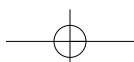
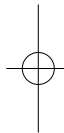
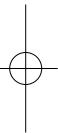


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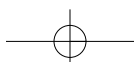
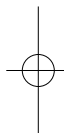
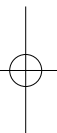
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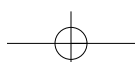
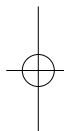
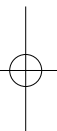
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**A Brief Exposition of the Evangel of  
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MATTHEW**

DAVID DICKSON

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**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND TRULY NOBLE MY  
LORD, EARL OF LOUDOUN LORD OF MAUHLIN AND  
Tarinzan &c,**

HIGH CHANCELLOR OF SCOTLAND &c,

**And to His Honourable and Hopeful Eldest Son, my Lord  
Mauchlin,**

Grace and Peace  
Right Honourable,

**I**t is a sweet and remarkable providence that within these not many years, such a multitude of impressions of the holy Scriptures are vented among these three united Kingdoms, and so many thousands are of Scots and English who delight not only to have the holy Bible in their possession and houses, but also to carry it in their pockets, for reading of it upon all occasions. This as it speaketh much of the desire after divine knowledge, raised up by God in people's hearts, and as it promiseth much of the spreading of the light of the Gospel in these Dominions (especially the Lord having now seconded His own work by drawing from the fountain of his own free grace, the body of these kingdoms into a solemn covenant, for purging of all his holy ordinances and promoting of sound religion) so doth it call aloud unto all the pastors of his flock and to all the godly learned by all means to lead the Lord's people in upon the right understanding of the Scriptures, lest the plain and marvellously consonant word of God

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be mistaken and wrested by the instability and unskilfulness of such as have not their senses exercised to discern the single meaning of the Lord's voice and the admirable harmony of his heavenly speeches. Many worthy men of God (it is true) have profitably taken pains to this purpose, and some have written large commentaries-upon sundry books and parcels of Scripture, others have translated out of Latin the commentaries of others. But of those worthy men's labours only such as have much leisure and patience to read can make use. Others have written short paraphrases of harder places; others, expositions of hard words; others have minded herewith some sweet notes and observations, all of them contributing

one with another unto the common good, so much as each sort of writing could carry. Yet besides all these laudable ways of explication of Scripture, it seemeth that these dangerous times (wherein so many diverse errors are privily crept in and begun openly also to avow themselves) do call for such an explanation of the whole Bible as might not only shew the scope of each book and chapter, with the cohesion of the verses and the meaning of the words; but also propone the special heads of doctrine in each place, whereby people might see the whole grounds of religion in the text, and be guarded against all damnable errors (in which those persons are easily ensnared who know not the Scriptures nor the power of God) and all this to be in such brevity and clearness that men in their daily set reading of the Lord's Word might in the space of half an hour peruse a competent portion of Scripture thus explained.

I say set time for their private reading because albeit every man is not set apart for the Word and doctrine, but most part have, by God's appointment, civil callings and necessary employments about the matters of this life, each calling and employment having its own work, and each work requiring his own time so that there remaineth little time beside unto many; yet that man is too much busied in temporal affairs and more involved in the world than he can answer for who doth not redeem daily so much time as the necessary exercise of religion in the Word and prayer doth require, beside secret ejaculations of prayer unto God, mixed with his affairs and the mason-like looks of

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his conscience levelling its eye to each action to see if it be conform to the rule. For presuppose a man were employed as much as a king, and had so many realms to govern as were under David, King of Israel, yet could he not be excused for this, to neglect God's Word and prayer; for David oftener than once every day, yea and in the night also, did find time to call on God, and praise his name and verse himself in his Word, Psalm 119:55,62,164. Let the men of this world who have their portion in this life and have set up in their hearts the filthy idols of worldly profit, pleasure and preferment, for gaining and keeping whereof they do make use not only of all men but also of God and religion so far only and no otherwise than as they may be suitable and serviceable to their base ends, let such men, I say, neglect reading of the Scriptures and all serious following of religious exercises. But let not the children of God do so, who hold their standing here, and the hopes of eternal life hereafter by faith in Christ, for promoting of whose cause and

## 6 A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE EVANGEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

kingdom they are resolved to bear his cross were it even to the doors of heaven, if so God please, and to lay it down on the threshold with thanks and praise that ever they were counted worthy to suffer for his name. Let not these blessed souls walk in the way of the ungodly but rather delight themselves in the law of God and meditate therein night and day, Psalm 1:2–3. For the service of such saints and facilitating of their reading of holy Scripture I come forth (as before in the brief Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews, so now in the brief explanation of the Evangel according to Matthew) to call yet again unto the godly learned, to stir up themselves for contributing one with another unto some such brief explanation of the whole Bible as their godly wisdom shall agree upon a mould, this or any other: because apparently it is but little and not considerable, which anyone man alone can overtake in this work.

As for this piece, such a one as it is, there is great reason why it should bear your honourable name in the title of it, it being a part of the fruit of your Lordship's labour, who as one eminently careful of the purity of God's ordinances hath with others of our renowned nobility, faithful gentry and boroughs run the hazard of all things in this

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life, and of life itself, to purge the land from superstition and heresy and to give freedom not only to the preaching of the truth of the Gospel, but also unto pens and presses for propagation of it. What singular proofs of integrity and inflexible constancy your Honour hath given in this great work of uniting these three kingdoms more nearly unto God and among themselves in the matters of religion, it is so well known, that I need say nothing, but bless God for the raising up of so many precious sons of Zion to take their Mother by the hand in the day of her calamity and give thanks to his majesty for your Lordships in particular.

And as for Your Honour, my Lord Mauchlin, I could not but join your Lordship's name with Your Noble Father in this dedication; partly, because you follow up so hard after his footsteps that your gracious and prudent behaviour observed by all beholders hath drawn from your condisciple<sup>t</sup> in philosophy a more ample eulogy than either your Lordship's modesty or my measure of commendation of men will suffer me to repeat, partly that your Lordships may be thus yet more engaged to drink in and maintain that doctrine of salvation by Christ which giveth the text of his Testament for a pawn and pledge of its verity; the love and

fruitful profession whereof, that it may be the constant glory of the House of Loudoun, is the hearty prayer of

Both your Honours' affectionate servant, in the LORD,  
DAVID DICKSON

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## To the Honest-Hearted Reader

Beside what I have said in the Epistle Dedicatory, I must acquaint you, worthy reader, yet further with my purpose and way in this piece. The special intent of the putting forth of it is not only that measure of edification which thou mayest reap by this small work, but also that in satisfying the desire of sundry worthy men of God who have obtested me to make proof, how some other place of Scripture may be fitted for the Church's edification, after the mould of the *Short Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, I may engage them all (if it be possible) and others also with them, who are more able than I am, to quicken and prosecute, as partners, the motion made by me heretofore, and now renewed, to wit, that by the consent of a number of able workmen, dividing the task among them, some such brief explanation of the whole text of Scripture, containing the chief doctrines, in a way accommodate unto the capacity of common people, may see the light, for the settling of saving truth in their hearts, by the force of divine faith, closing immediately with the text of Scripture. Than which work I conceive there can be no one means, after powerful preaching, more forcible for rooting out of errors, and manifesting unto all men the true religion which we profess in Britain, and by covenant are obliged to maintain and propagate according to our power.

In this explanation of the Gospel according to Matthew, I have laboured to fit the mould so that the deduction of the doctrines from the text may be more obvious to the reader's uptaking than it is in *The Short Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

I have contented myself with some few observations upon each text, which might serve most for the clearing of the place; leaving to every reader as he hath time for meditation and ability of gifts, to observe what further the text may afford, it being sufficient for my design that thou find



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so much clearness and sweetness in the Lord's Word, by what I offer to thy taste, as may make thee more in love with the daily reading of the Scripture, and the learned and able may be stirred up to help thee with more stuff of this kind.

I point ordinarily at some words in the text, for a ground of the doctrine proposed: from which words, if the doctrines do not immediately arise, and formally follow, yet from these words such doctrines may be inferred after some little larger explication of them, as these illative particles, *for* and *therefore* do at least import.

The history being all along most part plain, I have forborne to trouble thee with large contents or analysis, or exposition of words, and have insisted only where some difficulty is, and that so long only as was necessary to give some light. Hasting in all other places unto the doctrine and couching in them frequently so much exposition of the words as I could with clearness and brevity, of which I have had a special care, resolving with myself that as larger commentaries serve only for them who have leisure and love to read much, so this sort of writing must be for these only who (for one reason or other) must either have something in short, or nothing at all. If this mould seem unto thee fit for opening of the sealed Book, pray with me that the Lord would fit and stir up a sufficient number of instruments for hastening forth this wished-for work unto thy edification, and I will remain,

Thine, to serve thee,  
for Christ's cause,

*D.D.*

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I

## CHAPTER I

*In this chapter is contained the genealogy of Jesus Christ, as he is man (vv 1–17) And five evidences of his holy and wonderful incarnation (vv 18–25).*

1. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

In this title of the genealogy, or roll of the pedigree of Christ, the Evangelist holds forth to us these things: [1.] The person of whom we have to take notice here is not a mere man but the Saviour of men, for the inscription calls this roll, *the book of the generation of Jesus Christ*, such a man as is true God also, and worthy to be called in the most proper and strict sense, Jesus the true Salvator<sup>1</sup> and Deliverer of men from sin and wrath; which still, properly taken, belongs only to him who is almighty God, and Jesus in effect. [2.] This person Jesus is thoroughly<sup>2</sup> able and fully furnished for accomplishing the work of man's salvation, and one who is anointed to the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, to bring about, and perfect the salvation of his own: for this Jesus is that Christ, the eminently *anointed* Saviour. [3.] He is the Saviour of Jew and Gentile, who in his Hebrew name Jesus, and his Greek name Christ, lifts up a banner of love to both, that the Hebrews and Grecians, the Jews and Gentiles, may come to him for salvation, the one no less than the other. [4.] As the Lord did promise in Paradise, in the assumed seed of the woman, to tread down the head of the serpent, and did renew his promise in Abraham's seed, to bless all the nations of the earth, and in David's seed to reign and rule over the true Israel of God for ever, so has he performed; yea, he has carefully provided, not only to make his promise good, but also that the degrees of his lineal descent according

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to his human nature should be marked—partly in the holy Scripture from Abraham to the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and partly in the public registers of the family and posterity of David from the captivity to his birth. Therefore he is called the *son of Abraham*, the *son of David*, and mention is made of a *book* or *roll*, drawn forth of the records. This

## 10 A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE EVANGEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

register was from age to age so punctually filled up in every family, and made known to all men (Ezra 2:62), that not only David's posterity was known thereby (and according to it was taxed by Caesar in Bethlehem), but also all the rest of the families of the Hebrews then in Judea could reckon their genealogy by the public records, and were taxed in their several places accordingly (Luke 2:3,4,5).

*2. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;*

*3. And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Tamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;*

*4. And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;*

*5. And Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;*

*6. And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;*

*7. And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;*

*8. And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;*

*9. And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;*

*10. And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;*

*11. And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon;*

12. *And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;*

13. *And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;*

14. *And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;*

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15. *And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;*

16. *And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

17. *So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.*

This catalogue of the posterity of David being so well known from the public registers and records of the family of David, that no doubt nor question was made of Christ's descent from David, not even by his enemies, the evangelist therefore does not scrupulously name here everyone of his ancestors, but only draws the line along so far as it might suffice for the edification of the church: and by so much as is here set down he teaches us these things: [1.] Jesus Christ is the very true Messiah promised to the fathers, who now in the fulness of time has assumed human nature of the seed of *Abraham*, and *David*, whose *son he is called*, according to the flesh: and he points at this when he says *Abraham begat Isaac*, etc. [2.] For our confirmation in the faith of Jesus Christ, we should acquaint ourselves with the prophecies which went before of him, and with the history of his ancestors, *here recorded from the Scripture of the Old Testament*, and in special from Abraham to the captivity of Babylon. [3.] Seeing it is a hard matter to believe that God should so empty himself for us, and become a man like us, we should receive so many impressions of the verity of his human nature as there are several names of his ancestors,

## 12 A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE EVANGEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

according to the flesh, named in this catalogue, for to this end we are led from one to another by *he begat*, and *he begat*. [4.] No man should be afraid to offer himself to be engrafted as a branch in Christ because Christ has been pleased to be a branch of poor Ruth, a Gentile, as well as of rich Boaz; of unlearned persons as well as learned, of ignoble and mean persons as well as kings; yea, and of persons blotted with notorious faults, as Rahab and Tamar, no less than of holy patriarchs and prophets such as Abraham and Isaac. [5.] As he has separated our nature in his own person, from all the pollution of his

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ancestors here recorded, so he can sanctify our persons and nature, however polluted our persons have been. [6.] By summing up the generations from Abraham to Christ in thrice fourteen, he teaches us that, notwithstanding so many notable changes were made in that people, especially about the period of each fourteen generations, yet was the promise of the Messiah's coming and the lineal descent of the blessed seed still kept on foot, till our Lord was born, and by this same means he gives us' to understand that in the greatest commotions of kingdoms or commonwealths, no promise made to the Church shall be shaken.

*18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the, Holy Ghost.*

In the second part of the chapter we have five evidences of Christ's wonderful incarnation. The first is, the virgin Mary is *found with child of the Holy Ghost*; wherein these truths offer themselves: [1.] Although Christ as God be eternal and has no mother, yet as he is a man, he has Mary his mother in her virginity, for *before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost*. [2.] This wonderful conception was no less true and real than any ordinary conception could be, for by ordinary evidence *she is found with child*, which was observed by those who did not know that it was of *the Holy Ghost* till afterward. [3.] We should neither speak nor think of this holy conception without the remembrance of the wonderful operation of the Holy Spirit, for to prevent all unworthy and unbecoming thoughts of this transcendent mystery, no sooner does the evangelist make mention of the virgin's being *with child*, but immediately he subjoins, *of the Holy Ghost*, to teach us to beware to think any thoughts of this great mystery of godliness, the incarnation of the Son of God, except by the conduct of *the Holy Ghost* who must form right thoughts

of Christ in our hearts, and lead us along through this following history in all saving truth. [4.] The Lord has a care of the fame and estimation of those in whom he minds to honour himself, for it is so provided by God, that the virgin Mary being with child, the promised Messiah,

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shall be espoused to her husband Joseph, in order that no exception could be taken against her by such as did not believe the mystery.

