) always *triumphs over judgment*. If lenity and patience—if grace and mercy—if warnings and admonitions—if any gentler means, such as the constitution of the system admits of, will suffice, they are always preferred to methods of severity; and where severity becomes necessary, the less severe the more, so long as they will be effectual to the purpose of infinite goodness: and total destruction is the final doom only when the distemper becomes remediless. Do

any persons then live in a servile dread of the Almighty from a consideration of his omnipotence, and because he is able to make them infinitely and eternally miserable? Let them learn to live in dread, not of *his power*, but of *their own perverseness* and ill desert. Let them fear above all things, lest they *forfeit*, by their abuse of his goodness and clemency, *the privilege of being his creatures*—lest they should be judged unworthy of a longer existence, and be condemned to the last punishment appointed to the worst of criminals, *eternal destruction*.

ALL men are under inevitable obligations to the supreme Lord and Proprietor of the universe, and giver of all good. They receive from his free bounty every faculty, possession and enjoyment: and he requires no return from them but gratitude and praise, and such a temperate, prudent, and generous use and improvement, as is most advantageous to themselves,

elves, and beneficial to others. Thus all men are by nature *debtors* for every thing they have to the divine *goodness*: and if they abuse the gifts of his liberality, misapply their faculties, and neglect the offices assigned to them, (as all do in a greater or less degree) then they become *debtors* to his *justice* also, stand in need of his patience and forgiveness, and *owe* the continuance of those blessings and privileges which they have forfeited, to his mercy. Hence we see the propriety of our Savior's expressing, in that prayer which he taught his disciples, the petition for divine forgiveness—in one place, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*—and in another place, as equivalent terms, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*. For by the crimes which men commit, they *forfeit* into the hands of their Creator and Sovereign the several endowments they are possessed of—wealth, liberty, health, their mental faculties, their moral powers, nay even life and existence

itself; and are liable to every effect of his displeasure, which unerring wisdom and justice may prescribe. If he does not then let loose his hand and destroy them—if he only gently chastises and admonishes them, to what principle or motive in the divine mind are we naturally led to ascribe it, but his clemency and *patience*? And we may rest in a perfect assurance, that his mercy endureth for ever, and hath no limits, but such as wisdom dictates, justice requires, and goodness itself confirms. The more numerous and aggravated mens trespasses have been, the more do they prove the extent of his lenity and forgiveness. When the servant in the parable, who owed his Lord and Sovereign the vast sum of ten thousand talents, is represented, as falling prostrate before him, and imploring his clemency, upon a promise of amendment and a future discharge of his obligations; and when the Sovereign is described, as moved with compassion, and not only granting his petition, by re-  
leasing



leasing him from the arrest, and allowing him further time, but with the highest generosity forgiving him the whole debt; —This is to be understood as a lively picture, representing the actual conduct of divine providence, in regard to the vicious and criminal part of mankind. If they confess their sins, if they are sensible of the evil they have done, and resolve to amend and make restitution, divine mercy is always at hand for their comfort and relief, to deliver them from the terror of a speedy vengeance and final ruin; till by an ungrateful, unnatural, insolent abuse of that very clemency, to which they are so much indebted, they exclude themselves from the benefit of a reprieve, and the hopes of pardon, and forfeit not only the divine bounty and liberality, but even protection, mercy and patience: whilst they *despise*, (as the Apostle expresses it) or treat with contempt, *the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-sufferance; not knowing*, i. e. not considering, *that the*

374 *The generous Monarch: Or,  
goodness of God leadeth them to repentance:  
but after their hardness and impenitence of  
heart, treasure up unto themselves wrath  
against the day of wrath, and revelation of  
the righteous judgment of God.*

By what conduct then do men in such circumstances, who owe so much to the divine clemency, most deservedly forfeit it, and most certainly expose themselves to his indignation, and the most dreadful strokes of his punitive justice? but by refusing that kindness and mercy to their fellow-creatures and fellow-servants, in very small matters, which they themselves have experienced in so large a measure from heaven itself?

How base and disingenuous was the temper of the servant in the parable! Unaffected by the example of his Sovereign—unmoved by the visible distress and earnest intreaty of his fellow-servant—never considering how trifling the sum was, compared

pared to the immense debt he himself was justly charged with—in sensible of the generosity and clemency he had so lately experienced—without mitigating his demand—without allowing the least respite—he immediately prosecutes the unhappy debtor with the utmost rigor. Where was his lenity, patience or generosity?—Where his conscience, his sense of honor or of humanity?—It is evident, that whilst he was in his Sovereign's presence, it was not a sense of his obligation, but only a fear of punishment, that wrought upon his mind, subdued his insolence, and reduced him to make humble acknowledgments and intreaties: and when he departed, the only sentiment that seems to have possessed him, was, that he had the good fortune to escape from so imminent a danger. No gratitude—no affection—no esteem of the King's generosity and clemency, in forgiving him so large a debt!—He seems to have considered it as the mere effect of his own admirable ad-

dress, and his Sovereign's weak indulgence!—Accordingly, instead of imitating such an example, he resolves to do the very contrary—to prosecute all who owed him any thing, without favor or delay—under a pretence, as we may suppose (for the worst men find some pretence for their conduct) of providing for any future demand his Sovereign might make upon him. Pursuant to this resolution, one of his debtors, who owed but a very small sum, happening unfortunately to come in his way, he snatches the opportunity of arresting him, and deaf to all his intreaties, without allowing him a moment's time, hurries him away to prison.—What a proof was this of an hardened unfeeling heart, and a mind void of every sentiment of true goodness!—No wonder the other servants of the court, who were witnesses of the fact, should be struck with an abhorrence, and resolve to inform their generous and good-natured Sovereign of so ungenerous and ill-natured a procedure;

or

or that the King should revoke his former promise of forgiveness, and commit the offender to the executioners of strict and inexorable justice.

Now to transfer this example to the state of mankind, in relation to the supreme Ruler and Judge of the World.—All men are guilty before God, of various trespasses and offences, tho' some in a much greater degree than others; either by omission of their duty or commission of crimes, and consequently are debtors to the divine justice. All have experience at the same time of the divine clemency and patience. If those then who are conscious to themselves of great failings and transgressions, are notwithstanding censorious upon the lesser faults and negligences of other men—if those, who are themselves the worst of criminals, are forward, violent, and unrelenting in punishing little offenders—if men who are themselves violators of the most important laws of God, unjust, extortioners,

tortioners, adulterers, slanderers, are for inflicting the utmost rigor of the law, and even more than strict justice requires, upon inferior sinners, who have been seduced by their appetites, or almost compelled by want, to fraudulent or dissolute practices—If they, who are themselves involved in the most wilful errors and absurdities of superstition, persecute with a merciless tyranny other men for their opinions—If any men, who are themselves addicted to any vice, and who confess themselves in their devotions to be *miserable sinners*, and appear to implore the divine mercy, in the petition, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, yet harbor at the same time an insolent, revengeful, implacable, unforgiving spirit towards those who have in any degree injured or offended them, tho' they are sensible of their error, and ask forgiveness;—all such persons resemble, in proportion to their several capacities and characters, the wicked servant in the parable,

rable,

rable, and shall be treated in like manner, according to their several deserts, by the most just Sovereign of the world and Judge of all men: because this temper and conduct is the most directly opposite to the divine benignity and clemency, and most entirely forfeits all claim to lenity and mercy. For it is a righteous sentence, that *they shall have judgment without mercy, who have shewn no mercy.*

BUT let it be remembered, that the duty of mutual lenity and forgiveness, important as it is, is founded upon a supposition that the injurious party does not persist in his evil dispositions and designs; but on the contrary, is sensible of the wrong he has done, and seeks forgiveness and reconciliation. To conceive a resentment proportionate to the nature and degree of any designed injury or trespass, is natural, reasonable, and perfectly consistent, not only with common humanity, but even the strongest affection to the offending party;

ty; as is the case of parents in regard to undutiful children. It is possible then, that we may love, not only our friends, but our enemies also; and be sincerely desirous of their welfare, at the same time that we retain a proper resentment of any injurious conduct they have been guilty of, and withhold our forgiveness, till they repent. The doctrine of our Savior is not that we ought to forgive unconditionally, or without measure, or end, which would be unnatural and absurd: not that we ought to shew no resentment for any injury, which would be a slavish cowardice: not that we ought to be wholly passive, and never repel an attack, or defend our person and character, even at the hazard of any one who attempts to abuse us, which would be contrary to the very principle of self-preservation: not that we ought to forgive *before* the offender repents:—but, that our forgiveness ought to be inseparably connected with, and always immediately to *follow*, the repentance  
of



of the injurious party; as we hope to have our repentance accepted of God for all the sins we commit: and that we ought to use all proper and humane methods, to bring the offender to a sense of the wrong he hath done, and to rejoice when those methods prove effectual. Let those then, who have been guilty of any injurious action, even to the meanest of their fellow-creatures, know and consider, that without repentance, they ought to expect no forgiveness either from God or Man. On the other hand, let those who have received any abuse from any one, remember the words of our Savior—*If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day return unto thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.* And let every one beware of flattering his own passion or pride on such occasions.

To sum up the whole in a few words: God is the best of sovereigns; and his offending creatures on earth have continual  
expe-

experience of his lenity and patience. Insolent and merciless men, who are insensible of their own faults, and implacable to those of others, are the worst of his subjects, and most unworthy of his clemency. On the other hand, they who learn from their own failings to exercise candor and forgiveness to others, may hope for divine mercy. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.* And they, who, tho' not insensible of injuries, yet *love their enemies, do good to those that hate them, and pray for those that despitefully use them and persecute them,* are the best subjects of the kingdom of heaven, bear the nearest resemblance to the all-gracious Sovereign and Father of mankind, and shall enjoy the largest share of his inestimable goodness and paternal favor.



## DISCOURSE V.

The compassionate Samaritan: Or,  
Universal Humanity recommend-  
ed.





## L U K E X. 25.

*And behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readeſt thou? And he answering, ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyſelf. And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt answered right: This do, and thou ſhalt live.—But he willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbor? And Jeſus answering, ſaid, A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell amongſt thievers, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and*

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wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell amongst the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

**T**HE querist, who was by his religious sect a pharisee, by his education and learning a scribe, and by his profession or employment a lawyer, (as we may discover by comparing some other passages with this) appears to have been possessed of an excellent understanding. He clearly saw the absurdity of the prevailing superstition, and the insignificance of what the Jews valued so highly, their ceremonies and sacrifices. He well understood, that all religion and virtue are essentially comprehended in the reverence and affection men ought to conceive for the supreme Being, and the good-will and kindness they ought to shew one to another. Hearing then the report of the wisdom and mighty works of Jesus of Nazareth, he was desirous of putting his wisdom to the proof: and therefore proposed a question to him, *tempting him*, not with a malicious intention, but in order to be convinced by his own experience, of his judgment in matters of religion. The ques-

tion was such as he thought proper to our Savior's character, as a prophet of God, and teacher of religion. *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?*—a question which no man can answer, without discovering either his ignorance and folly, or his good understanding and judgment. Another person, a youth of quality and fortune, asked him the same question, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?* And his answer was then most express and direct, *Keep the commandments.* But in the text his manner of reply is something different; tho', including the whole passage, it evidently appears to the same effect. This variation was owing to the difference of the two men. One proposed the question with a confidence in his own virtue and unblameable conduct, and therefore replied, That he had *kept all those commandments*, which our Savior specified, from *his youth up.*—The other, with a confidence in his own understanding, and a view of penetrating into *Christ's sentiments*



concerning the *Jewish religion*. He perfectly understood what each of them meant, and answered accordingly. To this lawyer then, who was a man of learning, instead of answering directly as in the other instance, *Keep the commandments*, he says, *What is written in the law? How readest thou?*—As if he had said, “Do you ask what you must do in order to salvation?—You—a man of education and literature—who by your profession have studied the law of Moses and the religion of your country—you ought to be thorowly qualified to resolve it yourself.—Let me hear, then, your sense of the matter, and the result of your studies in the subject of religion.” The lawyer well understood, that this was in effect paying a compliment to his understanding and character: and therefore he answered, “That he considered those two precepts of the Old Testament, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself*—as

“comprehending the substance of religion,  
“and all that was of much importance or  
“value in the Mosaic institution.” Jesus  
replied, *Thou hast answered right: this do,  
and thou shalt live.* It follows—*But he will-  
ing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And  
who is my neighbor?* i. e. he was desirous of  
knowing in what extent our Lord under-  
stood the word *Neighbor* in the foregoing  
precept. Whether it was to be limited to  
a brother Jew, or proselyte to the Jewish  
religion? or whether it comprehended  
men of other nations and professions? or,  
in a word, all mankind?—This was a  
subject of religious controversy and casuist-  
ry amongst the Jews; and the scribes and  
pharisees had for the most part determin-  
ed in favor of the confined sense of the  
word. It appeared to these bigots a  
strange interpretation, an impious stretch  
of the precept, to make it comprehend all  
mankind, even aliens to the common-  
wealth of Israel, enemies to their nation  
and religion—the idolatrous heathens—  
the

the dreaded Romans—the odious Samaritans:—they could hardly conceive it possible to consider such persons as their neighbors, and be ready to do them every kind office—this seemed to them to be throwing down all distinction between Jew and Gentile, the elect and the reprobate. To love all mankind, and consider every person in the world as our neighbor, whenever we have an opportunity of exercising our justice or humanity towards him, was a doctrine too noble and generous—too *Christian*—to enter into their narrow *Jewish* minds. It is probable then, that the lawyer asked the second question, as well as the first, with an honest desire of knowing our Savior's sentiments, being not entirely satisfied with the usual casuistry of his brethren the scribes and pharisees, and yet perhaps not fully established in the sentiments of universal benevolence, as seems to be intimated by the expression, that he was *willing to justify himself*, i. e. to pass for a wise and worthy person in

our Lord's opinion. There are many degrees of difference between the most contracted sentiments of a bigot, and the enlarged notions of a person of universal candor and humanity. Possibly, notwithstanding the freedom of his judgment and temper, he might still have some scruple in his mind, in regard to some persons of some religious character or denomination, —as for instance the *Samaritans* : for it is certain that there subsisted the most bitter antipathy between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans* : and the former especially, considering themselves as the orthodox party, as in some respects they were, conceived the strongest abhorrence and contempt of the latter. But leaving it undetermined, whether this gentleman was tinged with that most prevailing prejudice, or not, he was desirous to hear what our Savior would say upon the subject, and therefore asked him this second question, *And who is my neighbor ?*—To which, instead of a direct

rect answer, our Savior replied, by relating the following story.

A CERTAIN traveller, upon the road between Jerufalem and Jericho, was furrounded by a band of highwaymen, who not only robbed him of every thing, even his cloaths, but wounded him in a terrible manner, and went off, leaving him half dead. By accident a certain *prieft* came that way: but as foon as he was aware of the fpectacle, kept his diftance, and paffed along on the oppofite fide of the road. In like manner a *Levite*, arriving at the fame place, no fooner efpied the wounded perfon, than he alfo paffed by on the other fide. But a certain *Samaritan* happening to come within view of him, was immediately moved with compaffion, and, tho' upon a journey of bufinefs, came up to him—examined his wounds—applied oil and wine—bound them up—mounted him upon his own beaft—conducted him to an inn—ftaid with him all night—and

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in the morning when he departed, presented two pieces of silver to the innkeeper, with a charge to take care of the wounded traveller, and a promise, that he would make good, in his return, any further expence that might be necessary to his perfect recovery.—Now, which of these three (the Priest, the Levite, or the *Samaritan*) was the *Neighbor* to the traveller in that distress?—The lawyer answered, “ Undoubtedly he that did the humane and “ compassionate office.”

IT is often said, that example has a greater influence than precept. And the truth of this observation may be allowed, not only in respect of real living examples, but of those also which are drawn from history, or even fable. How much greater power over the affections of mankind have those fables and dramas, in which the characters and conduct of men are justly represented, than any dry precepts of morality, or systems of philosophy and divinity?

nity?—These latter may be of some use and advantage, especially to studious and contemplative persons: but have then only their strongest effect, when they are familiarized, and adapted to common life, by real or feigned action and example. Here then we find our Savior uniting, for the satisfaction of his learned and sensible querist, the art of fable, the influence of example, and the force of precept. For having composed, extempore, with his usual simplicity of art, and inexhaustible fund of invention, a parable so apposite to the subject of inquiry—having represented in it two contrary examples, one of *Samaritan humanity*, the other of *Jewish inhumanity*, he referred it to the judgment and decision of this *Jewish* scribe and lawyer, which was more agreeable, not only to the natural conscience and moral feelings of mankind, but to the spirit of the *Mosaic* religion, and particularly *that* precept of it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*. And when the lawyer had given a right verdict, he added,

added, with all the conciseness of precept, and weight of his own authority, *Go, and do thou likewise.*

To all men of undepraved judgment, and taste capable of discerning and relishing the simplicity of nature, and beauty of humanity, the instance recited would be very convincing, and proper to correct those partialities, which arise from a mere difference of name, nation, or persuasion, and which are the bane of social affection and neighborly kindness. The Jewish priest and Levite appear to have been afraid of experiencing the power of natural sympathy—they durst not draw near to the wounded traveller, through a fear lest compassion should get the better of their selfish prudence, and occasion them some delay, trouble, or expence. But the honest-hearted Samaritan had no such refined way of thinking. He no sooner saw the wounded person, lying on the ground, weltering in his blood, than he



he instantly forgot himself and his own business.—Here was a man's life in imminent danger—immediate assistance was necessary.—Without hesitating then for a moment, or considering what nation, religion, rank, or quality, the wounded traveller was of, or any circumstance, but that of his extreme distress and danger, he thought of nothing but how he might take the most effectual means for his recovery. His time, his attendance, his labor, his horse, his purse, every thing in his power, was employed to that end, with all possible alacrity and expedition. Nor was he content to perform the kind office by halves— or to entrust the patient, as soon as he had opportunity, to the humanity of others— or to call upon any to contribute their proportion;—but took the whole upon himself—staid with him till the morning, till he had the satisfaction of finding some symptoms of his recovery---and not only defrayed the charge already incurred on his account, but gave his word to the matter

ster of the house for any further expence that might be requisite, with an earnest charge to take all possible care of him, and an intention of inquiring, upon his return, into the state of the patient, and the care which had been taken of him.—Such was his humanity, compassion, and neighborly kindness—so natural, genuine and complete.

WHAT effect the parable had upon the mind of the Jewish lawyer, we are not informed. But it may be presumed, from the marks of judgment and candor which he discovered, that he was confirmed in his opinion of our Savior's wisdom, and struck with an admiration of his manner of instruction. This appears the more probable, on the supposition, that it was the same person, who on another occasion (as we find recorded by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark) asked him, *Which was the first or chief commandment in the law?* —To which he answered, *Thou shalt love the*  
*the*

*the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* The scribe replied, *Well, Master, thou hast said the truth. For there is one God, and there is no other but he. And to love him with all the heart, understanding, soul, and strength—and to love his neighbor as himself—is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.* It is added, *when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* i. e. By the sentiments which he had already professed, he was become almost a Christian: he had already got over the strongest prejudices of the Jews against the doctrines of the gospel, and the authority of our Savior. The honesty of his heart, and the clearness of his understanding, rendered him more susceptible of conviction, than almost any of his countrymen; and he wanted not much of that uncommon temper and resolution, which were requisite, for a man of his

his

his character and figure, to become at that time a professed disciple of Christ. Probably he became such, tho' we do not find it mentioned. For it is remarked by the Evangelist, that *many of the rulers*, i. e. several persons of eminence in the state, were in their heart believers in Christ; but did not confess him through fear of the people.—We need not wonder at this, if we know any thing of the world, and observe how great an influence, not only interest and ambition, but fashion, and the dread of appearing singular, have upon the minds even of men, who are in other respects of an excellent character.—But whatever effect our Lord's conversation and doctrine either produced, or failed of producing, upon the mind of this eminent Jew, or any other persons who heard him; it is our business to understand what effect it ought to have upon us; and in order to this, to study its propriety and excellence.

WE shall therefore, first, observe the most remarkable circumstances of the foregoing parable; and then consider the main purport of that and the corresponding passages, which is, to shew how much the sentiments and dispositions of universal benevolence contribute to form the character of a true Christian.

As to the remarkable circumstances in the parable, it may deserve our inquiry, why our Savior made choice of a *Samaritan* for his example of humanity, and on the other hand, of *two Jews* for examples of inhumanity? And further, why amongst all the Jews, who consisted of so many different parties and denominations, he thought fit to single out *a Priest* and *a Levite*?

THE question was, concerning the signification of the precept, *Thou shalt love*

402 *The compassionate Samaritan: Or,*  
*thy neighbor as thyself*—or, how far we  
ought to extend our neighborly kindness  
and affection. Now, the Samaritans were  
the nearest nation to the Jews, inhabited  
almost the same country, and professed  
almost the same religion: yet there were  
no people in the world to whom the Jews  
conceived a stronger hatred; infomuch  
that they would have *no dealings with them*;  
and the most odious appellation that our  
Savior's enemies could cast upon him, was  
that of *a Samaritan*: and when he him-  
self asked *a woman of Samaria* for a draught  
of water, she expressed her surprize, that  
he being *a Jew* should ask any favor of a  
*Samaritan*. The person to whom our Sa-  
vior addressed his parable was *a Jew*, who  
by the very question, *Who is my neighbor?*  
seemed to point to the mutual discord and  
hatred between the Jews and Samaritans.  
It was therefore the particular and proper  
point of our Savior's view, to convince  
the Jews who heard him, and particular-  
ly the person who asked the question,  
that

that they were obliged to consider all men, even the worst of *heretics*, the *Samaritans*, as their neighbors, or as proper objects of their affection and kindness. For this reason, he draws an amiable picture of a Samaritan, shewing the greatest kindness and generosity to a person in distress, whom he accidentally met with, without examining what nation or religion that person was of—nay, tho' probably he might know him to be a Jew. Thus, the application of the parable becomes pertinent and close. For if this was a right and worthy behavior in a *Samaritan* to a *Jew*, would not the like behavior in a *Jew* to a *Samaritan* be equally worthy and commendable?—The portraiture itself (had our Savior added nothing to it) was admirably fitted to suggest this argument, and to strike the conscience of every Jew.—Thus there appears to be a sufficient reason, why he should represent a *Samaritan* rather than a *Jew*, as the good man in that instance. Beside—he draws his cha-

404 *The compassionate Samaritan: Or,*  
racters with an exquisite propriety, according to the real temper and conduct of the nations and parties subsisting in those days. For the *Samaritans* had in general more humanity in them than the *Jews*: or, to express it perhaps more properly, were less addicted to inhumanity and barbarity. Some instances to this effect may be produced even from the history of the gospel. For when *ten lepers* met our Savior, and implored his miraculous aid, to deliver them from that loathsome distemper, and found themselves, as they were on the way to shew themselves to the priest, on a sudden, to their great astonishment, perfectly healed—but *one* out of the *ten* had so much gratitude, as to return to thank his benefactor; and it is remarked, that he was a *Samaritan*—the rest were probably *Jews*. And our Lord makes this reflection upon it—*Were there not ten healed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this STRANGER.* There is indeed



indeed an occasion recorded, on which the *Samaritans* discovered their national and religious prejudice, and their consequent incivility and barbarity. For when our Savior and his Apostles passed through a part of their country, they would not afford them any kind of provision or entertainment. But it is to be observed, that the very *Apostles* discovered a worse spirit on the same occasion, and wished that he would call down fire from heaven upon them to consume them. Their affection for their Master, and resentment of the indignity with which he was treated, happened to coincide with their hatred of the *Samaritans*, and tempted them to break out with so much violence. With equal goodness and candor to *them* and to the *Samaritans*, he answered, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of—the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*—He was himself a *Jew*, and applied himself chiefly to instruct and reform his *countrymen*, pursuant to his commission.

406 *The compassionate Samaritan: Or,*

*For I am not sent, saith he, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Yet it is observed by the Evangelist John, that *many of the Samaritans believed in him*—and in another place, that *they besought him to stay with them*—and it was upon this event, that he made the proverbial reflection, *A Prophet is not without honor, except in his own country.*—Beside these instances, a reason may be given, why the *Samaritans* had more humanity than the *Jews*—a reason drawn from general experience—namely, that in all religious dissentions, the party that hath had power, authority, antiquity and numbers on its side, hath been less disposed to mutual charity, than the party that happened to be inferior to the other, in these weighty circumstances: and that those who have been branded by the most odious names and titles on account of their religion, have generally been more remarkable for humanity and goodness, or at least less remarkable for insolence and uncharitableness; than they who have had

had the best appellations, assumed by themselves, or attributed to them by others. A complete history of persecution, with all its causes and effects in the world, would afford convincing evidence of the truth of the foregoing observation. As then the real national character of the *Samaritans* was such, upon a comparison with that of the *Jews*, our Savior, tho' himself a *Jew*, thought fit to do *poetical justice* to each, in his fabulous representation, by taking a *Samaritan* for an example of humanity, and *two Jews* for examples of the want of it.

It may be more difficult for us to discover the reasons, why he selected a *Priest* and a *Levite* for his examples of the latter kind. Had the *Priests* or *Levites* then less charity than men of other professions or denominations?—This we cannot be certain of. They might probably have more zeal for the peculiarities of their religion, and therefore more aversion to the

Samaritans. But this does not seem to affect the case supposed in the parable, as the wounded traveller appears to have been a *Jew*, (tho' he is not called so) by the course of his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho. Yet he experienced great humanity and compassion from the *Samaritan*, but none from two of his countrymen, a *Priest* and a *Levite*. What probable cause can be assigned, sufficient to harden the hearts of *these men*, against a *Brother-Jew*, in so distressed a situation? We cannot easily imagine any, except the same which inspired them with so much hatred of the Samaritans, namely, their superstition or bigotry. This operated to a most pernicious effect; as it not only infused into them a hatred of the rest of mankind, but destroyed, or greatly diminished, their kindness one to another. Surely there never existed any people, whose hearts were become so impenetrable to the feelings of humanity, as the Jews in our Saviour's time. Yet that evil spirit, which  
was

was compounded of pretended piety, and real barbarity, increased amongst them afterward, till it produced the most dreadful effects, and ended in their utter ruin. The very truth and goodness of Christianity, served to exasperate it, till it was wrought up to the highest degree of malignity and open hostility. So our Savior predicts—*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, or on the land of Judea: I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*—An astonishing declaration from the mouth of the Savior of the world, the innocent Lamb of God—but most exactly true, if we understand it aright, as a prediction of what would come to pass.—Now of all the Jews, the *Priests* and *Levites* were most likely to be infected with this evil spirit. For in every age and nation, the \* *ministers of religion* have been  
either

\* N. B. Tho' the *Priests* and *Levites* among the Jews may be styled ministers of religion, *i. e.* of the  
cere-

either the *best* or the *worst* of men, according to (not the name, but) the nature and spirit of that religion which they actually supported. Whenever and wherever the religion publicly professed and taught hath been upon the whole *good*, the laity have been the *better* for it, and the clergy the *best* men of the community. The original institution of Moses was undoubtedly a *good* religion; and therefore, so long as the Israelites preserved it, and kept close to the original standard, the *Priests* and *Prophets* were the *best* men of the nation. But after it was corrupted and changed—hear the words of Jeremiah—*The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so: But what will ye do in the end*

ceremonial law; yet *Preaching* was no part of their office. To instruct men in the truths of religion, and inculcate the duties of morality, was the proper office of the prophets, wise men, and scribes---i. e. Preachers, philosophers, and men of letters: and such (not Priests) our Savior tells the Jews he would *send* to them.