*19. Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*

The second evidence is Joseph's perplexity. He, being certain of the real conception of the virgin, and uncertain of the holy manner of it, either because he was not informed by the virgin how the matter was, or because, if he was informed, he did not fully believe, he is put to a perplexed deliberation what to do. There was on the one hand such evidence of purity and holiness in the carriage of the blessed virgin that Joseph could not find a reason in justice to make her a public example, and for this part of his resolution he is commended as a *just man*. On the other hand there was such certainty of her being with child, and that the child was not his, that he was minded to *put her away privily*. DOCTRINE: [1.] God by perplexities can prepare the hearts of his own for a clearer satisfaction in matters of highest concern, for this exercise of Joseph is made a harbinger to the revelation and satisfaction which afterward he received. [2.] Our Lord's sufferings began very early, even before he was born, when the virgin mother comes under suspicion for his incarnation, and comes under this hazard, to be put away privily for his cause. [3.] No wonder Christ have had hard entertainment in the world before he be known, when even his own, according to election, do refuse him till he manifests himself to them. For Joseph is about to reject the mother and the child before he knew the mystery.

*20. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

The third evidence is the testimony of the angel, revealing the truth to Joseph. DOCTRINE: [1.] No less than divine

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revelation can satisfy a soul in matters concerning Christ. Joseph must be taught from heaven before he be clear about the incarnation of the Son of God. [2.] The Lord can turn the doubts and fears and perplexities of his own into an advantage to themselves and others also, and into a clearer manifestation of his own glory: for now the incarnation of the Son of God is more clear to Joseph, and to the Church, the Lord having reserved the revelation thereof to himself, than if Joseph had never made question about it. [3.] The Lord shows himself in a necessary nick of time. While the virgin is in hazard to suffer and Joseph about to put her away, the Lord himself intervenes, for while he *thought on these things*, the *angel appeared*; the angel calling Joseph *son of David*, obliges Joseph to serve as the chief of all the sons of David, the *renowned branch and true root* also of the house of David, for whose cause the posterity of David was kept undestroyed, when other families were confounded. Then he discharges Joseph's suspicion which he had of Mary, assuring him that that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. He says this, not to seclude<sup>2</sup> the operation of the Father and the Son, whose work is always one with the work of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Father and the Son do work whatsoever they work among the creatures, being all three one God; as undivided in essence, so inseparable in operation. But this work is attributed to the Holy Ghost to seclude<sup>3</sup> the ordinary way of generation of man, and to assure us of the sanctification of the substance of the virgin assumed by Christ, and of the freedom of Christ's human nature both from original sin and also from all possibility of sinning, by reason of the personal union of the human nature with the divine, made by the Holy Ghost. [4.] As Christ is the son of David by lineal descent through Mary his mother, so also by law through Joseph his supposed father, and father in law, who was descended from David, for the angel called Joseph thou *son of David*. [5.] The Lord in due time clears the righteousness of such as suffer in their name and estimation for Christ, for Mary's chastity is now made manifest from heaven; *Fear not to take unto*

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*thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

21. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

For the further confirmation of Joseph the angel shows him how that the conception is of a man child and gives order to name him, after he is born, with the reason thereof; hereby teaching us these truths: [1.] As Christ was really partaker of our flesh and blood in his conception, so Mary his mother did bring him forth as really and kindly as ever woman bare a child, for it is said, *she shall bring forth a son*. The word in the original speaks this plainly. [2.] The son of the virgin Mary is the only true Jesus, recommended to us from heaven, to be taken notice of as the true Saviour. All who had this name before him were but his shadows and types of him at the best, for of Christ it is said, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save*. [3.] Natural and civil relations of men and women to Christ did not take away their obligation and necessity to believe in him and to confess him unto salvation, as other sinners must do, but rather augmented the same, for to Joseph it is said, *Thou shalt call his name Jesus*, to wit, not only as foster-father, giving this name to him, but as a believer in him and confessor of him, avowing him to be the true Saviour, because *he shall save his people from their sins*. [4.] The son of Mary, Jesus Christ, God incarnate, purchases and gives salvation by his own proper worth and power, for of him it is said absolutely in the strictest sense, *he himself shall save his people*. [5.] Jesus is not to save every man, but only his *own people*, for whose ransom he made a pact with the Father, in the covenant of redemption, for it is said, *he shall save his own people*. [6.] The redeemed are no less sinners and lost in themselves than others are, for it is said, *he shall save his own people* from their sins. [7.] These things are spoken to Joseph to move him to consecrate himself to the service of Jesus, whereby we learn that except Christ be known as the Saviour, a man cannot heartily do him service nor endure

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trouble for him, in saying, *thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people*.

22. *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*

23. *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*



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The fourth evidence of the incarnation is the manifested accomplishment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, wherein the prophet, for the comfort of the Church, gives assurance that not only God should save Israel from their enemies, whom unbelieving Ahaz did too much fear, but also that the redeemer of Israel should verily be incarnate, and assume human nature in a wonderful manner. DOCTRINE: [1.] The mystery of Christ's wonderful conception was not altogether hid from the Church under the old Testament, for it is here foretold by Isaiah that *a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son*. [2.] It was foretold that the child born should be God and man in one person, Immanuel, that is, God with us, God manifested in the flesh, God in our nature, God reconciling us to himself. [3.] It was foretold that he should be believed on, and acknowledged to be God incarnate, for it is said, *they shall call his name Immanuel*, which is fully seen to be accomplished when this child Jesus is born, *who is the Saviour of his people from their sins*. For who except God can redeem and save men, who can make the redeemed his own proper and peculiar people, except God? Who can by his own merit and effectual power save from sin, except God? Only such a Jesus, as is verily God, really Immanuel, God incarnate, the true reconciler of God and man.

24. *Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:*

25. *And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus.*

The last evidence of Christ's holy and wonderful incarnation is the quiet faith and ready obedience of Joseph after

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he is now taught of God. DOCTRINE: [1.] From the time that a man be sure of God's word and warrant, he should dispute no more, but stop his ear to all carnal reasoning, for God having solved Joseph of his doubts, and given him assurance that Christ is the promised Saviour, he *did as the angel had bidden him*. [2.] A soul that knows the worth of Christ will be glad, according to its power, to do service to him or to any of those who belong to him, for now Joseph as a foster-father takes home, under the shadow of matrimony, both mother and child. [3.] When faith beholds the majesty of Jesus, it breeds fear and respect in the believer toward him, and brings all his affections in subjection to him, for Joseph,

understanding that the virgin is with child, that the promised seed is now come to destroy the works of the devil, and that the Holy One of Israel is now incarnate in the virgin's womb, he bears our Lord at such reverence, and so sanctifies him in his heart, that he suffers the virgin to remain a virgin, for it is said, *he knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son*, which is sufficient for evidencing the accomplishment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14.

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## CHAPTER 2

*Christ being born in Bethlehem is honoured from heaven and earth by the wise men coming to worship him (vv 1–12). And by the wonderful disappointing of Herod's bloody plot against him (vv 13–23).*

*1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.*

We hear no more of these wise men save what we collect from Matthew, that they were of the Gentiles, men of learning and wisdom, men of wealth and reputation; the circumstances of their coming are set down here, they *came from the East to Jerusalem, when Christ is born* in the days of Herod the King, wherein we have these things observable: [1.] The place of the nativity of Christ well agrees to the prophecy of Micah 5:2. Jesus is born in Bethlehem the city of David, which is in Judea, so called to distinguish it from Bethlehem in Galilee. [2.] The time when he should be born agrees also to the prophecy in Genesis 49:10, to wit, before or about the time of the sceptre's being taken altogether from Judah. That is, before the tribe of Judah did cease to be a tribe, before this tribe was dissipate and so destitute of all sort of government, which came not to pass till after our Lord's death. For now Herod is king in Judea who had slain the elders of the house of David, to confirm the kingdom in his own hand; yet the tribe remained, and had its own order within itself, for the regulating of the common things pertaining to the several families thereof as appears in the taxing of the family of David in Bethlehem. But after Christ's coming and ending of the work of redemption, for which he came, the tribe of Judah was so cut off and confounded that it never had a face of a tribe again to this day. Therefore the Messiah is now come. [3.] When such as should glorify God do it

not, but do misken<sup>1</sup> Christ, he can raise up others in their place by whom he will honour himself, for though the wise men of the Jewish church do not observe the time of Christ's coming, yet God prepares witnesses for himself from among the Gentiles. *Behold a number of wise men come*

*from the East* to honour him, whether from Chaldea, or Persia; or how many they were, or what were their names, it is not material to us. It is sufficient that Christ is honoured by them and that they are the firstfruits of the Gentiles in their conversion to Christ. [4.] The Lord fails not to make the best of all means for his own glory, for to make these men's testimony famous, and most fit to check the security of the Jews, they are led in a providence to Jerusalem to ask for Christ.

2. *Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

When these men are come to Jerusalem, they ask where Christ is and profess their faith in him, and their purpose to worship him. DOCTRINE: [1.] Though Christ's kingdom is not of this world, yet is he King of saints, the true King of Israel, to whom the throne of David was promised, that he should sit thereon and reign over souls for ever, for he is that born King of the Jews. [2.] Saving faith looks through all clouds of human infirmities in Christ and pitches upon some point of excellency in him, for these men by faith in a babe new born, behold the promised Messiah and the King of Israel: *they ask for the King of the Jews*, giving to him the ordinary style of the Messiah. [3.] The least spunk<sup>2</sup> of saving knowledge sets a man on work to seek after Christ, for *where is he?* say they. [4.] Faith ere it want Christ, will hazard all to come by him, for these men confess him with the danger of their life, to *be the born king of the Jews*, and ask for him in Jerusalem, even when and where Herod, a stranger, is reigning as king. [5.] Though Christ came in the form of a servant and humbled himself to be born of a lowly damsel, yet

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is his honour to be seen in heaven and earth, for a star is created to give warning to the world, that the bright morning Star is arisen: and from the east wise men come to confess him. [6.] Though God give signs and evidences of Christ's coming, yet not every man sees or observes them, but such only as God reveals them to, for none but these wise men get a right sight of this star; *we*, say they, *have seen his star in the east.* [7.] Faith in Christ and love to him, will spare no pains nor travel to come to him, for these men are come from afar, from the *east to see him.* [8.] Faith sees Christ to be God, and that makes men to overcome a world of difficulties, in seeking to have communion with him, for *we are come to worship him*, say they: to wit, with religious worship due to the promised Messiah, the Redeemer of souls.

3. *When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

At the hearing of this news Herod is troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, he for fear of losing his kingdom, and they for fear of wars between two kings. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is no new thing that kings are jealous of Christ when they hear he is a King. They can hardly conceive how his kingdom shall not pre-judge<sup>3</sup> their reign, although indeed their kingdom has no such friend as he is; therefore *Herod when he heard, was troubled.* [2.] Worldly men, settled in their honours, ease and wealth are feared to be troubled about Christ, and could be content to sit quiet without him, for all *Jerusalem here is troubled also*, more fearing temporal inconveniences by occasion of Christ's nativity, than rejoicing in the hope of salvation through him.

4. *And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.*

Herod dissembles his fear and pretends zeal, to bring the knowledge of Christ to light, and to this end he calls an assembly of the Church to enquire what the Scripture spake

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of the place of his nativity; than which, there could not be any act more plausible to the people, more acceptable to these strangers, or a more specious show of religious respect to Christ. In Herod we have the portrait of Christ's enemies; he dissembles like a crafty fox, waiting for the prey; so do they; he befriends the wise men who are seeking Christ so far as it may serve his own ends; so do they. He abuses the churchmen and their assembly; calls for a meeting of the chief priests and scribes, and propounds questions to be solved, as if he minded to make good use thereof. In particular *asking of them where Christ should be born*, as if none were readier to serve him than he, meantime he was seeking to find him out to kill him: so do they.

5. *And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet:*

6. *And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.*

The priests and scribes of the people assembled answer the question from Scripture. As it is the duty of the Churchmen to assemble readily when matters of religion and questions concerning Christ are moved in the Church, so they ought to determine questions, according to the Scripture, without feed<sup>4</sup> or favour. For being convened, they answer *It is written*, in the text cited by the assembly. Matthew and Micah agree in substance that although Bethlehem was a small city, of no great wealth nor estimation among the cities of Israel, yet it was not little in effect, but a city of renown, because in it was born the Governor of Israel, the King and Captain of the Lord's people, Christ Jesus. DOCTRINE: [1.] Scripture consists not in letters or syllables but in sense and meaning, for in citations of Scripture here and elsewhere, the Evangelists stand not for words but rest upon the sense. [2.] The meanness and baseness of any thing whereof Christ makes use should offend no man for *He can make a little Bethlehem* the place

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of his nativity. [3.] His presence dignifies the place, wheresoever he is, for Bethlehem, however small, is not the least city, for Christ is born in it. [4.] Christ's special subjects are the Israel of God, and Christ's office is to be a Governor, a Chieftain and a Guide to the elect, governing and feeding them, for he shall rule my people Israel, *he shall rule them as a pastor*, or shepherd as the word implies. [5.] God can make use of his foes for the furtherance of his own purpose, whatsoever be their intentions, for by the means of Herod and the scribes who were small friends to Christ, God's purpose for clearing of the fulfilling of the prophecy about the place of Christ's nativity is brought about. [6.] The Lord can so dispose of means for the benefit of such as are seeking Christ, that if one means be withheld, another more profitable shall be furnished. For the wise men, though they want the sight of a star for a while which they saw in the East (v 2), yet first they are led to *Jerusalem*, (v 1) and then to the light of the Scripture in the answer of the priests (vv 5, 6) that their faith might be built on Christ in the ordinary and surest way. In particular God offers them a notable point of light, in the answer of the priests and scribes concerning Christ's Godhead and eternity. For in the text cited here by the assembly (Micah 5:2) it is written that Christ's

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*going forth is from of old, from everlasting, which served to teach them that the eternal generation of the Son must always be remembered when his being born as a child is spoken of, which could not be but useful and comfortable to them at that time.*

*7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.*

*8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.*

Herod goes on to follow his bloody plot against Christ, and under pretence of a purpose to honour and worship him he intends to murder him. DOCTRINE: In Herod we see yet more of the ways of the enemies of Christ. [1.] He carries on his design closely lest any man should smell

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his intention; so do Christ's enemies. He calls the wise men privily; so do they. [2.] Though he has learned more of Christ than before, yet because his knowledge is not sanctified his malice is not abated; therefore the love of earthly things sets him on to follow his design against Christ so much the more eagerly, and so is it with the crafty politicians of this world. [3.] When he has gained one point about the place of Christ's birth, he goes about to gain another concerning the time of his birth also, that he may draw so much nearer for the surprising of Christ; so do Christ's enemies, hauling in the cords of their net by parts. [4.] He covers his purpose of murder under pretence of a purpose to worship Christ. He professes to have faith in Christ and to be of the same mind that the wise men are of, and that his resolution is out of the same affection with them to worship him; so do Christ's enemies, drawing near in profession of religion, that they may more easily betray. [5.] To make all fast he abuses the simplicity of Christ's friends and thinks to make them ignorantly to betray Christ into his hands; so do Christ's enemies; *Go search for the child, saith he, and bring me word.* [6.] Meantime as God blind-folded him in his deepest policy and suffered not his wicked wit to direct some of his servants, under pretence of conveying the wise men, to go along with them, to murder Christ, so does God disappoint Christ's enemies in their deep plots, for it is easy to God to make fools

of his foes when he pleases. Herod sent the wise men to search out Christ, but we read of none sent along with them.