*end thereof, saith the Lord?*—The end thereof in the prophet's time was the captivity and slavery at Babylon—and soon after our Savior's time, the desolation of the whole country; notwithstanding all the instructions and warnings of his forerunner John, himself, and his Apostles. How excessively religion was corrupted in his time, the whole history of the gospel testifies. Therefore we find amongst our Savior's capital and most inveterate enemies, the *Chief Priests*. It was the *High Priest* of the Jews who interrogated him upon his trial—who affirmed that he had spoken blasphemy, and directed the court to pronounce him guilty of death. Yet, how corrupt and malevolent soever the pharisees and chief priests were, nothing could be further from his most candid and generous mind, than to stigmatize any particular order or denomination of men, as such; how much soever that invidious practice may prevail now. He was the Savior of all men, tho' *especially of them*  
*that*

412 *The compassionate Samaritan: Or,*  
*that believe, as justice requires: and the*  
*same candor which he discovered for the*  
*Samaritans, he shewed for the Jews also,*  
*even his most implacable enemies—apolo-*  
*gizing and praying for them, even on the*  
*cross—Father forgive them, for they know*  
*not what they are doing.*

THE spirit of humanity and of Christi-  
anity is one and the same thing. If any  
person hath the least doubt of this, it is a  
proof that he is not yet acquainted with  
the general tenor of the writings of the  
New Testament, or with the real charac-  
ter and design of its authors. One memo-  
rable passage is sufficient to ascertain it.  
The Apostle Paul in 13th of 1 Cor. af-  
ferts, that the spirit of humanity excels  
every other quality that a man can pos-  
sibly be possessed of—all *knowledge*, all  
*faith*, and all *zeal*. Nay, he proceeds so  
far, as to affirm, that if a man was en-  
dued with *more* than *all* the great qualities  
attainable by human nature — with the  
know-



knowledge and eloquence of an angel— with a faith sufficient to work miracles— with such a contempt of this world, as to give all his goods to feed the poor—and with so much zeal, as to suffer martyrdom for his religion, and *give his body to be burned*;—yet, if he was destitute of the spirit of humanity or charity, he would have in reality *nothing* of the Christian in him. No words can possibly express the sense of what hath been asserted, in a stronger manner than his: and therefore there is no need of adding any thing more to prove the truth of it.

GREAT and numberless are the oppressions and evils that have arisen in the world from religions inconsistent, or unconnected, with humanity. This has created in the minds of some, a most unjust prejudice against either all religion in general, or the Christian in particular. It is readily acknowledged, that false religion may be as hurtful to mankind, as true religion

ligion beneficial. But this only proves how solicitous every man should be, for his own sake, and the common welfare of mankind, to find out and adhere to that which is true, and reject that which is false. Now there cannot be a surer test, by which to judge of the intrinsic truth and worth of every religion, than the spirit of humanity or inhumanity which it tends to promote. For that is unquestionably the worst religion, which authorizes men to injure and destroy one another; and that the best, which disposes men to do the greatest good one to another, and makes every man a friend to every man. This is true Christianity.—Ought we then to be prejudiced against *this* religion, because hypocrites and villains have artfully and impudently put the name of Christianity upon their own absurdities, superstition and wickedness? and so endeavored to disguise and sanctify the worst things by the best name? Are not the best things in themselves liable to become the worst in their effects by corruption?

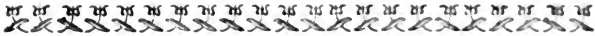
ruption?—If *false religion* hath produced many and great evils in the world, has not *false honor* produced more and greater? If *superstition* hath slain her thousands, has not *ambition* destroyed her ten thousands? What havoc has not ambition or a false sense of honor made in the world? What other cause hath produced so many duels, assassinations, conspiracies, rebellions, wars, overthrows of kingdoms, and devastations of rich and populous countries? But ought we to endeavor, on this pretence, to destroy all sense of *true honor* in the minds of men? Would it not be an absurd and wicked attempt? But it is in effect much more wicked to alienate mens hearts from the love of *true religion*, and the belief of *genuine Christianity*, upon account of the evils, which *false religion*, and *counterfeit Christianity* have produced. It is then the duty of every man, according to the measure of his understanding and ability, to oppose every erroneous and corrupt species of religion, and at the same time pre-

serve and promote that which is real and authentic.

OUR modern Deists assume to be men of reason, advocates for natural religion, and for the rights of society, enemies to priestly fraud and tyranny, friends to mankind, and believers in a future state.— We hope (and readily believe, as far as we can find any evidence for it) that they are as wise and good men as they pretend to be: but are persuaded, that if they would examine with a distinguishing and impartial judgment, they will find, that they cannot attack priest-craft and superstition, propagate the spirit of humanity, or establish the belief of natural religion and a future state, by any means so effectual, as by giving the highest credit and authority to the writings of the New Testament, especially the discourses of our Savior. Some men, even at this time, and in this nation, seem to be entirely ignorant, either how much we are indebted to  
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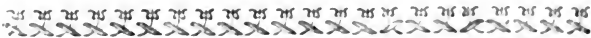
the New Testament, for the reformation from popery, or what inestimable blessings and advantages we derive from that reformation. It is observed, we hope with truth and justice, that the spirit of humanity prevails in these nations more now than in any former time. And to what cause can this noble and beneficial effect be more properly ascribed, than to the knowledge of true Christianity; which hath been in some measure restored and diffused amongst us, by the labors of many excellent instructors and reformers of the age? Hence it hath come to pass, that all parties and orders of men in the nation are now become convinced of the truth, though perhaps not the importance, of the foregoing assertion, that the spirit of humanity and of Christianity is the same. For their further and entire conviction and satisfaction, it is to be wished, that they all would carefully study the New Testament, and then pass a judgment upon it;—particu-

larly the passage of the text, and the meaning of our Savior, when he answered the inquisitive lawyer, and said—*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart—this is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*;—and when to convince him further, in how comprehensive and unlimited a sense, the word *Neighbor* was to be understood, he represented to him the example of the compassionate and generous Samaritan—and added—*Go and do thou likewise.*



## DISCOURSE VI.

The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or,  
Spiritual Arrogance rebuked.







## MATTHEW XIX: 30.

*But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.—For the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a-day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place: and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto*

*them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house; saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me*

*to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?—So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called but few chosen.*

**A** YOUNG Gentleman of large estate (St. Luke calls him *a certain Ruler*) accosted our Savior with the highest customary mark of respect, the bended knee, and with much earnestness asked him the following important question—*Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?* He answered—*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: and upon the youth's demanding which, replied—Thou shalt do no murder—Thou shalt not commit adultery—Thou shalt not steal—Thou shalt not bear false witness—Honor thy father and thy mother—And love thy neighbor as thyself—*pointing out those precepts of the law which enjoined the moral and social duties. Had the young man rested content with the foregoing answer, there would probably have been an end of the

conversation. But he added, *All these have I kept from my youth up: What lack I yet?* Probably in hopes of obtaining some high expressions of commendation from our Savior. But tho' he *beheld him and loved him*, as one of the Evangelists observes, *i. e.* looked upon him with an eye of complacency and affection, yet his answer was, *If thou wilt be perfect, i. e.* acquire a finished character, and attain to the highest virtue; *go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come and follow me.* But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.—The answer struck a damp upon his mind—he was disappointed of the encomium he expected, and touched with a conscious sense of the weakness our Savior had discovered in him; and therefore went away with visible marks of confusion and regret. Our Lord took this occasion to reflect upon the almost insurmountable difficulties and temptations, which lay in the

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the way of rich men, and prevented them from embracing the Christian profession and service; comparing such conduct to an absolute impossibility—to a camel's going through the eye of a needle. The disciples were not a little surprized and confounded with his assertions. He beheld them, and observed the loss they were at to reconcile his language with their own opinions. But knowing that it was not a proper time to explain every thing to them minutely and distinctly, he endeavored to give them some satisfaction, by adding, *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* The import of which seems to be—That tho' all natural and ordinary means would be ineffectual, yet the power of miracles might be sufficient to convert some rich men, even at that time, to *Christianity*. Then *Peter*, who was always more forward and sanguine than the rest, reflecting upon the unwillingness which the young gentleman shewed to part with his possessions, in  
order

order to follow Christ, tho' he was promised *treasures in Heaven*; and assuming to himself a merit from his own conduct in that respect, said, *Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee: What shall we have therefore?* Jesus knowing the honesty of Peter's heart, and admitting the truth of his plea, replied, *Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, shall, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory, sit also on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*—Thus he encouraged his disciples to a faithful and steady adherence to the Christian profession and service, by assuring them, that whatever temporal inconvenience or loss any of them had sustained, or should hereafter sustain, by such adherence, it should be abundantly compensated to them, at the restoration  
of

of things in the future state. But lest they should be tempted to presumption and self-conceit, from their situation, advantages and character, as being his immediate disciples, the first professors and propagators of Christianity, and from the magnificent promises which he had then made them—lest they should arrogate to themselves his favor, and the highest honors and rewards of his kingdom, upon such circumstances and qualifications as implied not the highest degree of real virtue and goodness, he adds, *But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first*: i. e. Salvation, and the honors and rewards of the life to come, shall be bestowed, not according to men's present apprehensions and partial ideas of precedence, excellence and merit, but by a different estimate, the judgment of divine wisdom and equity. And therefore, they who stood the first or highest in their own opinion, or the esteem of the world, may be last or lowest in that infallible judgment:

428 *The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or,*  
ment: and on the other hand, they who enjoy no distinction of office or character in this world, may appear the foremost, and be the most distinguished in that which is to come. The state of things will be, in numberless instances, the reverse of that which takes place at present. This important sentiment he expresses in the concise manner, by saying, *Many who are first shall be last, and the last first:* and then proceeds to exemplify it, by the following parable.

THERE WAS a certain lord who had occasion for laborers to work in his vineyard. He agreed with a number, early in the morning, to work all day at such a rate of wages as was customary. At several times of the day he collected more, and sent them into his vineyard; and almost at the close of the day he found some waiting for employment; and upon his demanding why they stood idle all the day, they replied, that they had not been  
fo



so happy as to meet with any master that would employ them: these also he sent into his vineyard, with a promise that he would allow them what should be reasonable. In the evening he ordered his steward to call the laborers, and pay them; beginning with those that came last into the vineyard: and he gave to them the same pay as had been promised to those who were hired in the morning, and had wrought the whole day. This was observed by those who came *first* into the vineyard; and they immediately concluded from it, that they should receive a large addition to their wages. But the steward paid them no more than the terms of the agreement required, and informed them, that it was so ordered by his master. Upon this they came with a complaint to the lord of the vineyard, as if they had been treated unjustly, because they that came last into the vineyard were not only first paid, but received as much as themselves, who had labored the whole day.

To

To which he answered, speaking to one of them, “ Friend, Have not I fulfilled  
 “ the terms of agreement with you? have  
 “ I done you any wrong?—If I think fit  
 “ to give to these last as much as to you,  
 “ is my generosity to them an injury to  
 “ you? Are you to direct me in the di-  
 “ stribution of my favors? Is it not law-  
 “ ful for me to do what I will with my  
 “ own? Or, have you a right to mur-  
 “ mur and complain, to be envious and  
 “ greedy, because I am good and gene-  
 “ rous?”—So shall it be in the future  
 state: *The last shall be first, and the first last.*  
*For many be called, but few chosen.*

It may suffice to throw a light upon the whole parable, if we observe, That by the figure of laboring in the vineyard is meant, laboring to promote Christianity; and by those who went early in the morning to work, the immediate disciples of our Savior are represented, who *first* entered into the Christian profession and ser-vice.

vice. And the disposition which they shewed to assume merit, each to himself, from that circumstance only, to lay claim to the first rank in our Lord's favor, and the highest rewards in his kingdom, and to exclude others, is strongly marked by the subsequent passages in the parable. It was undoubtedly the first business and design of our Savior to convert his immediate followers, from their Jewish ignorance and rudeness, into wise and good men, and make them sincere professors, and successful propagators, of Christianity. For this reason, we find him on many occasions taxing them with stupidity and prejudice, and reprehending the pride, envy, resentment, and other wrong dispositions, which they sometimes discovered—in such terms as these—*Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of—Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven—O ye of little faith—O slow of heart to believe—How is it that ye do not understand?*

432 *The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or,*  
*derstand?—How long shall I be with you and*  
*suffer you?* But notwithstanding such frequent reprehensions, and mortifying reproofs, they continued to have the highest veneration of him and affection to him, from a thorow conviction of his superior wisdom and goodness, as well as miraculous power. And he allowed the sincerity of their attachment to him, and valued them for their honesty of heart: and therefore frequently pointed his instructions, with a view to cure them of their particular follies and prejudices. The parable before us is a remarkable instance of this kind, and is admirably calculated to subdue the spirit of ambition and self-conceit, envy, and rivalship among them, and to bring them to a modest opinion of their own qualifications and merits. For he assures them, that, tho' they had the peculiar advantage of being his immediate disciples, and the first converts to Christianity, yet many that were first should be last, and the last first, in the distribution  
of

of the honors and rewards of his eternal kingdom: and tho' they might then plead, that they had *born the heat and burden of the day*, been employed in *his service*, and labored diligently to promote his cause, and the interest of Christianity, and consequently might justly expect the fulfilment of the promises he made to them, and to receive their due share of honor and reward; yet if they presumed, upon such merit alone, to arrogate to themselves the highest distinction and first rank in his kingdom, and to envy others an equal share of his liberality, they might find themselves disappointed, like the laborers in the vineyard, who foolishly and insolently demanded more than was their due: For that he himself, as Sovereign, would confer the dignities and rewards of his heavenly state, according to the direction of divine wisdom, without any regard to such vain and groundless expectations— That he might, and certainly would, see fit to prefer some of them who were last

434 *The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or,*  
in the Christian service, and had bestowed  
the least pains in propagating the gospel,  
above some of them who were the first  
converts, and had spent their whole lives  
in his service—That he would not submit  
the measures of his administration to their  
cognizance and judgment; but would  
consider it as folly and insolence in them,  
if they called in question the equity and  
propriety of such a sentence and determin-  
ation. For has not every master and  
proprietor a right to do what he will with  
his own? And shall not then the Judge  
of the whole world reward his servants in  
the manner and proportion he himself  
shall think fit, without any regard to the  
partial ideas and selfish expectations which  
any of them might conceive?—It is to  
be remembered, that this parable follows  
the magnificent promise which he made  
to his Apostles, of their being advanced  
to twelve thrones of judgment over the  
twelve tribes of Israel. Having therefore  
raised their hopes of future advancement

and dignity, by so noble encouragement, he thought it necessary to throw in an allay, to prevent his promises from raising or cherishing that spirit of vanity and ambition, of which they appeared but too susceptible. We may further observe, that he limits his representation to the Christian profession and service; because that alone was the proper subject of consideration, to which his hearers were then attentive, and in which they were highly interested, as being his disciples. Therefore he does not comprehend in his description any other kind of qualification or desert, but that which arose from *his service alone*, or from their fidelity and diligence in the discharge of that particular employment or office which he should assign to them, as his Apostles and the propagators of his religion. He represents the Lord of the vineyard, as asserting, with propriety and dignity, his perfect right to act as he did, and his liberality in so doing; but without specifying his reasons.

sons. Now certainly our Savior did not mean, by this, to represent himself as acting without reason, and rewarding his servants in a partial manner, or not in due proportion to their respective deserts. But it was not his custom to express his whole sense upon any subject, but to leave something, and often some material point, to be found out by the reflection of his audience. So here is a conclusion to be drawn by reflection, which solves the difficulty, and completes the sense: namely, that there might be *other* circumstances, qualifications, or merits, beside those which arose merely from *laboring in the vineyard*, i. e. in the service of teaching and propagating Christianity, which might be sufficient to recommend persons to the gracious acceptance and high approbation of the Judge of the world, and entitle them even to the *first* rank in his celestial kingdom. For tho' he allows all that was due to any desert arising from honest and diligent endeavors in his service; yet at the same time



he checks a spirit of presumption in his servants, and makes the most candid and generous concessions in favor of those who entered last or latest into the Christian service! and by parity of reason, tho' it is not expressed here, in favor of those also, who should *never enter into it at all*—of those who should never hear of the name of Christ, or who, through ignorance or invincible prejudice, should disbelieve or reject Christianity. This sentiment is expressed by our Savior, in another passage quoted hereafter. Those who came latest into the vineyard might plead for themselves very justly, that they were willing and well-disposed, but nobody had employed them: and therefore it was their misfortune and not their fault, that they had remained idle so long: at the same time it is supposed, that there were other circumstances and qualifications which recommended them to the favor and bounty of the Lord of the vineyard. In like manner, many sincere Christians may

justly plead, that if they have not been employed in discharging some important and useful office, it was not owing to want of disposition or desire, but merely to want of means and opportunities. This plea, as far as it is sincere, will be accepted; and they shall not suffer a diminution of honor and reward in a future state, merely because they were disabled by their circumstances from performing those useful services in this world, which they would willingly have done. With similar reason many heathens and infidels may plead, that they were not acquainted with the divine institution of Christianity, with its noble principles, striking evidence, and cogent motives; otherwise they would have embraced and professed it, and labored to promote it in the world. If this allegation be true, if it be verified by an honest and diligent improvement of those abilities and advantages which they enjoyed, it will be admitted in its fullest import, and they shall be rewarded equally  
with

with the Christian, in proportion to their integrity and goodness of heart. So that there will not be the least foundation for that most impious charge against the Sovereign and Judge of the world—*That he is an hard Master, reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not scattered.* On the other hand, there may be many Christians, who, tho' they have enjoyed great distinction, and discharged some high office, in this life, like the first disciples of our Savior, shall obtain but the lowest place hereafter in the kingdom of Heaven; or, if they are destitute of other more essential qualifications, shall be utterly excluded from it; even tho' they may be able to plead, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name—and in thy name have cast out devils—and in thy name have done many wonderful works?*—Thus *many who are first shall be last, and the last first. For many are called, but few chosen.* i. e. Many who have the gospel tendered to them, yet refuse it—many who seem

to accept of it, yet do not sincerely and cordially embrace it—many who sincerely believe it, yet do not bring forth all the fruits that might be expected from so excellent a belief—nay, many who are zealous and assiduous in discharging some offices of religion, and who labor abundantly in promoting the cause and interest of Christianity, may yet have their zeal mixed with so much presumption and arrogance, as will prove a debasing alloy to their virtues, and greatly diminish that honor and reward, which they might otherwise have obtained, from the perfect equity and liberality of the Lord of the world. There are now many professed Christians, and we hope sincere in their profession, who nevertheless seem very unwilling to admit, that the Savior and Judge of the world will extend his mercy and liberality to heathens and infidels, tho' of the best moral character; or even to many of their fellow-Christians, whom they suppose to be not so found in the faith as them-

themselves, or to practise an erroneous worship. Such Christians may be astonished when they are informed, that these very persons, whom they seem to despise as reprobates concerning the faith, may be not only accepted to salvation, but even promoted to the highest rank and dignity in the kingdom of heaven; whilst they themselves shall hardly obtain the lowest place in it, or be utterly excluded. For the words of our Savior are not in vain, which he spoke to his followers, when one of them asked him, *Are there few that be saved?* And he answered, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* — *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: But he shall say,*

442. *The Laborers in the Vineyard: Or,*  
*say, I tell you, I know you not whence you*  
*are: Depart from me all ye workers of ini-*  
*quity. There shall be weeping and gnashing*  
*of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and*  
*Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the*  
*kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*  
*And they shall come from the east, and from*  
*the west, and from the north, and from the*  
*south, from all parts of the inhabited*  
*world, men of every nation and of every*  
*profession, and shall sit down in the kingdom*  
*of God. For behold, there are last which shall*  
*be first, and there are first which shall be last.*

Now the sum of all the foregoing senti-  
ments is to this effect.—That the admini-  
stration of the final judgment, and distri-  
bution of the honors and rewards of the  
future state, will be according to such  
ideas of the most impartial justice and  
equity, and the most extensive goodness  
and liberality, as can hardly enter into the  
narrow hearts of many Christians.—That  
sincerity of heart, goodness of intention,  
and

and integrity of moral character, will be the ground of our acceptance and advancement in the future state, without any respect to the names or professions, distinctions or offices, which have taken place in this life.—That to have the knowledge of the gospel is indeed a great advantage to us at present: and if we improve this advantage with proportionate fidelity and diligence, it will rebound to our greater honor and higher advancement hereafter; but if misimproved and abused, to our greater disgrace and confusion.—That tho' no labors in the cause of Christianity, no act of duty from a Christian motive, shall fail of a due recompence, yet it is a very bad sign of our Christian sincerity and goodness, if we arrogate to ourselves the favor of the Deity, and are desirous of limiting the extent of his mercy and liberality to any of the rest of mankind.—That such an envious disposition in any person, tho' otherwise a sincere, or even a laborious teacher of Christianity, is a  
failing

failing of the worst kind, and deserving of the strongest reproof. And the great Judge of the world may say to such a Christian, with a most just and significant rebuke, *Is thine eye evil, because I am good?*—At the same time then that we endeavor to discharge any particular office, with fidelity and industry, let us beware of entertaining the least degree of presumption and vain confidence in regard to ourselves, or of envy and uncharitableness to the rest of mankind. Let us study to preserve a humble opinion of our own qualifications, and a lively sense of our own defects. This temper of mind will recommend us to the gracious acceptance of him *who resisteth the proud, and sheweth grace or favor to the humble.* For when we have done our utmost in the service of our Lord and Master, we are still *but unprofitable servants, and have only done that which was our duty to do.*





## DISCOURSE VII.

The Virgins raised at Midnight:  
Or, Vigilance and Preparation  
injoined.



1917

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT  
55 EAST LEXINGTON AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

RECEIVED

## MATTHEW XXV. I.

*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so—lest there be not enough for us and you:*

448 *The Virgins raised at Midnight: Or,*

*you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

**T**HOUGH the Evangelists *Mark* and *Luke* have omitted the parables of this chapter, and related only the substance of the discourse in the preceding chapter, which they immediately follow, and with which they appear to be connected; yet there are none more peculiar to our Savior's character, or more admirably adapted to strike a deep and permanent impression on the minds of his Apostles. They were the *last* that he spoke to them, and seem to have been, along with the

preceding chapter, one continued discourse, on the following occasion.

Two days before the passover-feast, when he had been teaching the people at the Temple, some of the Apostles took occasion to observe to him the strength, beauty and magnificence of the Temple and the adjoining edifices. To which he answered—*See ye not all these things?—Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down.*—This prediction, spoke with that perfect assurance which became a true prophet, could not fail of astonishing them that heard it, and exciting strong emotions of curiosity, wonder, and consternation. As soon, therefore, as he was retired from the city, they all applied to him, to know what he meant, and when that strange and terrible event would come to pass. They seem to have taken it for granted, that such an event must be coincident and connected, not

450 *The Virgins roused at Midnight: Or,*  
only with the destruction of our Savior's enemies, a revolution in the Jewish government, and the commencement of another age or æra, but with the erection also of his kingdom in this world, and the advancement of his servants and adherents. They confounded in their own minds his taking possession of his throne, coming in his kingdom, judging the world, and rewarding his followers, with the destruction of the Temple, and a change in the Jewish state. Yet we find by the tenor of his discourse, that he did not think proper to distinguish these events so clearly, as to extricate their minds from all confusion, and enable them to understand fully what things related to this, and what to the future and invisible world.

IN answer then to their questions, *When shall these things be? and What shall be the sign of thy coming; and of the end of the world?*—or, as it should be rendered, *the conclusion of the age?*—he first of all de-

cribes to them the approaching times of confusion and distress, the calamities and persecutions, the snares and impostures, which they would be exposed to, and which would put their wisdom, fidelity and constancy to the proof. He represents also the siege and ruin of the city of Jerusalem, and the terror and desolation which would overspread the whole country. He assures them, that to many particular persons these calamities would be so sudden and surprising, that they would not be able, in making their escape, to carry off any share of their property, and even a moment's delay might be fatal to them. With all this he intermixes some poetical strokes concerning his own dignity, dominion, and judgment, as if he was to make a visible appearance from heaven, with great splendor, to execute justice upon his enemies, and to deliver and reward his servants and followers. Such expressions will not lead into mistakes them who are conversant with those parts of the

452 *The Virgins roused at Midnight : Or,*  
prophetic writings of the Old Testament, which predict and describe the downfall of states and the ruin of nations, and in which they take their figures from the visible heavens; as if there would be the appearance of an astonishing change in the clouds, sun, moon and stars. It seems probable also, that he intermixes the things of this world with those of another, and represents the whole as one coincident or continued scene, with design: for he makes no mention of death, which is the seeming interval or partition; but proceeds from the state of his disciples in this world to that of a future, without marking the transition: because he would have them not to be inquisitive when or how things should come to pass; but only to be assured of their reality, and to be always ready for them, whenever they should occur. *Watch therefore,* saith he, *for ye know not in what hour your Lord doth come.—Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten virgins, &c.—*If it should  
be



be asked, *When?*—the proper answer seems to be, an indeterminate period. In this world, public calamities, private distempers, and finally death, often surprize the unwary: and in another, the resurrection from the dead, and other interesting events, may appear much more surprizing. The present life allotted to men, wherein they are to labor and make preparation, is, in the language of Scripture, *their day*.—The period of death is THE NIGHT, *whercin no man can work*—and the life after death, whenever it shall commence to each individual, is *the day of the Lord*. This day of the Lord, or coming of our Savior, or process of judgment, or administration of the kingdom of Heaven, is illustrated in the whole of this discourse, by a variety of scenical descriptions.

THE point upon which each parable terminates, ought to be the main subject of our attention, and the other parts to be considered chiefly as concurring to that,

∴

G g 3

and

454 *The Virgins roused at Midnight : Or,*  
and calculated to make it strike the deeper  
impression. According to the very nature  
of parabolic compositions, the figures made  
use of are never to be understood literally,  
or as corresponding in every particular to  
the thing designed, but only as containing  
a just resemblance in some one or more  
material points.—The figures, therefore,  
of the Son of Man sitting upon the throne  
of his glory—of all nations being assem-  
bled before him, and separated into two  
parties—and of one and the same sen-  
tence passed upon each of them, without  
distinction of individuals—seem not to be  
designed for a literal description of a ma-  
terial scene, which will be actually exhi-  
bited, but to require a more spiritual in-  
terpretation : in like manner as the figures  
of the wealthy bridegroom celebrating his  
nuptial solemnities, and the virgins attend-  
ing at midnight with their lamps upon his  
procession ; or of the master returning  
from a distant country, examining into  
the conduct and accounts of his servants.