*9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and 10, the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*

*10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

The wise men follow the direction of the Scripture, and go toward Bethlehem having (so far as we read) neither convoy nor encouragement of any company. DOCTRINE: [1.] If we love to find Christ we must resolve to go after him alone or in company, either with or without encouragements

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from men, as God shall dispose. [2.] God is not lacking to such as are on the way to seek Christ, but will renew directions and encouragements to them as they stand in need, for the star which for a time disappeared, now appears again to them for their comfort. [3.] What one means does not reach, God supplies by another means, for the Scripture had told them of Bethlehem but had not descended so low as the particular house, but God supplies the rest by the direction of the star which now goes before them in the way, and stands above the house where our Lord lay. That this star was none of the ordinary, but made of purpose for this particular service, appears by the motion of it. [4.] Those means which do lead a man most certainly unto Christ, should be the matter of his special joy. The joy which arises from finding of Christ cannot be expressed, for it is said, *They rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

*11. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

The wise men at length do find Christ and do not stumble at his outward infirmities, base lodging or any other thing but worship him as their God and Saviour, consecrating themselves and all they have to his service. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as seek Christ in truth, shall find him at length. [2.] Such as believe what the Scripture speaks of Christ, will see Christ's Godhead in his deepest humiliation, and by faith will pierce through all



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impediments; therefore was it that they *fell down and worshipped the child*. [3.] Riches and wisdom and honour and all that we have ought to be laid down at Christ's feet and offered to the service of Christ, as the fountain and owner thereof, for *They opened their treasures and presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh*.

12. *And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

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Now the Lord discovers Herod's plot and disappoints him. DOCTRINE: [1.] Wicked men may keep their design against Christ close from the knowledge of men but cannot hide their counsel from God: he perceives Herod's mind perfectly. [2.] The Lord is watching over the just and will not suffer their honest simplicity to be so far abused by the enemy as ignorantly to betray Christ into the enemies' hands. Therefore he forewarns these wise men that they should not trust Herod nor go toward him any more, but *return home another way*. [3.] Such as believe in Christ, the longer they follow him the more confirmations of faith they find, as here; beside all the former, God gives this revelation also to these wise men and their life also for a prey from the rage of Herod.

13. *And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*

The wise men are gone, now Christ is sent away also. DOCTRINE [1.] Our Lord was persecuted so soon as he was known in the world; he is sought to be slain who came to save men, for Herod *seeks to destroy Him*. [2] He who is the Ancient of Days, the everlasting Father, according to his Godhead, is called a young child according to his manhood, as Isaiah 9:6 did foretell, for Herod *shall seek the young child*. [3.] The Lord will have ordinary means used when they may be had: He will save Christ by flight, and will do no miracle needlessly; therefore, *Go flee into Egypt*, saith the Angel. [4.] It is safe to wait for the Lord in all things, and to attend his providence. *Be thou there till I bring thee word*, saith the Angel to Joseph.

14. *When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night and departed into Egypt.*

Joseph obeys speedily. DOCTRINE [1.] When our direction is clear our obedience should be speedy and without delay as Joseph being warned, *ariseth by night and makes for his*

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*journey.* [2.] When Christ is known, he will be more dear than anything else, for as the child is first in Joseph's commission (v 12) to take care for him, so in his obedience here the child is before the mother; for it is said, *He took the child, and his mother.* [3.] Any place, if God send us there, if Christ be in our company, is good, even Egypt, for Joseph *departed into Egypt*, being sent thither.

15. *And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

That we may see how the prophecy is fulfilled, the meaning of the words of Hosea is, in effect, as if it had been said, o Church of Israel, when thou wast in thine infancy, I so loved thee, that I brought thee out of Egypt as my adopted son, and in thee I called out of Egypt my only begotten Son who, as the promised seed of Abraham, was in thy loins; and as in thy bondage in Egypt, I intended to foreshadow and signify the sufferings of my Son, and his fleeing out of Canaan into Egypt, so also in the calling of thee, my adopted son out of Egypt, I intended to foreshadow and signify the calling of my only begotten Son out of Egypt, that he should perfect the work of redemption in the midst of the land promised unto thee; yet notwithstanding all this, thou hast been unthankful to me. Thus Christ's going down to Egypt, and his bringing back out of it, is a fulfilling of the prophecy; and withal, this shews us that in all the Lord's work about Israel, he had a special eye upon the promised seed, upon the Messiah, who was to come out of that people, foreshadowing something of him, or accomplishing something foresignified of him. Therefore it should not seem strange to us that the Evangelists do apply sundry such speeches of the old prophets unto Christ who was mainly aimed at and borne witness unto in the Law and the Prophets.

*16. Then Herod when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old*

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*and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.*

Now Herod, finding himself disappointed, bewrays his cruel design against Christ. DOCTRINE [1.] God turns the wisdom of his enemies into folly, *Now Herod finds himself mocked.* [2.] Wicked heads do take it hardly if every instrument whom they employ and abuse do not serve their base designs, *for Herod is wroth with the wise men, as if they had mocked him.* [3.] Enemies of Christ, when fraud fails them, fall to open rage, now *Herod sends forth to slay Christ*, if he can find him. [4.] Satan and his instruments labour to overthrow such as are like to Christ if they cannot overthrow himself. Therefore Herod causes to slay all the young children in Bethlehem who were nearest in age to Christ. [5.] Wicked men do not reverence God's providence in disappointing their wicked purposes, but are incensed the more to do mischief, as Herod's course shows here.

*17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,*

*18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not.*

The Evangelist applies to this passage of God's providence the words of the prophet Jeremiah (31:15), who foretells that as the captivity of the ten tribes had once made the state of Israel as it were their mother to mourn, so should the calamity of Israel make that state to mourn again, for the murder of so many children in and about Bethlehem. Yet this comfortless sorrow should be swallowed up by the consolations of Christ come into the world, as may be seen in Jeremiah 31, comparing verses 15 and 16 with 10, 11, 18 and 22, in the last of which verses the incarnation of the Messiah is pointed at expressly. Now this prophecy is here accomplished. Rachel indeed here mourns and no consolation can be

sufficient to assuage this sorrow, except that consolation only which comes by the Gospel and by the incarnation of the Son of God. DOCTRINE [1.] It is a good way of making use of God's providence to compare

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events with the predictions of God's Word, and to mark where we see accomplishment answerable, that we may say with the Evangelist, *Thus is it fulfilled what the Lord hath spoken.* [2.] The troubles of the Lord's people are foreseen and weighed in a balance, and comfort is prepared for them, for the weeping of Rachel is foretold of the Lord before it comes, and consolation is prepared for it in Christ, as the place in Jeremiah cited gives evidence.

19. *But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,*

20. *Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life.*

Now Joseph is called back from Egypt. DOCTRINE [1.] The Lord remembers his own in trouble to comfort them in due season, for *so soon as Herod dieth, the Angel carrieth news.* [2.] The death of persecutors is the delivery of the persecuted, therefore says the angel, *Arise, for he is dead that sought the child's life.*

21. *And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

22. *But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.*

Joseph is afraid of Archelaus and is delivered of his fear. DOCTRINE [1.] No wonder the children of wicked parents be suspected till their regeneration appear; therefore Joseph is fearful of Archelaus, Herod's son, that he shall be father-like, or father-worse. [2.] When God will comfort a man, he removes one doubt as well as another, as *this fear is removed by another revelation from heaven.* [3.] The Lord's warrant and clear

direction quiets the mind, therefore *Joseph being warned by the Angel, turneth aside into Galilee.*

23. *And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.*

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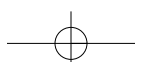
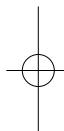
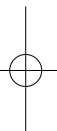
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In Christ's abode at Nazareth, the evangelist observes God's providence, intending thereby that he should be called a Nazarite, that is, one separate from sinners. Sundry types of Christ did foreshadow and promise that he should be called indeed a Nazarite, or one separate, for Joseph is called the Nazarite of his brethren, or one *separate* from his brethren (Genesis 49:26), first, in regard of the measure of love which his father bare to him, next he is *separate* from his brethren in regard that they sold him to the Gentiles, and thirdly, he is *separate* in God's providence from his brethren, that he might prepare a place for them and preserve the life of his own people; in Joseph was Christ fore-shadowed and promised to be such a *Nazarite*, separate in all these respects. Again, in the typical law of the Nazarite (Numbers 6) it is fore-signified that Christ should be separate from sinners, and dedicated unto holiness; dead to the pomp and pleasure of this world; that he should be the ornament and flower of religion, and the true pattern of piety to all the Israel of God. Moreover in the type of Samson it is fore-signified (Judges 13:5) that Christ should from his birth be a *Nazarite* unto God; who by his power and sufferings should overcome his enemies and bring delivery to Israel. Now Christ, his dwelling at Nazareth and his being called a *Nazarene* from his dwelling, was a fit means to call to men's minds the perfections of the *Nazarite* in him and to make them see the accomplishment of the foresaid prophecies in him. And therefore does the evangelist mark the providence of God in directing his dwelling to be in this little town Nazareth, whereby occasion might be given to all men to observe and perceive in Christ the fulfilling of the prophecies which foretold that he should be really a *Nazarite*. DOCTRINE Whensoever we hear him called *Jesus of Nazareth*, let us remember that he is that true Nazarite, that promised pleasant plant, that Holy One of Israel, separate from sinners, the true deliverer of Israel from their enemies, who hath broken the bars of death and hell and by his death hath overcome the devil, and accomplished everything which in the types were foreshadowed of him.



PROOF-READING DRAFT

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## CHAPTER 3

The Evangelist passes over our Saviour's life in private, and sets down how John the Baptist, by his ministry, as the forerunner of our Lord, prepares the way for the receiving of him (vv 1–12). How Christ by him is baptized and how Christ is magnified from heaven, in his entry into his public office (vv 13–17).

*1. In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea.*

While Christ is dwelling at Nazareth in Galilee, at the time appointed of God, John Baptist is sent forth to preach in the wilderness of Judea, that is in the moorlands and hilly country of Judea. John is called the *Baptist* because he was the first that did baptize, hereby distinguishing him from John the Apostle. DOCTRINE [1.] God has set times wherein he will have every thing done which was foretold to come to pass, therefore it is said, *In those days*; to wit, of which Isaiah spoke (40:3), while Christ is dwelling at Nazareth this appointed work is done. [2.] How basely soever the world count of preaching, yet it is the only ordinary way to prepare souls for receiving of Christ. Therefore it is said, *John came preaching*. [3.] It is in God's choice to send the preachers of the gospel, to what place he will, for John is sent to preach in the wilderness of Judea, and not in Jerusalem.

*2. And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

The sum of John's preaching was to move men to repent, because the kingdom of God's grace offered in the gospel, was now ready to receive the penitent. DOCTRINE [1.] The gospel finds men mad and out of their wits in an evil way; when it is sent unto them they are men who must return to their wits, as the original of the word *repent* imports. [2.] The end of the preaching of the gospel is to persuade

men unto repentance, for *repent* is John's main scope. [3.] The grace of God offered in the gospel is in effect the *kingdom of heaven*, for it opens the way unto it, and enters the man not only into the right, but also

into the begun possession of the *kingdom of heaven*. [4.] There can be no greater allurement to move a man to change his evil course and turn unto God than the offer made to the penitent of the kingdom of grace and glory through Christ: for this is the motive which John uses, saying, *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near*. [5.] Both ability and exercise of repenting is brought about by the preaching and power of the gospel, for to beget both, John is sent to preach this doctrine, saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of GOD is at hand*.

3. *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

John's calling and authority to preach is described to be from heaven, according to the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3. DOCTRINE [1.] The calling and authority of a preacher is chiefly to be looked unto, that he take not this honour to himself, but be called thereto warrantably, for Matthew here shows the warrant of John's calling out of *Isaiah*. [2.] A called preacher should labour that the heart of the hearers be prepared for more and more lively receiving of Christ, for this is John's scope, to *prepare the way of the Lord*. [3.] He should not keep silence but in open audience discharge his commission plainly, not in obscure or high terms: *fully*, keeping back nothing of the Lord's revealed counsel, and boldly, not fearing what flesh can do unto him, for this much is imported in John's *crying voice*. [4.] He should labour to bring down the pride of impenitent hearers, and to lift up the dejected soul of such as in the sense of their sin and unworthiness dare not believe; for this is to make the Lord's *paths straight*, enjoined by John.

4. *And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

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He shews the austerity of John's way and manner of living, fitted for his extraordinary commission. DOCTRINE [1.] Such as the Lord calls to the ministry, he fits them to the work, and to the times wherein he employs them: such austerity was fit in a Nazarite, sent forth to awaken a world besotted in security. [2.] Ministers in their outward manner of living should so behave themselves as least exception may be taken against



them, and as the work in their hand may be most advanced, for so did John Baptist.

5. *Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.*

6. *And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

As for the success of John's ministry, there is no small confluence of the people unto him. DOCTRINE [1.] When the Lord minds to fish souls, he can make them swim thick about the net of the Gospel, for all Judea went out to John's baptism. [2.] It is not unusual to the Scripture, to take *all*, for *all sorts and ranks* of people, *all Judea, and all the region*, for all sorts of people out of Judea and the region about Jordan. [3.] Ministers in the receiving in of members of the Church must be content with the profession of repentance and faith, joined with submission to the ordinances, and not pry narrowly into their hearts and consciences, for John did not take auricular or particular confession of sins; it was impossible, the multitudes coming to baptism being so great; but such as confessed their sins in general, and desired baptism, were admitted by him and baptized in the river, whether by sprinkling water on them, or dipping them, the Word doth not determine; for it is so large as to give room to either, but that it was sprinkling is most likely, for thus most conveniently so great multitudes could be baptized of John *confessing their sins*.

7. *But when he saw many of the 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?*

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This is a special sermon in the people's audience, directed by John to the Pharisees (the most precise sect among the Jews, who sought to be justified by their works) and to the Sadducees (the most licentious sect of the whole, who believed neither resurrection of the body, nor immortality of the soul) wherein John exhorts them to uprightness, and bringing forth of good fruits by five reasons: The first is, Ye have hitherto been wicked vipers, and it is a wonder that ye are fled from wrath, therefore now bring forth good fruits (vv 7, 8). DOCTRINE [1.] How powerful is the preaching of truth when the Lord is pleased to bless the same, for here many even of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to John's

baptism! [2.] Such as profess to believe the word and to repent of their sins, to submit to God's ordinances, cannot be excluded from entering in the society of the Church, for John does not exclude these Pharisees and Sadducees, the worst of men, from entering in the Christian Church by baptism, of whom he could have no more but profession of faith and repentance. [3.] Notorious sinners may and should, in their receiving into the Church, after any pollution by scandal, be put in mind of their former evil life, that they may be humbled the more, and be more holy for time to come: for John doth not stand to call these Pharisees a *generation of vipers*, which is the name of the worst sort of serpents. [4.] It is a rare thing to see sectaries converted, for John wonders at their coming, and saith, *Who hath forewarned you to flee?* [5.] Wrath follows on all the wicked, who either live belly-gods and epicures, as the Sadducees, or seek to be justified by their own works, as the Pharisees, for *Who hath forewarned you*, says he, *to flee from the wrath to come?* [6.] Coming to Christ and subjection to his ordinances is the way to eschew wrath: for that here is called *flying from wrath*. [7.] When God's glory, people's edification, and salvation do require that public faults should be publicly rebuked, then the credit of the party to be reprov'd is not to be stood upon;<sup>1</sup> for John does not stand<sup>2</sup> in this case to brand these too much esteemed sectaries,

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with the style of *generation of vipers*, to the end they may be humbled, and the people drawn off the following of their former erroneous courses.

8. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

John having admitted these Pharisees and Sadducees into the Church by baptism, now instructs them as disciples. DOCTRINE [1.] The severity of the faithful pastor should be mixed with love and care, to have men saved, for while John reprov's what is bypast, he gives them direction for time to come, saying *Bring forth fruits*. [2.] Men must not be secluded or suspended too long from the society of the visible Church, but upon their profession of repentance, and faith in Christ, and subjection to his ordinances, must be admitted, and then commanded to prove themselves sincere, by such fruits as may evidence the truth of their repentance: for so does John, saying, *Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.*

9. *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.*

The second reason: I assure you (said John) lest you deceive yourselves, that the prerogative of being Abraham's children, will not avail you, except you be sincere children, careful to do good works; therefore *Bring forth fruits*. DOCTRINE [1.] Carnal confidences are great impediments to true repentance, and must be renounced by such as would be found sincere. Therefore, says John, *Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father*. [2.] God's promises to the children of Abraham may be fulfilled and yet all such of the children of his flesh, as are profane, may be cut off: for John says, *Think not to say, Abraham is our father*. [3.] Rather than God should not perform his promise, he will work miracles; he will convert such as there is no more hope of than of stones, for John says, *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*.

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10. *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*

A third reason: If you be barren, or bear ill fruits, you shall be cut down and perish. Therefore bring forth good fruits. DOCTRINE [1.] When the gospel is preached, as mercy is offered, so destruction should be most severely threatened if use be not made of the gospel; this is John's way, saying, *Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees*. [2.] The preaching of the gospel of God's mercy necessarily requires of such as embrace the faith a holy life and good fruits. [3.] Such as profess to receive the gospel and do not study to bring forth good fruits shall perish, for it is written, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*.

11. *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

A fourth reason: Beside this outward baptism of water by me, you must have another baptism of the Spirit by Christ; therefore seek after it, that you may bring forth good fruits. Herein John abases himself and exalts Christ. DOCTRINE [1]. Outward baptism is indeed God's ordinance, yet

it is not to be rested on, but a further baptism is to be sought after; therefore says John, *I baptize indeed with water, but...* [2.] The more a man be in estimation for his office or gifts, the more need had he to keep him within his own bounds, in a due distance from Christ and not to encroach upon his Master's glory: for so does John here, understanding that some of the people had too high estimation of him. *I baptize you with water*, says he, *but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I*. [3.] The proper element of baptism is not oil, salt or spittle, but only water and no other thing; therefore John says, *I baptize with water*. [4.] One of the ends of baptism is to seal up the covenant of *repentance*; whereby the party baptized may be obliged to follow the course of repentance, and may also have

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the promise of God, for furnishing grace to repent, sealed unto them also; therefore says John, *I baptize you UNTO REPENTANCE*. [5.] The more knowledge a man have of CHRIST, the lower will he abase himself before him, and exalt Christ the higher; this moves John to say, *He that cometh after me, is mightier than I ...* [6.] The most excellent of men are not worthy of the meanest employment of service to Christ; that is it which John says, *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*. [7.] There is a two-fold baptism, one of water poured upon the body by the minister, another of the Spirit poured forth on a man's soul by Christ, and these two may be in time distinguished, for John says, *I baptize with water*, but he *shall baptize with the Holy Ghost*. [8.] Whosoever are baptized inwardly by the Holy Spirit are also baptized *with fire*, that is, by a more penetrative power and virtue than what water at first shows; which virtue must go through the whole man, unto thorough mortification of sin. That is it which by way of explanation is imported, when he says *with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; taking baptism by fire here, not for any extraordinary gift of miracles, but for that which is common to the regenerate.

*12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

A fifth reason: Though now the fruitful and unfruitful be joined one with another in the visible Church, as chaff and corn are mixed on the floor, yet Christ will sever the one from the other, and will take the fruitful to heaven and will cast the unfruitful into hell. Therefore *Bring forth good fruits*. DOCTRINE [1.] The visible Church is like a corn-floor,

wherein good and bad, as chaff and corn, are mixed together, for so does the comparison import. [2.] Christ as the perfect Husbandman will so sever the one from the other, that not one of the wicked shall be in the company of the godly, for, *He will thoroughly purge his floor.* [3.] Christ has means at hand to make the separation: he has his word, and Church censures, and afflictions, and trials by persecution, and death, and the day of judgment, when

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he shall fully perfect the separation, for *his fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.* [4.] The upright and fruitful shall be gathered into heaven, the unfruitful, as chaff, cast into hell; not one of the godly shall perish, nor one of the wicked shall escape perdition, for he will *gather his wheat and burn the chaff.*

*13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.*

The second part of the chapter concerns Christ's baptism, wherein first we mark a providence of Christ's education, in another part of the country than John Baptist lived in; where John's commission to baptize in the name of Jesus appears to be divine, so much the more, that our Lord and he had never seen one another in the face before now, not till now Christ comes from Galilee to Jordan. [2.] Our Lord was pleased to be baptized for his own reasons; namely, that he might countenance and bless his ordinance to us, as he did circumcision to the Jews, and that he might present himself among sinners as our surety, and offer himself to the Father to be baptized with the baptism of affliction, for our ransom.

*14. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?*

This offer of Christ to be baptized astonished John, so far as he forbade Christ to be baptized, in that he knew Christ needed not baptism. DOCTRINE [1.] The clearest sighted of God's servants do not see the deep of the Lord's work till he reveal it; therefore was it that at first John refused to baptize Christ. [2.] Although it be sufficient to be once baptized outwardly, yet baptism of the Spirit must be renewed frequently: for John already endued with the Holy Spirit in an eminent measure, says, *I have need to be baptized,* that is, yet again to receive a larger measure of this baptism: yea the more of this grace is bestowed upon any man, the

more he is sensible of his need, and desirous of a further measure of it, for none more holy than John, and none more desirous to be more holy than John, *I have need to be baptized*, says he. [3.] Christ is the dispenser

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of the inward baptism of the Spirit, *I have need*, says John, *to be baptized of thee*. [4.] When Christ's excellency and John's low dismission of himself are compared, it is a wonderful thing to the beholder; therefore says John by way of wondering, *Comest thou to me?*

*15. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*

Christ will have John to consider the time of his Lord's humiliation, and what belonged to them both in regard of their office. DOCTRINE [1.] Some things were necessary to be done by *Christ* in the time of his humiliation which otherwise was unbeseeming the dignity of his person. *Therefore*, says Christ, *suffer it to be so now*. [2.] It is a thing both right and comely for each man to do what his calling requires, for, *it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*, says Christ. [3.] When the Lord makes his will clear to us, we should renounce our will and follow his, *whatsoever* blind zeal, or carnal humility shall speak to the contrary, for when John was informed of Christ's mind, *then he suffered him*.

*16. And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.*

As baptism was the figure of death unto Christ, so his speedy coming upon dry land did fitly foreshadow that he could not be holden long of death. Therefore it is marked, *that straightway he went up out of the water*. Now after his baptism, three wonders do appear. The first a vision of the opening of the heavens towards Christ and to him, to show that as he came down from heaven, so he should return unto it, and that heaven closed against us is made open through him unto those for whom he presented himself upon baptism. The next wonder is, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him, by this visible sign of his presence showing that Christ is that meek and gentle One, that innocent

and harmless One, that most loving and lovely Dove, in whom the Holy Spirit has his

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constant residence; in and through whom alone, we are to receive of the gifts of the Spirit, and out of his fulness grace for grace. Of this wonder it is said that he, meaning John Baptist, *saw this*; to wit, in a more special manner than the rest of the multitude: for this was the sign promised to John (John 1:31,32,33) whereby he should be certified of the person of the true Messiah.

*17. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

[1.] Now follows the third wonder, unto the observation whereof we are stirred up by a new *lo*, or *behold*, for we are dull to conceive heavenly things. [2.] Because we cannot conceive what the Lord does except he declare his mind by his word, *A voice speaks from heaven*. [3.] Of this man, now baptized, and demonstrate by the glory of the opened heaven shining on him, and by the residence of the Holy Ghost upon him in the similitude of a dove, the Father says, *This is my Son*, to wit, my Son, properly so called, my native and *only begotten Son*, by eternal generation. This is he who from all eternity was *with GOD* the Father, and *was GOD* (John 1:1) and who is called, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person* (Hebrews 1:2,3). [4.] The Father testifies of this person, that he is his beloved Son, beloved in a singular way as his *native Son*, beloved for himself and for his proper worth, being God and Man in one person. [5.] God loves Christ, and is well pleased with him, as he stands in our room: for as he stood now in his office of the Mediator and Surety for us, offering himself for us unto death in baptism, the Father was well pleased and satisfied with him, as with a perfect ransom for our redemption; beside or above which he craved no more, but rested so fully contented with the Son, and with all those in whose name he did offer himself, that he made open proclamation of it from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. The demonstrative particle, in the original twice repeated, imports as much as he is *that Son, that* beloved One by way of excellency, to wit, *that Son spoken of in Paradise, shadowed forth in the sacrifices, and other figures of the Law, prophesied of by the Prophets, and declared by them to be Jehovah*

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our righteousness, and *waited* for by all the faithful before his coming, as the consolation of Israel, namely, the consolation of such as were baptized by John for salvation in him: and thus we have the glorious mystery of the Trinity most clearly revealed: for the *eternal Father*, the first Person, by a voice from heaven speaks of his *eternal Son now incarnate*, the second Person, and the Spirit of God, the third Person, proceeding from the Father and the Son, descends in the similitude of a *dove*, all three thus distinguished, remaining One infinite and undivided God blessed for ever, *Amen*. By this also we have the covenant of redemption laid open to us, for *The Son incarnate* offers here himself Redeemer and Surety for the elect, to be baptized unto death; *the Father* accepts the offer and declares himself well pleased in him; and so it rests that we (being unable to pay our debts by ourselves, or to do anything of ourselves which may please God or profit our souls) betake ourselves to Christ, who is Surety for all those who come to him.

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## CHAPTER 4

Our Lord prepares himself for his public ministry by a conflict with Satan (vv 1–12). Then returning to Galilee he takes up his dwelling at Capernaum, preaches the gospel, calls four Apostles, and manifests his power in the miraculous manner of relieving all sorts of miserable persons (vv 13–25).

*1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

**A**fter that our Lord is baptized, and publicly installed in his office, he is moved by the Spirit to enter the lists with Satan and his temptations. DOCTRINE [1.] The experience of temptations is a fit preparation for a profitable discharge of the holy ministry, for this exercise was a fitting of Christ to his office. [2.] All men are subject to temptations, and no man need be discouraged for them: for even Christ our Lord was tempted, and that to the end that he might conquer Satan, who had overcome us, and might give us also the victory over him, and comfort us in all our temptations, while we behold the power of holiness in him, who neither had sin in him, nor could be drawn by temptation unto sin. [3.] Whatsoever exercise we go about, especially where hazard and danger appear, we should be sure to have warrant for our engaging; for even Christ went not into the wilderness to be tempted but as he was led of the Holy Spirit, who instructed him in what belonged to his calling.

*2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

In every part of our Lord's humiliation, he lets out some spark of his Godhead, that when he is seen to be Man, he may be known to be God also. He fasts, and upholds himself without meat or drink, *forty days and forty nights*,

not only to fulfil what the time of the fasting of Moses and Elias did foreshadow of him, but also as the Son of God, to shew forth his divine

power, able to sustain the human nature under every burden which the Father should lay upon it. [2.] Whatsoever power it pleased our Lord to put forth in his human nature, yet did he not abolish the verity thereof, but did keep unto it all the natural properties; and in the time of his humiliation did subject it also to all common and sinless human infirmities. Therefore having so miraculously sustained himself so long a time, he *afterward was an hungred.*

3. *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

The temptations and assaults of Satan are three. The first, to provide for his bodily wants by an unlawful means, for to work a miracle at Satan's direction, was not a lawful means of providing food to himself. DOCTRINE [1.] No wonder men find themselves daily solicited by Satan unto sin, for Satan's style from his continual practice is the Tempter, and it is his trade to tempt. [2.] It is possible that such as God doth love dearly, may be troubled with bodily apparitions of Satan; for the Tempter is permitted to appear to Christ himself, and to speak to him. [3.] It is no wonder to find Satan calling in question the adoption or regeneration of any of God's children, for he dare call in question the Sonship of the Son of God, notwithstanding that within a few days before this the Father and the Holy Spirit from heaven had borne witness in open sight and audience unto it. *If thou be the Son of GOD*, says he. [4.] Satan fits his temptations to men's present case and condition; for *Christ, being hungry, is tempted to provide bread* in a way which the Tempter prescribes. [5.] In tempting, Satan pretends to be careful of helping the tempted party to a better condition, for here he seems desirous both to have bread provided for Christ in his need, and also to see him made manifest as the Son of God by such a miracle; for he says, *If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.* [6.] Satan's temptations are more than one, a number linked together, for here he tempts, first, to

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 misbelieve the word of God lately spoken of him, then to suspect and doubt of his Father's provident care over him, thirdly, to provide for himself by indirect means, and fourthly, to abuse his power of working miracles, in taking directions from Satan, and committing suchlike other sins.