THESE

THESE parabolic representations should be taken together, and understood so, as to preserve, not only the propriety of each in its several parts, but the consistency of all with each other, and their combined effect, in conveying the most useful sentiments, and exciting the strongest resolutions to the practice of virtue.

HERE then it may be proper and useful to take a summary and general view of them together, as following each other in a series, that so we may discover more easily and certainly the spirit and design of the whole:—which may be represented to this effect: That the conclusion of this life—the commencement of another—the state of things in the world to come—and the process of a future judgment—will bear a real resemblance in some points, those which most of all require our attention, to things with which we are already acquainted, and of which we can form some determinate idea.

FOR instance, those events will be sudden and alarming, to the unprepared minds of men, like the approach of a bridegroom, at midnight, to those virgins who were obliged to attend his procession, but who were then roused from sleep, and some of them in the greatest confusion and unreadiness.

MEN shall assuredly be called to account for their conduct, and rewarded for their fidelity and useful service, like the servants of a wealthy and powerful nobleman, who had treasure committed to their care and management, during his expedition into a remote country.

THE future judgment will be as important, interesting, and affecting to us, as the most unusual and astonishing scene that we can possibly imagine in the visible world around us.

AND

AND finally, the kindness or inhumanity of men one to another will as certainly be the ground of their acceptance or condemnation, at the final judgment, as if they had shewn the same kindness or inhumanity to our Savior in his own person.

THESE are the important and useful sentiments which we are to learn from this whole series of similitudes and parables, in which our Lord compares his coming—to that of a thief in the night—of a master to his servants—of a bridegroom to his attendants—of a nobleman to his stewards—and of a monarch of the world to his throne of universal judgment; thus rising gradually from lower and more familiar images to the highest and most august we can conceive.

IT hath been already observed, that our Lord's design in the three parables of this chapter, spoke to his Apostles, was to excite

458 *The Virgins roused at Midnight: Or,*  
cite their vigilance, their fidelity, and  
their humanity. These were the most  
important qualifications for the right dis-  
charge of their duty and office, as his  
disciples and apostles. To each of these  
purposes he applies a distinct parable.  
This of the Virgins was intended to excite  
their *Vigilance*: for he expressly makes  
this application of it: *Watch therefore, for  
ye know neither the day nor the hour when the  
Son of Man cometh.*—Attention, circum-  
spection and forethought are indeed quali-  
ties becoming every man, and proper to  
form a character of wisdom and virtue in  
every condition of life; and all the dis-  
ciples had more than ordinary occasions  
for the exercise of them. Therefore our  
Savior, after instructing his Apostles,  
adds, according to St. Mark, *What I say  
unto you, I say unto all, WATCH.* But it is  
equally evident, that the Apostles were  
most of all interested in this advice. And  
therefore, when he had given the like ad-  
vice and exhortation on a former occasion,  
and

and when Peter asked him, *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?* —he answered, *Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?* evidently applying what he had said to his Apostles chiefly, who were chosen and appointed by him to their office. It seems probable also, that none but *they* were present when he related these parables: for St. Mark mentions some of the Apostles as asking him *privately* the questions which gave rise to this whole discourse. We may observe then, that he here represents in private the advice which he had before given them amidst a concourse of people, Luke xii. 35. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding, &c.* This instruction is repeated with some difference of expression in the verses preceding our text; and the figures there made use of are amplified,

460 *The Virgins roused at Midnight: Or,*  
plified, and others added, in our parable,  
to render it more explicit and perfect, and  
to fix the impression deeper in their me-  
mories.

THE Apostles had discovered a strong  
curiosity to be informed, particularly and  
circumstantially, of the time and manner  
of those alarming events, which our Sa-  
vior's character, conduct, instructions,  
and predictions, had led them to expect,  
*viz.* the ensuing national disorder and ca-  
lamity, the destruction of Jerusalem, the  
erection of his kingdom, the exertion of  
his regal and judicial power, the subjec-  
tion of his enemies, and the advancement  
of his friends and followers. These events,  
as we have before observed, were all con-  
founded together in their imagination.  
He would not gratify their curiosity, by  
unfolding them as distinctly as they seem  
to have desired: But having given them  
all such intelligence as they were qualified  
to receive, and that would conduce to any  
valuable



valuable end, he proceeds to make use of their ignorance and uncertainty in regard to the time and manner of such events, to excite their constant care and vigilance. Their situation was such as obliged them to be always upon their guard, and in a posture of preparation and readiness for such events, how sudden and surprizing soever; like soldiers who keep guard amidst the uncertain alarms of war—Or, to use our Savior's own comparisons, like a *Householder*, who expects that his house will be attacked in the night—or *Servants* who are waiting for their *Master*, and know not at what hour he will come—or the *Attendants* of a *Bridegroom*, whose duty is to watch in the evening, and to be ready with their lamps at the moment of his arrival. This temper and disposition, so proper and necessary to persons in their situation, our Savior endeavors to excite and corroborate, by applying to them these comparisons: for they were always in danger of being tempted, by timidity and despair,

462 *The Virgins roused at Midnight : Or,*  
to give up all their hopes, and desert his  
cause; or at least, finding their hopes so  
long deferred, and their expectations so  
much disappointed, to let their courage  
and resolution subside, and sink into such  
an indolence and stupor, as would disable  
them from executing that high office and  
arduous enterprize, for which he intended  
to qualify them.

IT now remains, that we attend to the  
propriety, strength and beauty of the pa-  
rabolic representation in the text, as de-  
signed, (not to excite horror and melan-  
choly, as is evident from the very nature  
and construction of the allegory) but to  
rouze their attention and vigilance, and  
inspire them with courage and resolution,  
proportionate to the alarming apprehen-  
sions they were under. In this view, and  
by keeping in mind the circumstances, af-  
fections, hopes and fears, of the Apostles  
at that time, we may be better enabled to  
discover the excellence of this representa-  
tion,

tion, and the aptitude of the figures made use of to produce the designed effect. To this end he assures them, that the time would come, when the kingdom of Heaven, or his own appearance in dignity and splendor, and their situation and relation in respect to him, their interest in his coming, their surprize at his appearance, the qualifications and dispositions of his followers in general, their acceptance by him, and the favor by which he would distinguish those who were found prepared to go forth and meet him, and the unhappy and remediless consequence of being unprepared, might be explained and represented by the sudden approach of a bridegroom at midnight—the alarm given to the sleeping servants, whose office it was to go forth with their lamps and attend his procession—the ready attendance and honorable reception of those servants who were prepared—the confusion and disorder of those who were unprepared—their vain endeavors to retrieve their own folly  
and

464 *The Virgins roused at Midnight: Or,*  
and negligence—their equally vain intreaties for admission—and their disgraceful rejection, and utter exclusion from the bridegroom's presence and entertainment.

No figures could shew, with greater strength and perspicuity, the importance and necessity of making timely preparation, in order to be found at last in readiness for the grand events of the kingdom of Heaven, than such a representation of the vigilance required and expected of servants in the discharge of their duty, in one of the most important and magnificent occasions that usually occur in human life. For in proportion to the importance of the occasion, the interesting nature of the event, and the uncertainty of the time, the more are preparation and watchfulness thought indispensable, and supineness and negligence unpardonable.—Every *Christian*, by his profession of *Christianity*, acknowledges himself to be a *servant of Christ*, and therefore may easily  
6 apply

apply to himself such figures as are evidently borrowed from that relation, and which represent the different consequences of vigilance or negligence in performing that service. But every judicious reader will discern the peculiar force and fitness of them when applied to his Apostles, as they were his immediate and personal servants and attendants when he lived upon earth. *Ye call me Lord and Master, saith he to them, and ye say well, for so I am.* And there is no argument he makes more frequent use of, than their condition and obligation as his servants. For instance, when he reproved their vanity, and let them understand, that after using their best endeavors, the only language becoming them was, *We are but unprofitable servants—we have only done that which was our duty.*

WE may observe also the various as well as powerful motives which he suggests to them, in the passages we are con-

466 *The Virgins roused at Midnight: Or,*  
sidering, in order to secure their fidelity  
and excite their vigilance:—Their own  
interest and property—for *the householder,*  
*if he had known, would assuredly have*  
*watched, and not have suffered his house to be*  
*broken through.*—Their hopes of honor and  
reward---*Blessed is that servant whom his*  
*Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*  
*Verily I say unto you, that he will make him*  
*ruler over all that he hath.*—Their fear  
of disgrace and punishment—*But if that*  
*servant shall say in his heart, My Lord de-*  
*layeth his coming: and shall begin to smite his*  
*fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with*  
*the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall*  
*cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion*  
*with the hypocrites.*—Their uncertainty  
as to the time—*He shall come in a day when*  
*he looketh not for him, and in an hour that*  
*he is not aware of.*—In our parable these  
several motives are repeated with differ-  
ent circumstances, proper to produce the  
most vigilant attention to their real situa-  
tion, character and office: and other mo-  
tives

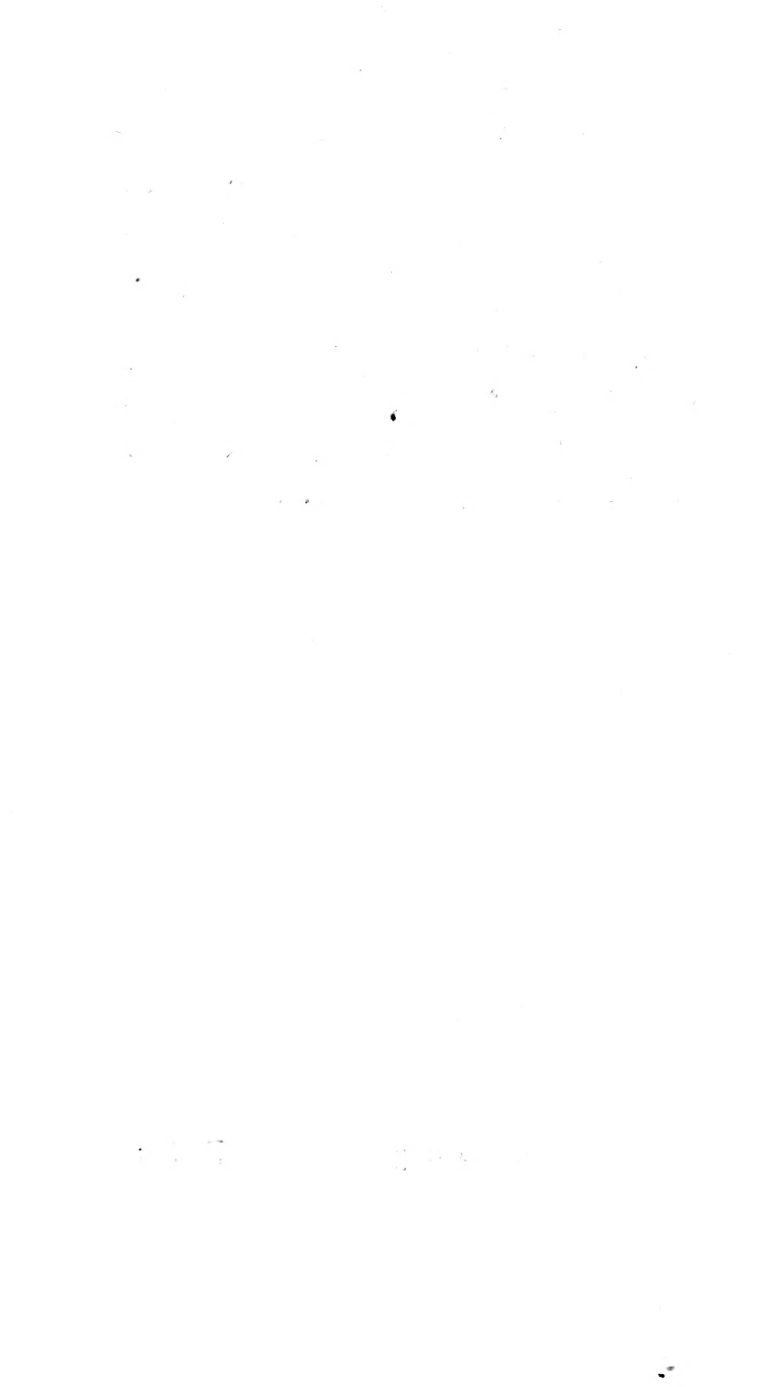
tives are added—such as, the importance of the occasion—the impossibility of retrieving past negligence by any expedient, or of obtaining favor by any importunity. *They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Then came the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

THE Apostles were alarmed with apprehension of the events then approaching in *this* world; and not without reason: for according to our Savior's prophetic description of them, they were very interesting and affecting; and it was highly requisite to prepare for them with vigilance and resolution. But so far were they from being thorowly prepared, that tho' he had often forewarned them of his own death, yet that event threw them into consternation and despair. And tho' he often foretold his own resurrection and appearance from the dead, yet when

468 *The Virgins roused at Midnight : Or,*  
it came to pass, they were at first in extreme confusion and amazement, like the Virgins awoke out of sleep by an alarm at midnight. And *we* have great reason, as well as *they* had, to be filled with the most serious apprehensions of those events of *another* world, which our Savior hath foretold and represented to us. For notwithstanding all the preparation we can make, our own death, whenever it shall come, may throw us into consternation: and the resurrection of the dead, and appearance of our Savior in his power and glory, will undoubtedly be more astonishing and affecting, than any events that ever took place in this world.—If it were possible that we could know with certainty, when and how these things shall be—the time and manner of our own death—the particular nature and circumstances of the resurrection of the dead—and of the future state and final judgment—whether the souls of men pass immediately into another life—or whether they remain



main in a state of death or insensibility for a longer or shorter period;—all such knowlege would probably be very unfit for us, and only tend to nourish a vain curiosity, without improving the mind in virtue. To all such inquiries the proper answer is, Watch—prepare—be in readiness—*for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.*





## DISCOURSE VIII.

The Servants examined: Or, Fidelity and Diligence required.