4. *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Our Lord answers this temptation by Scripture. DOCTRINE [1.] Satan's temptations must not be neglected, but carefully answered, and that by Scripture, as the only means to overcome him, for, *It is written*, says Christ. [2.] Howsoever God hath appointed means of entertaining<sup>1</sup> men's lives, yet the power of sustaining life is not in the means, but in God's powerful word, or commanded blessing, conveyed by means, or without means, as he pleases, for man lives not by bread only but by every word that cometh out of God's mouth. [3.] Seeing that means of life, although we have them, cannot avail us except God give his blessing, we should attempt nothing about them without God's warrant; for else we do offend God, and provoke him to withdraw his blessing. This is the reason why Christ rejects the temptation by this Scripture, saying, *Man liveth not by bread only*, etc.

5. *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city; and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,*

6. *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

The first temptation being rejected by Scripture, Satan makes a new assault and pretends Scripture in his second temptation. DOCTRINE [1.] Although Satan is foiled, yet he will set on again. [2.] God may give Satan so far power over the body of one whom he loveth dearly, as to carry

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it out of one place to another, for Satan is permitted to transport Christ's body from the wilderness to the city, and to lift it up upon a pinnacle of the temple. [3.] Satan's power in this kind is limited so that he cannot hurt nor molest further than he is limited. He may lift up Christ's body on a pinnacle of the temple, but he has no power to cast him down. [4.] Where the ordinances of God are, and where he promises his presence, that place and that society is to be accounted holy, although many of

the people in that place and society be defiled. Jerusalem though defiled now exceedingly yet retains the name of the holy city. [5.] Satan will readily press the same point by sundry means and crave unreasonable proofs of a man's adoption one after another, for the second time he says, *If thou be the Son of God*. [6.] As Satan tempts at one time to use unlawful means to preserve life, so at another time he will tempt a man to neglect means of preserving life. At one time he will tempt us to distrust God's care of our preservation, at another time to presume upon God's care without a warrant; yea, sometimes he will tempt a man to put an end to his own life, and will colour it with some pretence, for *Cast thyself down ...* says he. [7.] Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and pretend Scripture for his temptation, *It is written*, says he. [8.] When Satan cites Scripture he wrests the meaning, or hides the word which might show the meaning, for in Psalm 91:11,12 it is said, The Lord shall keep *thee in all thy ways*, that is, in thy warrantable<sup>2</sup> walking. Satan keeps up<sup>3</sup> these words.

7. *Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Christ answers the second temptation by Scripture also. DOCTRINE [1.] We must not esteem Scripture the less when Satan and his instruments abuse it; but with the same weapons must we fight against Satan still, and oppose a clear place of Scripture unto such places as the Tempter blows mist upon, for, *It is written again*, says our Lord. [2.] We should not desire God to give any extraordinary proofs

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of his care towards us when he has after an ordinary manner provided means for our safety; neither should we limit the Lord in any thing, for this is the meaning of, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. [3.] What the Scripture speaks indifferently to all it is to be esteemed as spoken to every singular<sup>4</sup> person, and the singular persons are to be accounted as addressed in the writing of the general: for upon this ground, Christ says, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, because in Deuteronomy 6:16 it is written, *Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God*. [4.] Christ as our Surety subjected himself unto the law, and therefore he applies the precepts to himself no less than to us, for he saith of himself, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord*.

8. *Again, the Devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.*

9. *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

This is the third temptation to which Satan makes way, by shewing the glory of the kingdoms of the world from a high mountain, whence many towns, castles and fruitful fields might be seen as the compend<sup>s</sup> and example of all the kingdoms of the world, which have nothing in them but a greater quantity of what may be seen in one place of one kingdom. DOCTRINE [1.] Satan will not give over the conflict, till he have made trial of all sorts of temptations; after the former essays, Satan will now tempt Christ with the offer of gain and glory. *All these*, says he, *will I give thee*. [2.] Satan labours to have a man in love with the bait of riches and honour ere he utter a temptation, and to have the bait speaking ere the temptation speak: for before he speaks to Christ, *he sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world*. [3.] Satan will make fair offers of what he cannot perform, for he says, *All these things will I give to thee*. [4.] The children of God may be tempted with the vilest and most blasphemous suggestions that Satan can devise: for

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this unclean spirit dare tempt the Son of God to the vilest idolatry, and dare say to Christ, *Fall down and worship me*. [5.] When Satan minds to make a man a slave to sin and to ruin him for ever, he will crave but one act of sin as a very small thing, and that under hope of great advantage: therefore he says, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, or kneel to me.

10. *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

The Lord abhorring the blasphemy of the proud and unclean spirit, rebukes him and answers the temptation by Scripture. DOCTRINE [1.] A bold temptation should have a peremptory answer, and that confirmed by Scripture, as here, *Get thee hence*, says Christ. [2.] Religious *service* as well as religious *worship* is due to God only: God will not permit either

of them to be given to saint or angel, or any creature, for *Him only shalt thou serve*. [3.] Whatsoever is the true sense and intent of any passage of Scripture, it is to be accounted of as if it were expressly written, for in Deuteronomy 6:13 it is said, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him*. Christ says, It is written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and serve him only*.

11. *Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

Thus our Lord has overcome Satan in our name and shown to us the way to fight against and overcome the adversary. DOCTRINE [1.] Satan being resisted flees, for it is written here, *Then the devil leaveth him*. [2.] The grief and vexation which comes by temptation shall be recompensed with consolation after the conflict and victory, for *Angels came and ministered unto Christ* after this combat.

12. *Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee.*

Upon the hearing of John Baptist's imprisonment Christ goes to Galilee. DOCTRINE [1.] Faithful ministers must

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<sup>39</sup> resolve<sup>6</sup> for persecution, for, *John Baptist is cast into prison*. [2.] All preachers of the gospel are not imprisoned at once, for when John is in prison Christ is free. [3.] Persecution of the ministers of the gospel is a forerunner of Christ's departing from a land, for when word came of John's imprisonment, Christ departed from Judea, and went into Galilee.

13. *And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zabulon and Nephtholim.*

14. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,*

15. *The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtholim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.*

16. *The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.*

Christ being now come into Galilee, flees from Nazareth to Capernaum. DOCTRINE [1.] Christ will not be tied to any place; though he be brought up at Nazareth he will leave it for his own reasons and come and *dwell at Capernaum*. [2.] Our Lord in all things had respect to Scripture, to fulfil what was foretold in it. Even this change of place was made that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled by this means, in which prophecy to comfort the Church against the desolation to be made in the land by the enemy, Isaiah foretells that in the part of the country where the desolation began, that is, in the *land of Zabulon and Nephthalim*, there Christ should begin the consolation of the Church in the preaching of the gospel, and now our Lord performs this. [3.] The people that lie in their sins without the saving knowledge of the gospel are indeed in *great darkness* and under the power of *death*. [4.] Whatsoever sin or misery people be under, the preaching of the gospel is able to relieve them, therefore it is called *A great light*. A light *sprung up* to them when Christ preached the gospel among them.

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*17. From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Christ had preached before in the time of John's freedom, and made more disciples than he (John 3:26), but now he begins in this countryside, and shows himself more powerful than before. DOCTRINE [1.] When Christ's gospel is opposed and his servants persecuted, he can let forth his light and power so much the more, and can supply the lack of instruments; therefore it is said, *From that time he began to preach*. [2.] Christ's doctrine and the doctrine of his faithful servants is all one in substance; the sum of John Baptist's preaching and Christ's is all one; for both preached in substance, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. [3.] When the gospel comes it finds men under the tyranny of Satan, for the offer to bring them *into the kingdom of God* imports this.

*18. And Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren: Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers,*

*19. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

20. *And they straightway left their nets and followed him.*

21. *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them.*

22. *And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

Christ calls Apostles, first two, then other two *brethren*. DOCTRINE [1.] In the calling of these Apostles may be seen the care which our Lord has to provide ministers for his Church. [2.] None should intrude himself into the office but should expect Christ's calling as these disciples did. [3.] Such as Christ calls, he furnishes them with all furniture for the calling, and promises unto them good success, for *I will make you fishers of men*, says he. [4.] Such as are called to the ministry must refuse neither pains nor

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peril to save souls, but must go about their work with as great desire to convert men, and as great prudence to bring them in, as do fishers going about their work, for, *I will make you fishers of men*. [5.] When Christ calls his chosen instruments, he calls them with power of persuasion and overpowers all opposition and impediments, for *Straightway they leave their nets and follow him*. [6.] His calling of them by couples, and those also *brethren*, gives us to understand that the work of the ministry requires the concurrence of more hands, and no less affection among them, than among *brethren*. [7.] His calling of so mean men as fishers shows the freedom of his grace in choosing of instruments, manifests the power of his kingdom who by such weak means can subdue the world, and declares the deep of his wisdom who provides so for his own honour that the instrument shall not carry away the glory of the work.

23. *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.*



24. *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them.*

25. *And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.*

Here is the diligence of our Lord in his office, with the great power of his Godhead manifesting itself. DOCTRINE [1.] How painful should ministers be in seeking out lost sheep within their bounds, when they hear that Christ went about all Galilee! [2.] The means of conversion of souls is the preaching of the gospel, however men esteem of it, for *He went about teaching and preaching*. [3.] The special opportunity of preaching is when people are convened in the ordinary place appointed for religious exercises, for Christ preached *in their synagogues*. [4.] The gospel is a matter of highest concernment. *It is the gospel of the kingdom,*

<sup>42</sup> of that incomparable kingdom of heaven, which by the gospel is revealed to men, and offered unto men, by which gospel men get right and title to the kingdom, yea, become heirs of the *kingdom*, and whereby men are governed and led on to the full possession of the *kingdom*. [5.] Although our Lord's doctrine needed no confirmation, for it is the truth of the ever living GOD, yet our weak faith needs confirmation; therefore Christ strengthens the weak faith of such as at first did not perceive Christ to be the Son of God. He was graciously pleased to let forth the evidence of his Godhead, sovereign power and goodness, in working miracles, and those all profitable miracles such as might lead men to seek the relief of the maladies of the soul from him who was healing *all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people*. [6.] The first report of Christ's grace is very taking. The favour of his grace, as of precious ointment, did in the beginning of his preaching of the gospel affect the Gentiles and drew them to seek after him, for *his fame went through all Syria*. [7.] Such as find need of Christ's help and believe that they can be relieved by him, will spare no pains, but seek him where they may find him, for *There followed him great multitudes*. [8.] When it pleases our Lord to let forth his power he can gather multitudes after him, and make up his

Church out of all sorts of people, from all places, as he pleases, for *They follow him from Galilee, from Decapolis* and other parts.

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## CHAPTER 5

Christ's Sermon on the Mount is set down in this, and the two chapters following: in this our Lord gives evident marks of the blessedness of faithful disciples (vv 1–12). He instructs the Apostles in their duty (vv 13–16) and expounds the Law otherwise than the Pharisees did (vv 17–48).

1. *And seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.*

2. *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,*

In these two verses is set down how Christ fitted himself and the auditors for the sermon. DOCTRINE [1.] The Lord has respect to the multitudes and pities their misery; this is the *seeing of the multitude* with the eye of compassion here spoken of. [2.] He judges their souls to stand in more need of healing than their bodies, *Therefore he opened his mouth and taught them.* [3.] There are great odds<sup>1</sup> between the fiery promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, unto which none might approach, and Christ's preaching of the gospel, for *Christ went up into a mountain*, in a homely manner, *and sat down*, and gathered his disciples about him, and when he was set, he taught.

3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

These speeches following do not declare wherein blessedness consists, but do show the marks of the man who, although by faith in Jesus he indeed is blessed, yet possibly by reason of some mist or cloud of temptation, he cannot perceive himself to be blessed for the present. The marks are in number eight: the first mark of a true disciple of

Christ is *Poverty of Spirit*, whereby a poor beggarly soul in his own estimation, sensible both of his own sinfulness and lack of knowledge, faith, love and other saving graces, does in the sense of his wants follow after Christ to be helped. DOCTRINE [1.] Every man who in the sense

of his own wants and poverty is made to beg at the throne of grace, verily is blessed, whatsoever be the sense he has of his own unworthiness and misery, for Christ of such pronounces, *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* [2.] Whosoever are poor in spirit, seeking after Christ in the sense of their own need, have right and title to the riches of grace and glory. Although they be poor and beggarly in their own feeling, yet are they rich in Christ's estimation, for of such Christ says that *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, that is, unto them belongeth eternal life.

*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

The next mark of true disciples is *Godly Sorrow*, which makes a man in all sorts of grief to pour out himself to God in Christ, and to seek relief from him. DOCTRINE [1.] Whosoever do follow after Christ, mourning in their sense of sin, or fear of wrath, howsoever they may seem miserable in their own or the world's eyes, yet are they verily blessed, for of such Christ says, *Blessed are they that mourn.* [2.] Such mourners may be destitute for a time of comfort, but at no time can they be destitute of blessedness, for even in the time when they are mourning and do want comfort, it is said of them that *they are blessed.* [3.] Although their comfort be delayed for a time, yet it shall not always be withholden, for the word of consolation is here spoken unto them which they in due time shall find applied and verified to them by God's Spirit; for it is said that *they shall be comforted.* This shall be partly by being made to see satisfactory reasons of God's delaying to comfort them; partly by receiving now and then real deliveries and sensible outgates<sup>2</sup> of their mournful condition, and partly by being supported with strength in the inner man at all times

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that they succumb not, till at last they be fully delivered for ever, for *they shall be comforted*, saith the Lord.

5. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

The third mark of true disciples of Christ is *Meekness*, which is a grace of God whereby Christ's followers are so nurtured and tamed by the Spirit of God in the sense of their own sins and wrongs done to God, that they do without fretting submit themselves to God's corrections, whether mediately by the wickedness of men or immediately in his providence falling on them. DOCTRINE [1.] Whosoever do put a right construction upon God's dealing with them, however hard their case

be, certainly are blessed, for of such Christ says, *Blessed are the meek.* [2.] A man endued with Christian meekness is master of as much in the world as he stands in need of. That is to say, however little portion he may seem to have of the earth, and so much the less possibly because of his meek disposition and averseness from ungodly strife, yet has he right to all that he has need of in this earth through Christ; yea, he shall have the use of all he has need of in this earth so as he shall be content with his lot, and that which he possesses shall be joined with the rich blessing of God poured out upon it; and last of all he shall inherit that new heaven and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (1 Corinthians 3:21,22; 2 Peter 3: 13). For so much does the promise import, *They shall inherit the earth.*

6. *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.*

The fourth mark of true disciples is *Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness*; such hungry souls are they, who in the sense of their sinfulness, and want of all inherent righteousness, do heartily hunger to be more and more certified of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and do thirst to draw sap and life from him: for the changing of their sinful nature, and making them more holy and righteous by his Spirit. DOCTRINE [1.] Such as are heartily desirous to be justified and sanctified through Christ are blessed, for of

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such Christ pronounces, *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness.* [2.] They who hunger after the righteousness of God in Christ shall be satisfied. Although for the present such souls as do feel this hunger be pained, yet they shall have all that they desire in God's own time; the Word of the Lord shall be made milk, honey, bread and marrow unto them; a well of living water shall spring up from the Holy Spirit unto them. Now and then they shall have so large a meal, and so full satisfaction, that they shall be forced to say, *Enough O LORD:* and at length shall be put in full and sensible possession of all; for it is written, *They shall be satisfied.*

7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

The fifth mark of true disciples is *Mercifulness*, whereby Christians have such a holy compassion for the miseries of other men's bodies and souls,

as doth make them actually to do them good, as they are called unto their relief. DOCTRINE [1.] The outletting of bowels of compassion to others who are lying under the burden of sin and misery is the sure evidence of a blessed man, for of such Christ says, *Blessed are the merciful*. [2.] The Christian's showing mercy to others is a forerunner of the renewed and fresh sense of God's mercy to himself, for this is imported in the proof of such men's blessedness, for *they shall find mercy*. Now certain it is, that such men have already obtained mercy, else they could not be merciful, else they could not be blessed; but it is possible that they do not feel mercy, but rather for the present feel sad wrath to their estimation, yet the promise is, *They shall find mercy* to their own discerning sensibly. [3.] When God makes his children find the fruits of their mercifulness, it does not puff them up as if they merited or deserved it, for it is not said here, they shall merit, but *They shall find mercy*.

8. *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.*

The sixth mark of true disciples is *Purity of Heart*, whereby Christians study not only to eschew sin and to have a blameless conversation before men, but also to be holy in their mind, and in their designs and affections before

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God. DOCTRINE [1.] Although believers in Christ do find sensibly much pollution in themselves, yet if their heart love it not; if when they come short in duties their heart is grieved for it; if the honest endeavour and study of their heart be that they may be pure and holy, they are, notwithstanding this felt sinfulness, truly blessed, for our Lord says, *Blessed are the clean or pure in heart*. [2.] Holiness and purity of heart is a preparative for sensible communion with God, for it is promised, *They shall see God*. That is, their eyes shall be opened to behold by faith the invisible God: the Lord shall make them to discern the mysteries of salvation hid from the world; he shall make them to observe the work of his providence injustice, mercy, goodness and power in the world about them; and withal to perceive lovingkindness toward themselves, and at length they shall *see God face to face* perfectly, in the kingdom of heaven.

9. *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

The seventh mark of true disciples is *Peaceableness* whereby Christians study not only to live peaceably with all men, but also to procure peace among men, where they live, so far as in them lies. DOCTRINE [I.] Whosoever does, without wronging of truth in love to other men's welfare, study to make solid peace, wheresoever they have power, are truly blessed, for *Blessed are the Peacemakers*. [2.] They who give evidence of their Christian disposition both to maintain and to procure true peace among those with whom they live, should be esteemed true Christians, begotten of God, for *they shall be called God's children*; that is, by this mark they are declared of God, and should be by men acknowledged for truly regenerate persons, in whom the image of God is to be seen shining in their works.

*10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The eighth mark of a true disciple is the *Suffering of Persecution* for righteousness' sake. DOCTRINE [I.] Whosoever in following of Christ are troubled and persecuted by men

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for doing that which God allows, and do choose rather to suffer affliction than to commit sin, are indeed blessed, for *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake*. [2.] Let persecutors do their utmost to rob the godly of all that they have, yet they cannot rob them of heaven, for it is said, *The kingdom of heaven is theirs*; that is, even if they were banished out of their native country and utterly spoiled, yea killed, yet heaven belongs to them by Christ's conquest and by God's promise, and it shall certainly be given to them, for making up all their losses.

*11. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.*

The last doctrine our Lord applies to his new chosen Apostles, intimating to them that they were to be hunted after and persecuted by men as a prey is hunted to death by dogs. DOCTRINE [I.] Reviling or speaking any manner of evil against Christ's servants is, in our Lord's estimation, persecution, for so he expounds it, saying, *when men revile you and persecute you*. [2.] Christians must beware to give just ground for troubling of themselves, for that is not persecution when ill is spoken against men truly and justly, but when ill is spoken against them falsely, and *for Christ's*

cause. Therefore Christ says, *Blessed are ye when they speak ill of you falsely for my sake.* [3.] Notwithstanding of whatsoever persecution occurs, the troubled and persecuted servant of Christ still remains blessed, for *Blessed are ye when men persecute you.*

*12. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

This commandment is added for a further consolation. DOCTRINE [1.] Our Lord will not be content that his servants in persecution do carry themselves heavily, thus and such as may be, but will have them to bear the cross joyfully; he will not have the courage or comfort or countenance of his children beaten down, while they bear his glorious cross, but he will have them cheerful, for *Rejoice*

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*and be exceeding glad,* says he. [2.] Although their suffering cannot merit any thing, yet shall it be rewarded graciously, for *Great is your reward,* says our Lord. [3.] Whatsoever consolation God gives to his suffering servants in this world, which indeed is not small (for they have more peace and joy in themselves from God, and more estimation among the saints, than all their trouble is worth) yet he will not reckon this for a reward till he have them up in heaven, for he has said, *Great is your reward in heaven.* [4.] The light affliction of this life cannot be compared with that which shall be given in heaven, therefore he says, *Great is your reward.* [5.] Whosoever endures any trouble, were it but so much as evil words for Christ's cause, he shall be enrolled among the martyrs and holy prophets, who from the beginning of the world have suffered for righteousness. This is our Lord's reckoning, saying, *For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

*13. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men;*

Our Lord having armed his Apostles against persecution, now teaches them their duty, and that under divers similitudes: and first of *Salt.* DOCTRINE [1.] Ministers have need to have their duties told them, no less than other people, therefore Christ speaks to them, saying, YE, that is, Ye my Apostles and Ministers are the *salt* of the earth. [2.] As salt seasons, makes savoury and preserves from putrefaction that which



otherwise would be unsavoury and ready to rot except it were salted, so ministers should not only be filled with grace and wisdom for their own preservation, but also labour by the word preached by admonition, by discipline, by a holy manner of conversing among the people and by all other means, to season earthly men and make them become savoury to God and one to another; therefore it is said *Ye are the salt of the earth.* [3.] If a minister either labour not to have graces and enduements for his employment, or having them, studies not to be faithful in his ministry, that he may season his hearers by the power of the gospel, or if having for a time, given a show of

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something, he ceases and falls from the faithful employment of his gifts, then is he of all men the most useless and unprofitable, both to others, and to himself. Of all men he is the most loathsome, and an intolerable burden to the people of God; most worthy to be despised of God and men; and least of all men to be suffered to bear office and charge in the Church of God; for so much imports our Lord's speech, comparing him to *unsavoury salt* which *hath lost his savour*, and cannot recover it again, and which *is good for nothing*, but *to be cast out*, and *trodden underfoot of men.*

14. *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill, cannot be hid.*

He shows the minister's duty in another similitude of light. DOCTRINE [1.] It is true that the original light and fountain of all light who illuminates everyone that comes into the world, is *Christ our Lord* himself, yet the ministers are called, *The light of the world* also, as instruments to hold out the light, because their office is to preach Jesus Christ who is the *true light*, through whom alone delivery from the dark condition of sin and misery, that is, true righteousness and salvation, is to be gotten: and because their manner of preaching and holy conversation should direct men how to exercise their faith on Jesus Christ, and how to draw virtue from him, for their consolation, and sanctification, therefore it is said, *Ye are the light of the world.* [2.] Except God erect a ministry among men and endue his servants with gifts and graces, and make them faithful to do their duty, the world shall lie in the darkness of ignorance and error of sin and misery, going on to perdition; and except ministers endeavour to have the world illuminate, by holding forth the true knowledge of Christ, they cannot be free of the world's perishing, nor answerable to

this their duty, for to them it is said, *Ye are the light of the world.* [3.] He tells them of the dignity of their calling, and duty therein, by another similitude, teaching us that as a city set on a hill cannot be hid, being set there, to the intent it might be seen afar off, so the ministers of the gospel, for the eminency of their calling, and the necessity of their duty, cannot be nor may be hid, but must show forth that

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light to the world, and they cannot choose, but have their doctrine and diligence in their calling, their manner of life and conversation, and whole carriage better and worse, laid open to the view and observations of all men, for they are compared here *to a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid.*

*15. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel: but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

By another similitude he presses the Apostles, and in them all his ministers, to propagate the gospel. DOCTRINE [1.] As men do not light a *candle*, that they may make it useless, by hiding it under a covert, but use to hold it forth, that all the house may see it and have the benefit of the light thereof, so God does not give to any man a gift to understand the mysteries of the gospel and to utter the same, with a calling so high and honourable as to preach his name, that they should keep close their gift within their breast or within their own doors, but that they should communicate their gifts in an orderly way to all the Church or house of God, and therefore, as they would be answerable to God's design, they must study to illuminate the world and the Church by the holding forth of the doctrine of Christ: for, if men do not light a candle but *that it may give light to the whole house*, far less must they think that God lights a candle unless it be for the use of his house.

*16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

From the former doctrine of the duties of the Apostles our Lord draws an exhortation to them and all ministers of the gospel (according to the rule of Mark 13:37, *What I say unto you, I say unto all*, whom you represent) teaching that what light of knowledge, or faith in God or love to God or to men Apostles and ministers have, they should bring it forth for the

benefit of men in their doctrine and life, by the faithful discharge of their ministry and by holy

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conversation; therefore he says, *Let your light shine* etc. [2.] They should so wisely and sincerely behave themselves in all things that they may be approven to the consciences of all men, for it is said, *Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works*, that is, may perceive, may be convinced and forced to acknowledge that ye so teach and so do as the Lord's faithful servants and children should do. [3.] By the holy conversation of Christians, God shall be glorified, known, believed in, loved and praised; therefore it is said, *that men may glorify your heavenly Father*. [4.] Christians by their holy life shall be justified of men, as the true children of God, for, says Christ, So do, that *men may glorify your Father* which is in heaven. [5.] No good work can be done except [1.] By a child of God [2.] In obedience to his God and Father's command [3.] For the good of men and [4.] For the glory of God, for it is said *Let your light shine, that your Father may be glorified* by men, who see your *good works*, that is, your *profitable and commendable* works.

17. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets:  
I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

Here our Lord vindicates himself from the calumny of Antinomianism, or opposing the Law and the Prophets. DOCTRINE: [1.] No wonder the sincere preachers of the gospel be slandered, as if they were adversaries to the law, for even Christ himself was traduced in his time as guilty of this fault, as he shows in his apology,<sup>3</sup> saying, *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets*. The ground of the mistake was because our Lord set at nought the glosses which the corrupt doctors of the time put upon the Scripture, and taught men the way of justification by grace, without the works of the law; therefore men traduced him as an enemy to the law and to the prophets. For clearing himself he brings five reasons: The first is, I am so far from intention to destroy the law and prophets, that by the contrary, I intend *to fulfil them*, says he; therefore the calumny uttered or conceived of me as if I intended the contrary is false. DOCTRINE: [2.] Christ is a true friend

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to the law. His doctrine, and the course prescribed by him to his Church, by all means procures the obedience of the law, and the fulfilling of the

prophecies, for he says, *I am not come to destroy them, but to fulfil them.* Now Christ is said to be come to fulfil the law and the prophets because what they prophesied of him he accomplishes; what they aimed at, he has brought and is bringing to pass; what way of righteousness and salvation they set down, he makes good; for what is in the law and the prophets to be fulfilled but *predictions* of what Christ should do, and suffer, (set down partly in plain, partly in figurative types and ceremonies), or *commands* of holy duties, backed by *promises* to the obedient, and *threatenings* against the disobedient, with their examples? All these Christ came to fulfil most exactly; first by accomplishing in his own person, all predictions of his perfect obedience, even unto the death, whether set down in plain terms or foresignified of him under types and figures of the ceremonial law; next by using all means that men should give obedience to the moral law, and by blessing effectually these means, and making men really to give obedience to the law. And thirdly, by making good all the promises to his subjects, and executing all his threatenings against his enemies. And so he says justly, *I came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.*

18. *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

The second reason for Christ's intention not to destroy the law and the prophets, or the truth of the Old Testament, is that the truth of the doctrine of the law and the prophets is more firm and stable than the frame of heaven and earth is. DOCTRINE: [1.] Heaven and earth shall be dissolved rather than the least point of truth (compared here to the least letter in the alphabet, to the smallest point, serving to the reading of the letters) should not be fulfilled; for heaven and earth do continue only till the time that all that which is prophesied in the Scripture, to be done before the world's ending, shall be fulfilled. Therefore says our Lord, *Verily I say unto you, Till heaven pass, one jot or one tittle of the law shall in no wise pass &c.*

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19. *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Here we have a third reason, proving that Christ's intention is not to abolish the directing and commanding power of the law, or to suffer the moral law to be laid aside, as not obligatory to obedience under the gospel. Christ's mind is, that whosoever he be that shall in his practice reject the yoke of anyone of these commandments of the moral law, which men account least of, and shall defend his practice, teaching that men may without guiltiness break the same, *shall be called and accounted of by God as the least* (that is, a man of no place or room) in the kingdom of grace and glory; or he shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven as it is said in verse 20. And on the contrary, whosoever shall maintain in their practice and doctrine, the authority of all the precepts of the moral law, as the rule of man's conversation,<sup>4</sup> shall be found true members of the kingdom of grace and glory and shall be had in estimation with God and his saints. DOCTRINE: [1.] A sore sentence stands against them who make transgressions so light and venial, as not worthy to be taken notice of; or who either give dispensations or take dispensations to transgress any moral command. And no less wrath is denounced against those who, because Christ has abolished the covenant of works and the condemnatory power of the law in favour of his justified and sanctified ones, teach that Christ has also abolished in their favour the directive, the commanding and the obligatory power of the law; for of such, and all such, Christ has said, *Whosoever shall teach men to break the least of these commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.* [2.] Those men may have great comfort who in their doctrine and example of life do so teach justification by grace, or by faith in Jesus without the works of the law, as they do also urge all those who do believe and are justified, to make conscience of the obedience of every precept in the

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moral law, even as they love to be saved, for of such Christ says, *Whosoever shall teach and observe the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, &c.*

*20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

A fourth reason showing Christ's purpose not to abolish the law is that he excludes from the kingdom of grace and glory all those whose righteousness shall not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. These Pharisees and scribes were indeed very painful, and

outwardly made great profession of holiness of life; but the truth is, they made conscience of outward obedience *only* (v 21) and of some commandments *only* (Chapter 15:3). Christ and grace they cared not for, therefore their righteousness was short. But a true Christian first studies to be clad with the righteousness of Christ and to have his sins pardoned in Christ, and after he is justified freely by grace without the works of the law, he labours to give evidence of the soundness of his faith by making conscience of obedience, as well inwardly as outwardly, not unto anyone only, or some, but to *all* the commandments of the law, studying to make progress in sanctification all the days of his life and so both in regard of imputed righteousness, which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and likewise in regard of inherent righteousness, manifesting itself in the sincere study of a holy conversation before God and man, the believer's righteousness far exceeds the superficial righteousness of the Pharisees. DOCTRINE: Except a man study to outstrip the Pharisees and scribes, both in respect of imputed righteousness and inherent righteousness also, he shall not be saved, for Christ here says, *Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

21. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:*

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A fifth reason of Christ's coming not to destroy but to fulfil the law, is by his showing the true meaning of the law, and crying down both the false glosses put upon the law by men, and also all vain traditions put in place of the law: and this Christ does most exactly, to the intent he may show how all men by the law are made guilty, and are found worthy of condemnation, and had need of a Saviour to ransom them, and also by showing how men, being pardoned, ought to study unto an upright obedience of the law in all things; and this is indeed to fulfil the law. To this end Christ expounds sundry commands in the second and first table, and corrects five or six corrupt glosses put upon the law by the Jewish doctors. First, he expounds the sixth Command, repeating the common gloss of the Pharisees received by tradition, who esteemed that the command, *Thou shalt not kill*, was not broken except by actual gross slaughter or murder. If any man should commit manslaughter, then they put him in one of three ranks: the first was to be brought *before the inferior*

*judges* of capital crimes, and to be in danger of their sentence, because the murder was not of the grosser sort. The second rank, was to be brought *before the council*, consisting of a greater number appointed as a superior Judicatory of capital crimes, to sit in greater cities, and there to be in danger of their sentence, which was to discern more shameful and painful death than the inferior Judicatory did appoint, in cases where the murder was more heinous. The third rank was of those charged with murder of the vilest and most abominable sort. By the great council which sat at Jerusalem the guilty were to be adjudged without mercy, or more ado, to be executed most shamefully and burnt in the most abominable place, in the valley of *Hinnom*, or *Gehenna*, whereby was represented *Hell fire*. The first of the three ranks is mentioned in verse 21. The rest are alluded to by Christ in verse 22. DOCTRINE: [1.] Natural men are but slight interpreters of the Lord's law; it is not killing in their sense, if a man be not actually slain: for, *Whosoever shall kill* in the grossness of the letter, he only is guilty in their judgment. [2.] Antiquity seems reason enough to carnal men in defence of all errors or corrupt customs: for which antiquity can be claimed; for Christ shows us that these Jewish doctors did think it sufficient

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that, *It was said of old*. [3.] Truth must never be prejudged by antiquity, nor error strengthened thereby, for unto their pretended antiquity, *It was said of old*, Christ opposes this, *But I say unto you, &c.*

*22. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

While Christ expounds the sixth command more exactly than the Pharisees did and shows the meaning of it by allusion to the manner of their judgment of capital crimes, our Lord's mind is not that those Judicial Courts with their different degrees of punishment should be the rule for censuring the breach of the sixth command; but his mind is that, although there be degrees of sin in breaking the sixth command, yet the command reaches to the condemning of every degree of the sin forbidden so far, that even rash anger is capital and brings a man under the severe sentence of God's judgment; for, *Whosoever is angry without a cause*, says he, *shall be in danger of the judgment*; that is, he is culpable of death; and if our neighbour be wronged by us in a disrespectful speech, the sin is yet more

capital and yet more deserves the punishment of death and condemnation, for *Whosoever*, says he, *shall say to his brother, Raca*, or any word of disdain, *shall be in danger of the council*, that is, shall be found guilty of a capital or deadly transgression, in a higher degree. But if anger and disdain proceed so far as to reproach our brother yet more despitefully and to call him *fool*, then we shall be in *danger of hell fire*, that is of a yet higher degree of judgment in hell. DOCTRINE: [1.] The meanest and chief outbreakings of our corruption in any sort are forbidden in one and the same command: for our Lord's exposition of *Thou shalt not kill*, forbids rash anger and every evil motion of the heart against our neighbour's person no less than it forbids murder. [2.] The wages of the least degree of sin is death, for not only *murder* but also *rash anger* and a disdainful speech are made capital or deadly sins which by our Lord's interpretation

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are worthy of death *and hell fire*. So that no relief is to be looked for in God's justice from the smallness of our sins, but all stands in the rich ransom of Christ's blood, and largeness of his grace, unto which refuge the severe exaction of the law and strict reckoning of justice doth drive us.

23. *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee,*

24. *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

After the exposition of this command, Christ makes application of the doctrine to his disciples and all his hearers for making use thereof, wherein he shows a necessity of making conscience to keep this command by two reasons: one is, that if we shall not entertain love to our neighbour, but both do him wrong and also not care to be reconciled with him, then God will take no service or worship at our hand, nor will he be reconciled to the man who, after wronging his neighbour, seeks not to be reconciled to him. And this reason is given with allusion to the manner of worship then in use, not yet abolished at the time when Christ did speak this. The sense whereof is not that Christ would have *altars* and *sacrifices* to continue, nor that he will allow men to come so unprepared to his worship as they must go back from the congregation, or from begun worship to prepare themselves. Nor is it his mind if men pack up



their mutual injuries among themselves that there is no more reckoning to be made for the breach of the sixth command, but 'Come and welcome', as the words seem to import, for this sense is contrary to the Scripture. But this is Christ's meaning in substance: In vain shall you offer any worship to God till you be in love with your neighbour, until you repent the wrong done to him by you; but if you be reconciled with God and in love with your neighbour, truly penitent for any wrong you have done him, then may you more safely approach to the service of God. Thus the worship must be done, and the worshipper must have a care that he lose not the benefit of his worship.

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*25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

*26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

Another use of the doctrine is, that seeing the guiltiness of breaking this command draws so deep, we should provide in time to be delivered from deserved condemnation and hell. Now what way should so oft deserved wrath be averted, except by the ransom of the Redeemer's blood, whereunto this accurate exposition of the law drives us? This exhortation is set down by way of allusion to a presupposed like case of a bankrupt dyvour<sup>5</sup> not able to pay his debt; who if he were not agreed with his creditor before the matter came to judgment should be cast in prison and not come forth till he paid the extremity, that is, never come forth: for it is impossible in the presupposed case of a bankrupt, that he who has nothing to pay to prevent<sup>6</sup> the prison, should pay all by himself, being in the prison. This being the meaning and scope of the similitude whereunto Christ alludes, it is to no purpose to dispute here whether God or the man injured by us be the party adversary; for the sense given tends to make us repent our sins and to seek remission of them from God in due time, through Christ's ransom, and to be reconciled with the man whom we have offended, as becomes true penitents; for if we defer all matters till death and judgment then our debt is found more than for ever we can pay; our Judge so powerful as we cannot escape

from him; the sentence so strict that there is nothing but extremity; the time of mercy being expired, nothing but justice, and no more mercy is to be expected: therefore says he, *Agree lest ye be cast in prison.*

*27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

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*28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Another doctrine wherein the seventh command is vindicated from the vain gloss and tradition of the elders who did not reckon this command to be broken, except by gross adultery or fornication, accounting little of light behaviour, wantonness, boiling lust, filthy speeches or the like: but Christ gives the true and spiritual sense of the command, declaring that a wanton look, and lust to violate another's chastity, whether man or woman, makes a person guilty of adultery before GOD and consenting in their heart to the sin. By the exposition of these two commands, our Lord brings in all men under the guiltiness of breaking the whole second table, or the whole law of loving our neighbour; for a man's readiness to hurt the life of his neighbour upon the lightest apprehension of the least wrong offered to him, and his readiness to misregard what shall become either of his own or of his neighbour's chastity, name, body or soul and his not fearing to put himself and his neighbour under the condemnation of the law and wrath of God, rather than his filthy lust should not be satisfied, to declare such a desperate self-love in men, and such a cruelty, both against our own souls and our neighbour's also, that may affray and affront us, looking upon our natural estate.

*28. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

*29. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

This exhortation is set down as the use of the former doctrine, wherein the words are not to be taken captiously as if one might hurt his own body under pretence to prevent<sup>7</sup> sin: for this is both forbidden in the sixth command

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and cannot be a solid cure or remedy of sin, though it were permitted; but the matter is proponed<sup>8</sup> in allusion to a presupposed like case of the hazard of a man's life, by a fester or a gangrene in a man's eye or hand, (wherein as it were) better that the chirurgeon<sup>9</sup> should pluck out the festered eye, and cut off the festered hand, than that the whole body should be lost; so in the case of a darling sin or lust, whereby a man is made to stumble and fall in sin, it were better that it should be mortified and quat<sup>10</sup> (how necessary soever, how dear soever, though esteemed of, as the *right eye* or the *right hand*) rather than by sparing of that sinful lust, both soul and body, should be cast in hell. Now there is no mortifying of the lusts of the flesh but by the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:13). And as for pardon of sin we are led unto Christ in the exposition of the sixth command, so are we here driven to Christ for the mortification of sin in the exposition of the seventh command, for he is the only chirurgeon who can cut off those fretting<sup>11</sup> lusts which fight against the soul.

*31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.*

*32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

For clearing yet further of the seventh command, Christ corrects a third corrupt gloss about the abuse of marriage in divorcements, which howsoever the civil Law left unpunished for civil reasons, yet it did not exeme<sup>12</sup> him from sin nor wrath, who was the giver of the bill of divorcement upon a light cause. This abuse Christ corrects, teaching that if any person be married, should thrust away their party, except in the clear case of adultery found in the party put away, they should be guilty of the breach of

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the seventh command and of all the consequences thereof, and they who approved the divorcement should be guilty also, each in their own degree.

In so high estimation has our Lord the band of marriage, that nothing can dissolve it except that which everts<sup>13</sup> the nature of the bands and brings perjury, beside the breach of the command, as double condemnation upon the offender.

33. *Again, Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.*

34. *But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne:*

35. *Nor by the earth for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.*

36. *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

As our Lord has cleared the exposition of some commandments in the *second table*, so for further clearing the sense of the law, he takes a fourth corrupt gloss of the Pharisees and tradition of the elders (concerning the *first table*) who made no breach of the third command, except perjury, and made the affirmative part of the command to stand only in the observation of vows. This their clipped commentary our Lord corrects by teaching: [1.] That by this commandment is discharged all idle or unnecessary swearing; for he says, *Swear not at all*, to wit, when God does not call us to take an oath; for otherwise to swear by God, when he calleth us unto it in weighty matters, for deciding controversies and ending strife, it is a part of his worship then religiously to take an oath; but except in the foresaid case, *Swear not at all*. [2.] Hereby also is discharged all swearing by the creatures; for, *Swear not by heaven*, says he, *nor by the earth* etc., nor by any part of man's self, as head or heart, nor by any other oath. The reason is, first, because these are creatures; *heaven and earth* are not *God*, and ought not therefore to be sworn by; and next, because indirectly God is imported in such oaths by reason of the relation which the creatures have to him, as God's *footstool*,

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or *city* or *work*; and thirdly, because as none of the creatures are our judge, to take order with us if we swear falsely, so none of all the creatures,

(no, not our own head or the least hair thereof) are so our own as we may engage the same by an oath, for the least change to be made thereon, were it but of the colour of our hair to be put in pawn, in case our oath be not true, and so we may not swear upon any pretence at all, by any of them, for *Thou canst not make one hair white or black*, says he.

*37. But let your communication be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.*

For eschewing rash swearing, our Lord commands that our sayings be averted by a constant, plain and uniform pronouncing of truth, imported in *Yea, yea*, when the matter is so, and *Nay, nay*, when the matter is to be denied to be so. The reason whereof is weighty, for whatsoever idle oath, or idle asseveration is *more than these, is from evil*, that is, from the devil and our corruption and therefore to be eschewed.

*38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*

*39. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

He corrects a fifth corrupt gloss of the law, wherein they abused an appendicle of the sixth command, namely, a judicial law given unto the judges for execution of justice, and did draw the law unto the authorizing of private revenge, as if God had put the sword in every man's hand to avenge himself; for correcting of which error, our Lord teaches his disciples that it were better to suffer injuries, and to expose ourselves by our patience unto the hazard of double wrongs, rather than to follow the corrupt doctrine of men, and by way of private revenge to break the commandment of God: for the consideration of the scope of Christ's speech makes it plain that thus the words must be taken *comparatively*, with the obedience of the Pharisees' false doctrine gilded with pretence of tradition and antiquity:

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for our resisting of evil or of injuries after our own way (as their tradition did give warrant) cannot fail but draw on a greater evil out of God's hand. And so it follows, that it is better to be smitten on both cheeks than that by a wrong way of revenging ourselves we should provoke God to destroy head and feet, soul and body together.