## M A T T H E W XXV. 14.

*For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods: and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents, came*

*came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. He also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Then he which had received the one talent, came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: Lo, there thou hast that is thine. His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful*

*slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

**W**HOEVER will compare closely this parable with a former one recorded by St. Luke, Chap. xix. 12. may perceive a very great resemblance in the main, and at the same time a remarkable difference in some parts; and that several particulars are added, or omitted, or varied, in this, with the greatest propriety, according

according to the difference of the audience, and the occasion.

WHEN our Savior spoke the former, he was in the house of Zaccheus, a wealthy Jew, who held a great office in the revenue, under the Roman government; for he was *Chief of the Publicans*. And there were present, besides his own disciples, a great number of Jews, who accompanied him in his way to Jerusalem, and who were in daily expectation of his assuming regal power and government. For St. Luke observes, *That he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear*. He represents *Himself* therefore in the character of a *Nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*. His Apostles are described by the *menial servants* of that *Nobleman*, who were intrusted with money, during his absence. *By the Citizens who hated him,*



*and would not that he should reign over them, are meant his enemies at Jerusalem. And the narration concludes with predicting their destruction: But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

BUT the parable in the text was spoke at another time, and to *his Apostles alone*: therefore, tho' some of the figures are alike, yet different circumstances are thrown in, and all that related to his enemies, and his own *regal* dignity, is omitted.—The view is confined to the character and situation of a master and his servants—and the whole terminates in the approbation and reward of them that were faithful and industrious, and the condemnation and punishment of the negligent and wicked servant. *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness—there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* We may reasonably conclude, then, without a more minute comparison, that he purpose-

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ly repeated, in part, a parable he had before delivered, adding or omitting such particulars, as were more or less suitable to his Apostles, and conducive to the intended effect.

THE preceding parable of the virgins was intended to excite their *vigilance*;—this, to secure their *fidelity*, and quicken their *industry*. The concurrence of all the parts to this effect is so discernible, the structure of the whole so perspicuous, and the several figures so intelligible, as scarcely to leave room for any explanation. Every reader must be convinced, at first view, that by *the man travelling into a far country*, our Savior meant to characterize *himself*—by the *servants*, whom the master called to him, *his Apostles*—by the *goods*, or *talents*, intrusted to them, their apostolic endowments—by *his coming after a long time and reckoning with them*, the *future judgment*—by his *applauding and promoting* those servants who had improved their

their stock, the *honors and preferments* of the future state.—And by his *condemning* the unprofitable servant to *outer darkness*, the *punishment*, of negligence and treachery, in another world.

It may be imagined, that he had a particular view to the character of *Judas*, in his description of *the wicked and slothful servant*, who pretended to *excuse himself*, by *accusing his master*: But this we cannot affirm with any certainty. And the force and propriety of the representation may be sufficiently understood, if we only observe, —that as among the *Apostles themselves*, notwithstanding their peculiar obligations to fidelity, there was *one*, who became a traitor and *the son of perdition*; so, among all *others*, whom providence hath endued with *uncommon* abilities, there will be found *some*, who have either made no use of them, or abused them to unworthy and wicked purposes.

HE had selected them from all his other disciples, to be his immediate attendants and principal agents in the propagation of christianity: had instructed them in the *mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven*—had communicated to them a knowledge to which they had been utter strangers—had implanted in them the sentiments of virtue and true religion; and imparted to them even the power of working miracles. Such were the *goods or talents* entrusted to their use and management.—Endowments of the noblest kind and most extensive utility, and such as rendered negligence and misapplication peculiarly criminal. He therefore sets before them, in the most striking point of view, the consequences, on the one hand, of fidelity and industry in his service; and on the other, of negligence and breach of trust; by representing a master returning from a distant country, and reckoning with his servants; applauding and rewarding every one who had been faithful and diligent, in these most significant

ficant terms.—*Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things—Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;* and on the other hand, rejecting the false and insolent excuse of the negligent servant, depriving him of all that he possessed, and expelling him into *outer darkness*. Thus he enlivens and adds force to the more direct admonitions he had before given them. *If ye are not faithful,* said he to them, *in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give unto you that which shall be your own?* Fidelity and industry are indispensable qualifications in the discharge of any trust; and are always required from servants in transacting affairs even of the smallest consequence: If these qualities then be so strictly required, and thought so worthy of approbation and reward; and if, on the other hand, negligence and misapplication be thought so culpable and inex-

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cusable, in things of little value or consequence; how much more the improvement or abuse of talents so excellent and valuable, as *those* which our Savior committed to his *Apostles*, and a faithful and diligent discharge, or indolent and treacherous neglect, of an office so important, as *that* to which *they* were appointed? The Apostle Paul, in the beginning of his epistles, usually styles himself the *servant of Christ*: and in defining the apostolic character and office, says, *Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.* i. e. Fidelity was the essential and most indispensable qualification for the apostolic office. The reason is evident then, why our Savior made use, not only of direct admonitions and solemn charges, but of the most animated and moving figures, in order to fix indelibly in their minds a sense of their obligations to fidelity. They were entrusted by him with  
such

such talents, as no other men were ever possessed of; and had an enterprize before them of so arduous a nature and attended with so many difficulties and temptations, as would require the utmost resolution and constancy. They expressly acknowledged him as their lord and master, had voluntarily taken upon themselves the strongest engagements, to be faithful in his service, and to do whatsoever he should command them. Yet he did not think it superfluous to impress those obligations upon their minds, by a variety of instructions and arguments: and in his last most intimate and affectionate conversation, when he was taking his leave of them in order to suffer death, he tells them, that if they would continue faithful to him, and do whatsoever he had commanded them, he would no longer call them his servants, but his friends. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you: Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: But I have called you friends:*

*for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. Remember the word that I said unto you: The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*—The Apostles then could not possibly mistake his meaning in the parable of the text. They would know themselves with certainty to be characterized by the *servants* there described; and would naturally feel themselves most intimately concerned in the process and conclusion of the narration: The sentence of approbation, *Well done, good and faithful servant: because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things,*—would inspire joyful hopes into the heart of every Apostle, who was conscious of his own integrity, and resolved to discharge the duty assigned to him. And even the unfeeling heart of Judas,



Judas, if he was present, must be struck with some degree of terror, at the concluding sentence, *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*—It will not be difficult to perceive how this parable would affect them, if we consider their situation at the time he spoke it, their high veneration for their master, and their thorow persuasion, that he would soon have it in his power to distinguish and promote them, in proportion to their fidelity and diligence in his service, and to punish them for negligence or treachery. If then the reader is capable of imagining himself in their condition, he may thereby obtain a truer understanding and more lively sense of the meaning, spirit, and the effect of the parable, than by any other method of explaining or applying it.

BUT tho' this parable has so evident a relation to the state and character of the Apostles, it is capable at the same time of

being applied to christians in general, and even to all mankind, notwithstanding any difference of circumstances. Every creature that is endued with rational faculties and active powers is under indispensable obligations to make a right use of them: And there are various duties and offices in human life proportionate to men's various capacities and conditions. Every man is capable of performing some service, and contributing in some manner and degree to the common good: And tho' that service may consist in little affairs, and be confined to *a very few things*; yet a faithful and diligent performance will redound to his own honor and advantage: and on the other hand, it will be to his own peril and final detriment if he neglect it. He stands in the relation of a servant to the supreme Lord of the world, who justly requires some service from him, and to that very end intrusted him with those talents or abilities which he is possessed of. And there will assuredly come a time of *reckoning,*

ing, when a most impartial judgment either of approbation or censure will be passed upon his conduct. The service required will be in exact proportion to the abilities conferred; the honor and reward to the fidelity and diligence in performing it; and the punishment to the presumption and wickedness of neglecting it. It is laid down by our Savior as the rule of divine as well as human judgment, that *from them to whom little hath been committed, little will be required; but from them to whom much has been committed, more may be justly expected.* Knowledge, power, wealth, health, strength, are variously distributed amongst the several individuals of the human species: in proportion to all which, separately, or in conjunction, a greater or less activity and usefulness will be required from the possessor. In the higher stations of life, the sphere of action is greatly enlarged, the duty and service belonging to them more important; and the mere example of persons so situated has a great influence on

their inferiors and attendants. But no man, who is possessed of the faculties common to human nature, is sent into the world, merely to consume the fruits of the earth in an idle and useless life, and to derive support and benefit from the labor and service of his fellow creatures, without making a return, by a discharge of the duties he owes to society. The creator, protector and governor of mankind, has formed them with such mutual dependence and relation, and endued them with such powers and affections, as discover undeniably their mutual obligations to serve and assist each other. How high or low soever any one is placed in external condition, how enlarged or confined soever his powers, he is the servant of society, and bound to be so by indissoluble ties, formed by the author of our nature. The greatest sovereign is no other in fact, than the chief servant of the public; to the safety and welfare of which he owes his most faithful and vigorous endeavors; If he entirely neglect this  
service

service he is guilty of a more than ordinary breach of trust; for which he must be accountable to the supreme ruler and judge. And persons in the narrowest circumstances, if not hindered by sickness and confinement, have some power, liberty and compass of action, which they are bound to make good use of, by obligations of the same kind with those that affect persons of the highest condition. He that neglects to provide for those of his own house, all that they may justly expect from his ability and industry, or refuses to do those acts of kindness and humanity which he is qualified to perform, resembles the *unprofitable servant* in the parable, who was under equal obligation to improve the *one talent* committed to him, as the other servants who received *five* or *ten*. Every man ought to attend to his own capacity and situation; and instead of vainly pretending or promising to become useful to the world, when providence shall better enable him, should faithfully and diligently improve the abilities

ties and opportunities which are at present afforded him, be they comparatively ever so small and inconsiderable. For it is a maxim delivered by our Savior to his Apostles, with a view to their then low condition, and their future elevation to the apostolic office, *He that is faithful in that which is least, will be faithful also in much: And he that is unjust in the least, will be unjust also in much.* Nothing is more common than for men to aspire to a rank that is above them, or a station for which they are not qualified; and flatter themselves with a vain imagination, that they would fill them up in the most useful and exemplary manner; whilst they are not at all aware of the difficulties and temptations that would immediately beset them. He that is now niggardly, and will part with nothing, yet persuades himself, that he would become generous if possessed of a large fortune: He that is now a petty tyrant over his own domestics, yet is ready to think, that he would govern a kingdom with

with much wisdom, equity and moderation: And he that now refuses to labor for the support of his family, yet imagines, that he would discharge some high employment, or perform some difficult enterprize, with wonderful vigor and application. It is often by such groundless imaginations, that men endeavor to gain their own esteem and applause, and to excuse to their own consciences their present idleness and unprofitableness. In general, the temptations to pride, indolence and luxury, to a neglect or abuse of talents, are strengthened and multiplied in proportion to the enlargement of men's abilities and circumstances: And therefore they who do not endeavor to become useful, in some way and measure, in their present circumstances, would probably become only the more useless, if not dangerous and hurtful to society, in proportion to the increase of their talents and endowments.

LET

LET every person then, who now misapplies the talents providence has conferred upon him, or abandons himself to a life of indolence, luxury and dissipation, consider seriously with himself, what account he shall be able to give of his own conduct, to the great master and sovereign of the world; and what sufficient excuse he shall then alledge in his own vindication. The slothful and wicked servant in the parable is represented, as endeavoring to eucxlpate *himself*, by throwing the blame upon *his lord*. *I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth. Lo there thou hast that is thine.* But instead of excusing, nothing could be a greater aggravation of his negligence and infidelity, than so false and presumptuous an allegation; which if it had been true, would avail nothing in his own justification; as he had entirely neglected that duty and service which was proportioned  
to



to his ability, and which therefore might be required from him with perfect reason and justice. He first resolved to give himself up to idleness, and pay not the least attention to his master's service and interest, and then pretended to know that he was rigorous and severe, and to be afraid that he would demand more than was due; nay charges him with injustice in demanding any service at all. In like manner, though the commandments of God are not grievous, and there is no duty or service, which true religion requires, that is not reasonable, honorable and advantagious; yet some persons are apt to consider all religion as burdensome, and the several rules and precepts of it as harsh and rigid; and hence endeavor to excuse themselves in throwing off all regard to it: At least they claim a dispensation for *themselves*, and think it is more than ought to be expected from *persons in their condition*, to be any way studious and industrious in the service of mankind. Instead of conceiving a  
noble

noble pleasure in it, they cannot endure the fatigue and trouble of doing good; of giving a serious attention, and applying their faculties vigorously, to any worthy end. Whenever Providence calls them forth to any duty of importance, though their abilities are every way equal to it, yet they imagine insuperable difficulties—*there is a lion in the way*—and they feel a terror and reluctance in their minds, and hence are tempted to devote themselves to an inactive and unprofitable course of life.—*I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth.*—It is indeed confessed, that to be ill employed is worse than meer idleness: but no sufficient excuse can arise, from a meer avoidance of bad actions, for the neglect of important and useful duties. Beside, idleness is attended with peculiar temptations to very bad actions: and such is the natural activity of mankind, especially the younger part, that if they are not employed to some virtuous and worthy, or at least innocent purpose, they will be in imminent

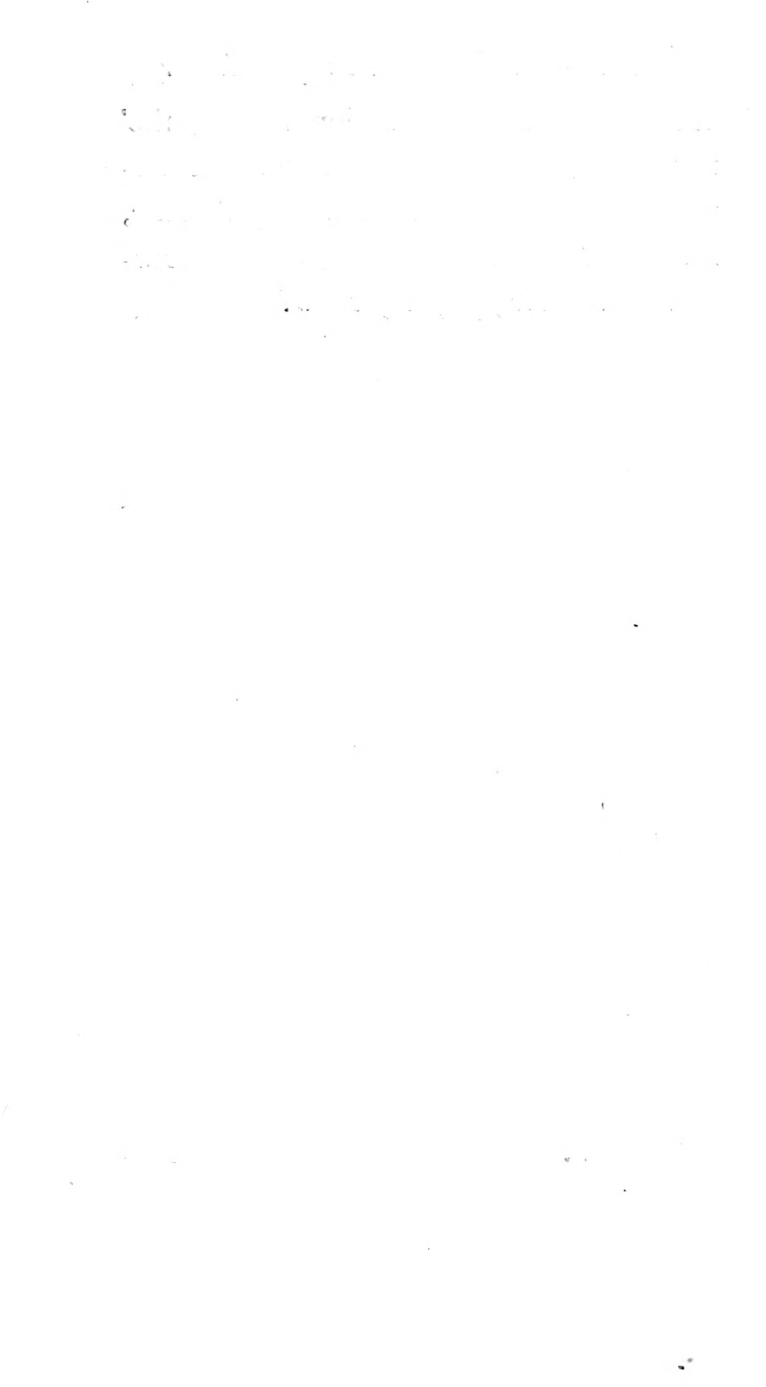
danger of falling into vicious and hurtful practices.

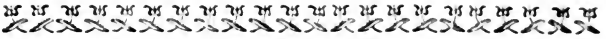
FINALLY, let us consider, what peculiar obligations we lie under, as christians, to a faithful and diligent discharge of our duty. We acknowledge ourselves, by our profession, to be the servants of Christ; and have received from him, as our master, the clearest instructions and rules for our conduct; the duties of piety and morality, which we are bound to perform, are placed before our eyes in the most conspicuous view; and our natural obligations to the discharge of them enforced, by peculiar and most affecting arguments: No encouragements to fidelity and diligence are wanting to us, from the hope of future acceptance honor and reward: We frequently recognize our christian engagements in a voluntary and explicit manner, by the several acts and offices of worship. These important circumstances and advantages will serve, either to direct and animate

mate us to a more wise and industrious improvement of our respective talents, or will render our neglect more culpable and inexcusable. How different soever our capacity and situation may be from that of the Apostles, in other respects, yet so far they are similar, as we are the professed disciples of Christ, and have our several talents and advantages, whether greater or smaller, derived from the former of our nature, or the author of our religion. Let us then observe the instruction of the *Apostle to the Roman Christians.*—*Having therefore gifts, saith he, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophecy according to the proportion of faith—cr ministry, let us wait on our ministring, or be that teacheth on teaching, or be that exhorteth on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity, he that ruleth, with diligence, he that sheweth mercy with cheerfulness: and be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Then may we hope to be accepted of him

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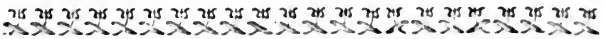
at last, with an approbation similar, tho' not equal, to that most significant applause, conferred on each worthy Apostle, *Well done! good and faithful servant!*—*Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*

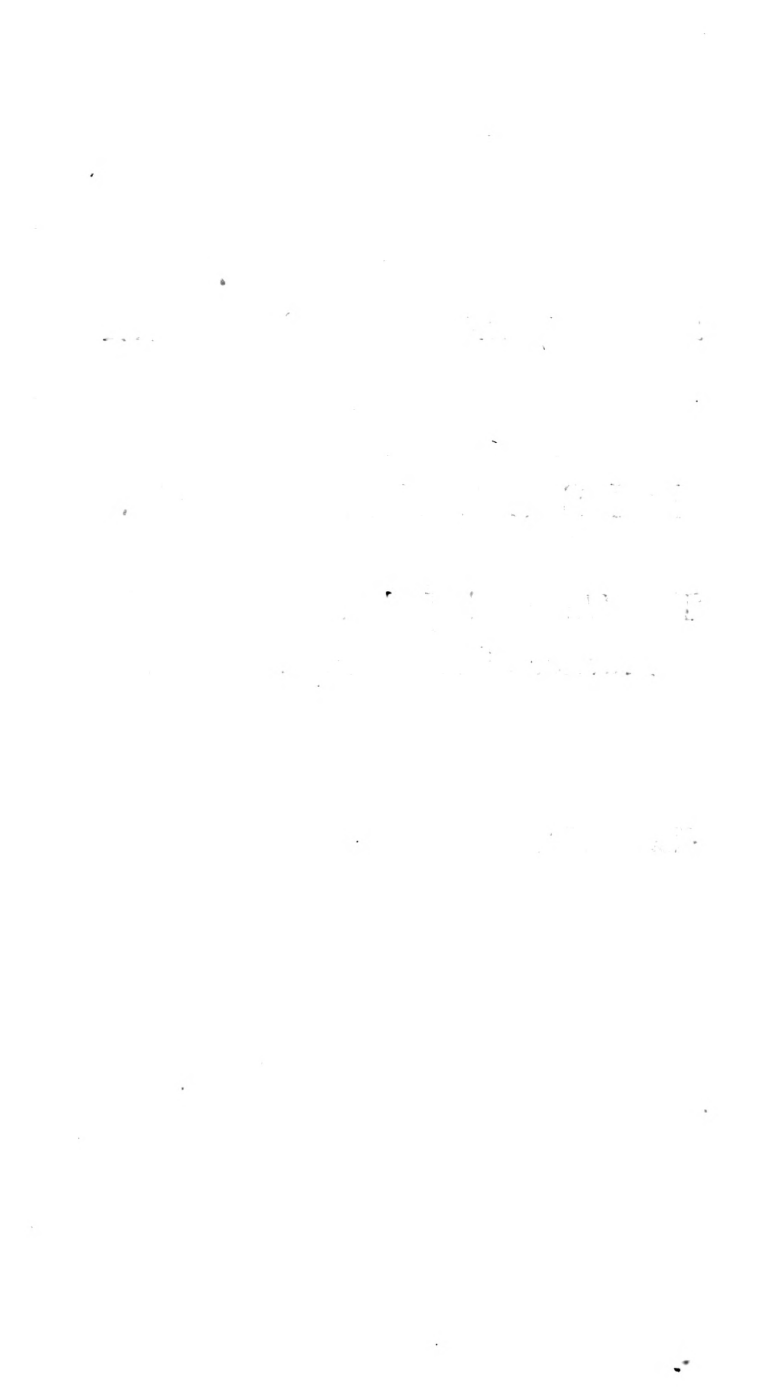




## DISCOURSE IX.

The Universal Judgment: Or, the  
Practice of Humanity inforced.







## MATTHEW XXV. 31.

*When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and*

*ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not: Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily*

*I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*

**H**AVING considered the fitness of the two preceding parables, to stir up the vigilance of the Apostles, to secure their fidelity, and quicken their diligence; we shall now take a view of the structure and parts of the representation in the text, as intended to excite their humanity, and persuade them to all such actions as naturally flow from the dispositions of generosity, kindness and compassion.

Vigilance and industry, fidelity and humanity, are the principal moral qualifications for performing the most difficult duties, and the most important and useful undertakings; and therefore were requisite in an eminent degree to the apostolic office and character. But as the exercise of hu-

manity was not a duty peculiar in any respect to their situation, character or function, but belongs equally to every man of whatever quality or station, in proportion to his abilities and opportunities; therefore there is no part of this parable or representation peculiar to the Apostles; but the whole of it may be applied properly, without any change or abatement of figure and expression, to mankind in general.

**HUMANITY** is a virtue so proper to mankind, so becoming their reasonable and social nature, of so frequent use and extensive benefit, so essentially necessary to the good order and happiness of the world, that we need not wonder that our *Savior* should employ the whole weight of his doctrine, authority and example, to correct and humanize the temper of his disciples, and inspire them with the sentiments of mutual kindness and compassion; especially if we consider how odious and pernicious the contrary dispositions are, and how  
much

much they prevailed in the *Jewish* nation.

NOTHING could be conceived more effectual to this purpose, than the representation in the text. All the parts are made subservient to this one moral end.—The Majesty which our Lord assumes to himself—the grandeur of the scene—the awfulness of the sentences pronounced—the animated and pathetic answers and replies—the throne of judgment—the assembly of all nations—the division of mankind into two classes—the reward and punishment to which they are adjudged;—these circumstances concur to give the greater force to the part which is principal; in which, humanity or inhumanity is assigned as the sole ground of their approbation or condemnation. Had our Savior only assured his disciples in terms of the plainest import, that the time would come, when he would judge the world; and that then every man should be rewarded or punished,

in proportion as he practised or neglected the duties of humanity ;—these few words would have contained the substance of his instruction, and would have been worthy of our most serious attention: But how cold and unanimated would such a bare declaration appear, compared to the august and pathetic representation here before us?

THAT he intended by this representation to convey to the minds of his disciples the most proper, important and useful ideas of the future judgment, is evident, and will be universally acknowledged: But whether the whole, or any part of it, is to be understood as a literal description, may admit of some doubt and inquiry. The affinity or resemblance it bears to the preceding parables, the composition of its several parts, and especially the speeches which are introduced, will naturally lead us to consider it, not as a literal, but in the main, as a figurative and parabolical description ;

scription; by which, the vast process and administration of affairs, in that kingdom of Heaven, of which our blessed Savior is constituted Sovereign, and the most important and interesting events relating to mankind, are drawn together as it were to a point, and placed in one perspective view; that the whole being seen at once in so strong a light, might produce the greater effect. That our Savior is constituted Sovereign of the world to come—that the fate of all mankind will depend upon his decisive judgment—that his judgment will proceed, not according to arbitrary decrees, but the real difference of men's moral characters and deserts—that according to his judgment, acts of humanity, kindness and compassion will be of the highest estimation, and the contrary the most criminal and inexcusable—that the wicked shall be punished with misery and destruction, and all good men rewarded with eternal life:—these seem to be the literal propositions contained in this figurative representation; these

these the important realities signified to us, to which our utmost attention is due, and which ought most effectually to govern our conduct, and incite us to virtue and goodness. It never was our Savior's intention to reveal to us the secrets of another world, or to inform us of the particular manner and circumstances of the grand events of it; but to give us only such general information and evidence of their certainty and importance, as would not gratify our curiosity, but awaken our vigilance—not astonish our imagination, but excite our activity and industry—not determine our speculations concerning his appearance and grandeur, but direct our practice, and enforce the obligations of mutual kindness and humanity.

It is impossible for us to know precisely, what notions the Apostles conceived, at the time this parable was spoke to them, of our Savior's dignity, and that regal power and dominion which he ascribes to him-



himself, or that kingdom which he so often predicts and describes to them. But it is not probable, that they were then arrived to those sublime ideas of his personal importance, his office and empire, which they afterwards obtained, when he was risen from the dead and ascended to Heaven, and had sent the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance the important instructions he had given them. By this representation therefore (which was the last he delivered to them) of his own future dignity, dominion and office, added to all the other figures by which he had characterized himself, he meant to enlarge, refine and elevate their conceptions of him, and their expectations of reward and preferment from him; so as would inspire them with the best moral dispositions, and most effectually engage them to the duties proper to their future character and office.

It deserves the particular consideration of all Christians, that how much soever

Christianity has been confounded in later times, by a mixture of metaphysical notions; yet our Savior never teaches his disciples any doctrine, or makes use of any expression, of a metaphysical import: but in conveying to them ideas of himself and his own future importance, confines his instructions wholly to that regal authority and office, which he represents as delegated to him by the supreme Being: and that he inculcates these sentiments always with a view to some moral purpose, and to influence their minds to virtue and goodness.

THE duties of mutual kindness and compassion are, as we before observed, most important in society, and essential to the character of a good man. And such goodness was most indispensably requisite to the character of Christ's Apostles, and to their success in the discharge of their office. Nothing could have been more prejudicial to the cause of Christianity, than a want of concord and mutual kindness and sympathy,

thy, amongst the first disciples. And we may justly observe, from the history of the Acts of the Apostles, that our Savior's instructions on this subject had so great and happy an effect, that the most perfect harmony and mutual kindness subsisted amongst them. They lived together as brethren: they converted all their private property into a common stock, out of which the wants of the poor were abundantly supplied: and they ministered with a cordial care and affection to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, and them that were sick or in prison. Must not this admirable effect be ascribed to the influence of our Lord's instructions? And to which of his instructions in particular can we more justly ascribe it, than to the noble and pathetic representation in the text? in which he describes himself as the Sovereign of all nations—as judging them in another world—as dividing them into two parties—as ranking them amongst the righteous or the wicked, the blessed or the cursed—  
and

and as consigning them to everlasting punishment, or to life eternal—in proportion to their practice or neglect of the duties of kindness and compassion.

THERE are four distinct views of the several parts of this parable, which deserve our particular attention, as most proper to produce the intended effect of the whole.—

(1) The grandeur of the scene described. (2) The elegance of the representation. (3) Our Savior's humanity of disposition expressed in it. And (4) the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous.

(1) THE grandeur of the scene described. In order to determine men's future and final condition—in order to decide their real characters—in order to reward them for their acts of goodness and beneficence, or to punish them for their want of charity and their acts of oppression and cruelty—what an apparatus is here introduced!—the throne of judgment—the monarch

narch of the world seated upon it—the holy Angels attending him—all nations assembled—a line of separation cast between them—sentence pronounced on each party, and confirmed against all pleas and objections, by the most unanswerable reason as well as supreme authority.—How proper is such a description to excite hope on the one hand, and fear on the other, which are often the most powerful motives in the minds of men, to direct and govern their practice. For instead of diminishing, it adds to the power of the description, if we understand the figures, not literally, but as adapted to human capacity, and intended to impress upon us a general idea of something greater, more important, and more interesting to us, than human language can express, or human imagination conceive.

(2) THE elegance of the representation.—In the first part of it, which conveys to us ideas of the highest grandeur, magnifi-

cence and solemnity, there is at the same time no pomp of diction, but a perfect simplicity and conciseness. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another.*

THAT discriminative and infallible knowledge, by which mankind shall be separated, according to their real characters, as righteous or wicked, is expressed with the utmost clearness and propriety, by the comparison of *the shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats*. Men shall be distinguished and separated, according to the real difference of their moral qualities, with as much certainty and precision, as the different species of flocks and herds are distinguishable by the keeper.

THE manner in which the virtuous and worthy part of mankind are represented as  
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answering to the encomium which the judge of the world had passed upon them, conveys to us an admirable idea of humility, or that self-diffidence which arises from modesty of temper. They express themselves as unworthy of that commendation and honor which the Sovereign of the world had vouchsafed to confer upon them. *Lord, when saw we thee an hungry, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? —When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?—or naked, and cloathed thee?—Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?—*On the other hand, there is an audacity and presumption implied, by the manner in which the wicked are represented as answering—they stand upon their defence, and as it were challenge the judge of the world to prove the truth of the sentence he had pronounced against them: *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?—*Yet the indictment is expressed only in negative

terms, and contains but a small part of what might have been laid to their charge. The all-righteous and merciful judge is so far from using asperity of language, and studying to aggravate their guilt, that he expresses his judgment of their conduct, and the reason of his passing the sentence of condemnation upon them, in terms that imply the utmost lenity and mildness. *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : Naked, and ye clothed me not : Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.* Was this all that might have been alledged against the criminals? Is there not evidently a designed omission of those multiplied and aggravated crimes and offences, of which they might have been justly accused? Might there not have been added, to their want of charity and compassion, a long catalogue of acts of fraud and rapine, oppression and cruelty? Might not the indictment have been truly expressed in terms to this effect?—That  
they



they had defrauded the poor—oppressed the weak—seduced the innocent—persecuted the righteous—and instead of doing good in the world, been the pests of human society?—that they had despised the authority, and violated the most sacred laws, of the divine government?—That they had acted with enmity and malice against himself, the Savior and judge of the world, by endeavoring to corrupt and subvert that most holy institution of religion, which he was sent to erect in the world, and by abusing and destroying the most conscientious and faithful professors of it.—Might not the names of hypocrite, blasphemer, tyrant, adulterer, murderer, have been inserted in the form of accusation, and truly applied at least to some of these unrighteous?—But such is the decency and delicacy of the description, that there is not the least appearance, but on the contrary the most manifest avoidance, of all opprobrious and invective language, how justly soever it might have

been applied. The whole amount of the accusation expressed in direct terms is, That they wanted humanity—that they did not minister to the indigent and the distressed. All the rest is passed over in silence, and submitted to the reflection of their own consciences. So in the parable of the *rich man* and *Lazarus*; when the former is described as *lifting up his eyes in a state of torment*, and imploring the mercy of his ancestor *Abraham*; the patriarch answers (not in upbraiding language) *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things*. The like mildness of language is ascribed by our Savior in this parable to himself, in the character of judge of the world, in alledging the reason and justice of his passing the sentence of condemnation upon the unrighteous. And we may observe that the sentences pronounced are perfectly becoming the justice and goodness of our Savior, and the dignity of divine law and government. *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from*

*from the foundation of the world.* In the opposite sentence pronounced on the wicked, *Depart from me, ye cursed;* the words, *of my Father,* are omitted. To be accursed of God may be a modern expression applied to malefactors; but is not the language of the New Testament. It is not the hatred or curse of God (who cannot hate any thing that he hath made) that sinners bring upon themselves by their wickedness; but their own curse, their own indignation and hatred, according to that most wise, fit and necessary constitution of things, which God hath established. By acting as enemies to the good order, virtue and happiness of mankind, it is become necessary to subdue them, to expose them to infamy, and to make them examples of punishment proportioned to their guilt; which will be done in a manner most becoming the majesty of the great Judge of the world, and subservient to the ends of infinite goodness.

(3) WE are to observe our Savior's humanity of disposition, which is expressed in the most lively and affecting terms, in these replies to the question, *Lord, when saw we THEE an hungred, &c. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME.* And on the other hand, *Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.*—It is said in Matthew xii. 46. That while our Savior was teaching the people, he was informed, that *his mother and brethren stood without desiring to speak with him: and he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples and said—Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.* In another place he says to his Apostles, *I will not call you servants, but friends. For ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you.*—These passages are admirably expressive of benig-  
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nity and affection; yet are excelled by the representation in our text. For here we behold our Savior, when invested with the Sovereignty of the world, when exalted to his highest dignity and glory, when seated upon his throne of judgment, when attended on by all the mighty Angels, addressing his speech to the assembly of the righteous, and stiling the poorest persons, the most obscure, the most neglected and distressed, who had lived virtuously and practised humanity in this world, HIS BRETHREN. How strong an idea of condescension, kindness and affection, does this image convey! Yet it is still heightened, and rendered far more expressive, by the preceding words, *Inasmuch as ye have done such things unto ONE OF THE LEAST of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME.* As if he himself, even in his most exalted state, had the most entire sympathy with every one, even the meanest, in every instance of regard or neglect, kindness or cruelty, with which he had  
been

been treated in this world. Is it usual for earthly Sovereigns to shew so much respect, and express themselves with so much tenderness, to the very lowest of their subjects?—Such goodness, so perfect an humanity, is not to be found amongst men, but is the peculiar property of the Savior and judge of the world; who thus imitates his Father, the all-perfect and ever-blessed Deity, in administering his rewarding justice and goodness to mankind.

(4) THE last parts of the parable we shall consider, are those which express the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. The former is thus expressed—*These shall go away into everlasting punishment*—and in a preceding verse, *into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*—i. e. shall undergo that undefined age of suffering, and that total destruction, which are intended for the authors and propagators of disorder, wickedness and misery

misery in the world. The latter is expressed by going *into life eternal*—and in a preceding verse, by *inheriting a kingdom which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world.*—There is a great variety of expression in the New Testament, both literal and figurative, denoting the rewards and punishments of another world. And from the whole connected together we may learn, that every wicked and impenitent person shall assuredly suffer in proportion to his guilt—that the end, the ultimate end, of the worst of sinners, is everlasting destruction, from that power of God, which, as our Savior observes, *is able to kill, or destroy, both soul and body, in hell*—and that the reward of good men shall be the enjoyment of immortality, and *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* As to any controversies that may have arisen upon this subject, we shall only observe first, that the best and only method of discovering the true sense of the New Testament, is by studying the passages of it

it carefully and in connexion with each other, in order, not to find our notions in it, but to learn our notions from it: And in the next place, that *they* alone understand this parable of our Savior, his other discourses, and the writings of the Apostles to the best purpose, who are most effectually incited by an attention to them, to the love and practice of all goodness and humanity.

THE several views which we have taken of the several parts of this parable naturally concur to produce this most happy effect. This was the chief end which our Savior had in view, in describing to his Apostles a scene of such magnificence and solemnity—in introducing figures and speeches so animated, elegant and pathetic—in signifying his own humanity and benignity in so affecting a manner—and in expressing the different sentences pronounced on the righteous and the wicked, and the different condition to which they are ad-  
judged,

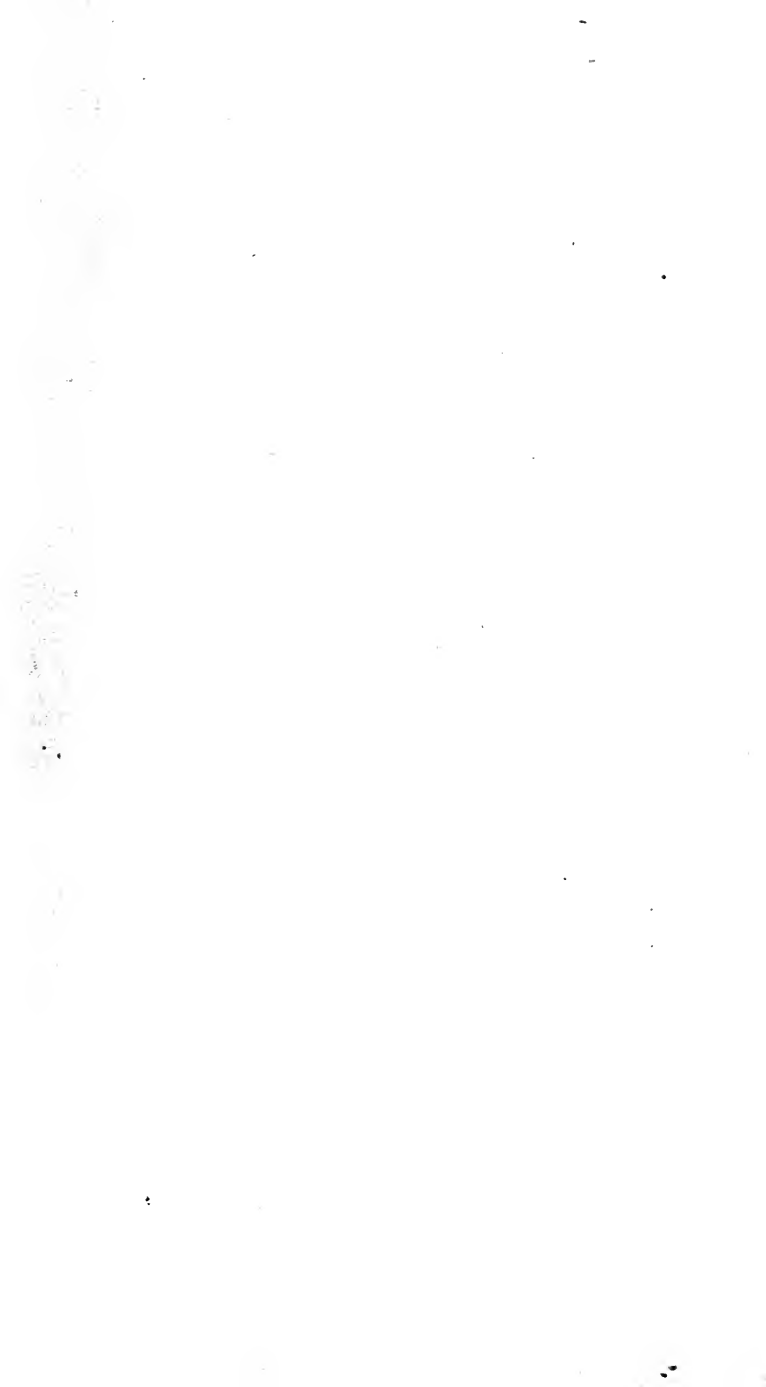


judged, in so strong terms, and so directly opposite to each other.—Let an awe then of the grandeur and majesty of our supreme and final judge—a belief of the perfect equity and candor of his procedure—a love of his condescension, kindness, and humanity—a terror of his rejection and the ensuing punishment and ruin—and a hope of his gracious acceptance to eternal life, conspire to engage us to an imitation of his goodness, and an obedience to the will of God, in all acts of justice and kindness, humanity and compassion.—If we are vigilant and industrious in making *this best* preparation for the events of a world to come; we need not to be struck with amazement and consternation on account of their grandeur and importance, or be solicitous to understand the particular manner or duration of them—but banishing all dark and perplexing thoughts, may wait, with entire acquiescence and satisfaction, for the righteous judgment of God; and may hope to be found amongst the  
number

number of those, whom the judge will separate from the wicked, whom he will place *at his right hand*, whom he will stile *his brethren*, and to whom he will say, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*


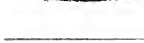
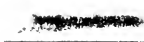

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