*40. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

The same doctrine he applies to injuries done under pretence of law, that in private revenge they be not met with the like; and with this sense: If any man sue thee wrongfully at law and by unjust cavillation take away thy coat, rather than thou should meet him in a wicked way under pretence of law to wrong him, it were better for thee to lose thy cloak also. How harsh does this doctrine sound in the carnal ears of natural men who think much to suffer any wrong done to them by men, but think nothing to do a wrong both to God and men, and to draw mischief on their own heads thereby!

*41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

Another sort of injury comprising wrongs done by oppression and unjust exaction under pretence of authority: if under pretence of service to be done to the public, any man press thee to be a *post* or a guide unto a *post*, do not thou for thy part contend for thy ease, but rather than thou shouldest fail in some duty by resisting, bear double burden for peace cause, lest thou be ensnared in a sin by contending.

*42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.*

Last of all, to teach us not to be weary of well doing, even then when we think we have many reasons, which may hinder us to bestow upon such as do either beg or borrow from us oftener and more possibly than we can

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well endure, our Lord commands to *give alms* and to *lend to the needy*, although not all that is craved, yet what we may spare, and the party's present need requires.

*43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thine neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

*44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*

A sixth corrupt gloss put upon the law by the corrupt doctors, who taught that the command of love of our neighbour was to be understood only toward kindred, friends and acquaintance, and that it is lawful to hate every man that is our enemy. Our Lord vindicates the law from this clipped and false exposition. DOCTRINE: [1.] For obedience to God, and pity to perishing men we must keep love, even to such as be our private enemies; for Christ has so commanded, saying, *Love your enemies.* [2.] Love to our enemies must be approved to God for we are commanded to prove our love to them by dealing with God to give them mercy contrary to their deservings at our hands; to this end he says, *Bless them, pray for them,* and this is a task to exercise our obedience, and to prove our sincerity therein.

45. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

To persuade us to obey this command, our Lord sets forth five motives. The first is, because so we may make it appear to others and to your own heart also that ye are the *children of God* whose bounty is extended in giving the common use of his gifts unto his evil and unjust enemies. DOCTRINE: [1.] By imitating the bounty of God, we shall grow more and more like to him, we shall more and more make it appear that we are renewed unto the image of God; therefore says he, *That ye may be the children of your Father.* [2.] We should not lightly pass by the common favours of God

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bestowed upon men, as the benefit of the sun and rain, but must observe the goodness of God therein toward men, in making his *sun to rise and his rain to fall on the unjust.*

46. *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

The second motive is that except your love shall extend the self unto your enemies, in the obedience of God, ye can expect no reward from him. DOCTRINE: [1.] Love refused to our enemies proves our love bestowed on friends to be no acceptable service to God, for, *if ye love them only which love you, what reward have ye to expect?* If we love only for love again, we do serve our self only and not God, and where no service

is no reward is. A third motive is this: the vilest and most odious sinners in the world shall equal you if you love only such as love you, and do not also love your enemies; therefore love your enemies. [2.] To stand at that measure of love which a wicked man may attain unto is nothing esteemed of by God, for, *if you*, says he, *love only your friends, do not even the publicans the same?*

47. *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

A fourth motive is, there must be more in you than civility, courtesy and humanity, moving you to give expressions of love only to your friends, therefore love also your enemies. DOCTRINE: [1.] There must be more in a Christian than can be in those that are not renewed: for, *What do ye more than others?* imports that we should do more, seeing we are born of God, better furnished with his Spirit, and more engaged by special obligation to God than others, and therefore must not carry ourselves so that it may be said unto us, *What do ye more than others?* [2.] The most hated sinners may equal the holiness of them who make not conscience to have this commanded love unto their enemies in them, for *Do not the publicans so?* imports so much.

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48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

A fifth motive is, God's children must aim at the perfection of all virtues, and therefore at the perfection of love, extended to their enemies. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christians are called unto perfection, and although they cannot fully attain unto it in this life, yet must they aim at it to come more and more near unto it, for it is said, *Be ye therefore perfect.* [2.] God only is the pattern of perfection to be set before our eyes, as he holds forth himself unto us in his Word, and in his Son Jesus Christ, the express image of his Person, to be imitated by us; therefore it is said, *Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

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## CHAPTER 6

Christ's sermon on the mount goes on in this chapter wherein he teaches the right manner of alms (vv 1-4), of prayer, (vv 5-15), of fasting, (vv 16-18), and discharges covetousness (vv 19-34). In all which he sharply taxes<sup>t</sup> the faults of the scribes and Pharisees.

*1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

Concerning the right manner of giving alms these truths are held forth to us. DOCTRINE: [1.] Alms, or showing mercy to the poor, is a duty carefully to be gone about, for it is said, *Take heed to your alms.* [2.] The sin of vain-glory may easily slide in itself in any work, especially in almsgiving; therefore Christ says, *Take heed that you do not your alms to be seen of men.* [3.] If alms be done for obtaining praise of men and not for conscience of a commanded duty, God will not take it for service, for it is said, *Otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

*2. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

*3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

*4. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

This is the remedy of this ill. DOCTRINE: [1.] We must mark and beware of such faults as we see in others, as namely such ostentation as the Pharisees used, who when they

were to give alms, proclaimed by sound of trumpet that the poor should convene at such a time and place to receive such a man's alms; therefore

Christ says, *Do not sound a trumpet*, etc. that is, beware of all vain ostentation. [2.] When men in doing good look more to men's praise than how to please God, the vain praise of men, whether they obtain it or miss of it, is all the fruit which they shall have of their work, for *Verily they have their reward*; they need look for no more. [3.] Each other sinner do seek darkness and lurking holes to hide their sin; but Church and market and the most open conventions are the choice places for acting of the sin of hypocrisy, as here, *In the synagogues and in the streets*. [4.] All hypocrites are vainly glorious. Hypocrisy and vain-glory go together, for hypocrites, he says, *Do, that they may have glory of men*. [5.] We should not suffer ourselves to take notice what we give in alms, nor should we esteem much of it, as if there were any worth in our alms. Let be to seek praise of men, for this is the way, *Not to let the left hand know what the right doeth*; otherwise no man can be ignorant of what he does deliberately; no man can give alms but the poor who receive the alms must know of it, and in public collecting of alms the work must needs be open. [6.] Alms given in a right manner, that is, in obedience to God and in love of the poor, is a secret work, for the main substance of it is only seen of God; therefore it is said, *That thy alms may be in secret*. [7.] What good work we take least notice of, what we make least esteem of and do carry most quietly between God and us, of that does God take special notice, for of such a work it is said, *The Father seeth in secret*. [8.] Whatsoever good work is done of secret intention to obey and glorify God shall be made open by him in due time to our praise and shall be rewarded in open to our profit, for beside the sweet testimony of the conscience following it, it is promised, *Thy Father himself shall reward thee openly*.

5. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.*

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The next doctrine concerns the right manner of prayer. DOCTRINE: [1.] In prayer all hypocritical ostentation must be eschewed such as the Pharisees used who, in the congregation and in the street, carried themselves so as they might be taken notice of and accounted to be devout men, for it is reproved here, *They love to pray standing, that they may be seen of men*. [2.] Persons who are vainglorious in their prayers have no profit of their prayers save the wind of some witless men's

approbation, for *They have their reward*. [3.] Howsoever men may think it hard that prayers for this fault should be lost, yet so it shall be found, for Christ says, *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward*.

6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

Christ does not here forbid public praying before others in the congregation nor in a family, for this is a part of God's due worship and of our confessing of his name, neither doth he retrinch<sup>2</sup> all our secret prayers to a chamber, but the meaning is that we should in all our prayers be far from ostentation. DOCTRINE: [1.] In prayer we should regard only God's eye, and seek only his approbation, and beside all our praying with or before others we should pray also when no man knows of it; and whensoever we pray, whether in private or public, we should be as far from vain ostentation as if we were in a private chamber alone with doors shut, for this is it that Christ says, *When thou prayest, shut the door*, etc. [2.] Our prayer must be from the inward of our spirit directed with confidence to the invisible God, for *Pray*, says he, *to thy Father*. [3.] In prayer God takes notice specially of the uprightness of the heart, and of that which is hid from men, for Christ says, *Thy Father sees in secret*. [4.] The sincere and secret prayer is followed with an evident blessing in the answer, for *He shall reward thee openly*, says Christ. [5.] The rewards of God must needs be full of grace when he promises to reward praying and begging both in this world and at the day

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of judgment, saying of secret prayer, *Thy Father shall reward thee openly*.

7. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

8. *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.*

The second fault in prayer is idle multiplying of words, which is discharged for three reasons which are so many doctrines: [1.] Idle multiplying of words is the sin of the heathen who are destitute of the saving knowledge of God, for Christ says, *Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do*. [2.] Idle repetition of words presupposes and proceeds from a base misconception

of God, as if he could be moved by multitude of words as men are moved, for *They think*, says he, *to be heard by their much speaking*, but *do ye not so*. The third reason is because Christ's disciples, when in obedience to God's command they come to worship God and to edify themselves in prayer, need neither to inform God what they would have, for, *He knoweth*, says Christ, *what things you have need of before you ask*, nor need they to move or persuade God, for *He is your Father*, says he, and therefore we should not, nor need not, use vain repetition. Meantime let us remember that when the saints insist in prayer, affectionately avowing the truth and mercy of God, and striving to strengthen their own faith in prayer, it is not a vain repetition or that much speaking which is here forbidden.

9. *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

For helping of this and other faults about prayer, our Lord gives us the example of a formed prayer, which is ready and fit to be made use of expressly as a prayer whensoever we should join in one body, with all true Christians militant in the world, in all common and necessary desires; which also is to be made use of as a *pattern* and *platform* for imitation, when we are to pray for anyone or more things, more particularly concerning ourselves or any part of the

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militant Church. Now as this prayer is a *pattern* for any desires more special than these which are here expressed, we are taught hereby: [1.] To pray *only for things allowed* and promised in God's Word, for such are all things in the pattern. [2.] To pray to God *only*, who only hears at all times, for *we must pray to our heavenly Father only*. [3.] To pray in a *known language* according as Christ did deliver this form of prayer to his disciples. [4.] To pray without vain repetition or idle multiplying of words, for this prayer is given for an example of such a prayer as hath no vain repetition. [5.] To pray with more respect to God's glory than to our own particular good, for the order of prayer teaches so much. [6.] To pray with a hearty and spiritual disposition, in fear and reverence towards God, as *trusting us in heaven*, there to receive, hear and answer our prayers from the holy sanctuary of Christ's Body, through which veil we get access to the fulness of the Godhead which dwelleth in Christ, who is in heaven and without whom we cannot find God reconciled. [7.] To pray with love toward God and confidence in him as in our Father in

Christ, for Christ gives warrant to call God *Father*. [8.] To pray with affection and love to all saints militant on earth as children of the same heavenly Father, theirs and ours: Father to the weak no less than to the stronger, for Christ will have us calling him *Our Father* in behalf of all the children on earth, for whom and with whom we do pray. From the first petition we are taught: [1.] That every true disciple of Christ must have the glorifying of God for his chiefest desire, for first and above all must he seek that God's *name may be hallowed*. [2.] That God must be hallowed as he makes himself known by his Word, for it is his name, or himself, as he is named and manifested by his Word and ordinances, and works and providence, *which is to be hallowed*. [3.] That he himself must be the procurer of his own glory among men, for therefore pray we, *Hallowed be thy name*.

11. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*

From the second petition we are taught: [1.] That beside the general kingdom and government of all things which

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is always fully in vigour, there is a special kingdom of grace wherein God is revealed and acknowledged to be King and Lord over his saints. This Christ calls *Thy kingdom* as a peculiar wherein he specially delights. [2.] That this kingdom of grace is so *come* already, as it shall be still coming more and more so long as Christ's disciples shall have need to pray, that is, till the fulness of glory in the second coming of Christ shall be revealed. *Then shall the kingdom prayed for fully come*. [3.] That God is he who promotes,<sup>3</sup> brings on and perfects this kingdom; therefore must we say, *Thy kingdom come*. [4.] That God will have all his disciples drawing at his royal and triumphing chariot by their prayers, and saying, *Thy kingdom come*. From the third petition we learn: [1.] That although God dwells in heaven and does all his intended will, yet men do not obey as they should his commanded will. Therefore there is need in this respect still to pray, *Thy will be done*. [2.] That the saints must renounce obedience to their own will and to Satan's will and to the will of men and must submit themselves absolutely to God's will revealed by word or work, saying, *Not mine, but thy will be done*. [3.] That it must be divine power which shall change men's hearts and frame them to the obedience of his will and to this end do we request him to subdue men's will to his own, saying, *Thy will be done*. [4.] That God hath no work of

sanctification to work upon any man but upon those only who are *on the earth*, for they that are in heaven are perfected and elsewhere there is none, whose will the Lord sanctifies. Therefore do we pray only, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven*. [5.] Although we do not attain unto perfection of holiness in this life, yet we must aim at it, long and pray for it, for our Lord teaches us to pray that the will of God may *be done in earth as it is in heaven*.

11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

From the fourth petition we learn: [1.] That whatsoever we make use of for our subsistence (comprised here under *bread*) must be sanctified unto us by prayer, and God must be acknowledged in every meanest matter which concerns

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our bodily sustentation even to the least morsel of *daily bread*. [2.] That we live not mainly by bread but by God's Word and his powerful blessing imported in *giving of bread*. [3.] That however lawfully and deservedly at men's hands we get our bread, yet in regard of God we deserve nothing, but must have all of free bounty and must beg of him *daily* to give us our *daily bread*. [4.] That we should not be anxious for tomorrow nor for great allowance in the world: sufficient for the day is the care of itself and we must be content to crave and to receive *this day our daily bread*. [5.] That as we pray not for the dead, but only with and for such as have need of *daily bread* and living on earth with us, so should we be sensible of their necessities and pray for them as for ourselves, saying *Give us our bread*.

12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

From the fifth petition learn: [1.] That none of Christ's disciples are so fully sanctified in this life, but sin will be found in them and that there is a necessity lying on us to acknowledge *our sins*. [2.] That every day in many things we offend all and must confess not only *sin* but *sins*. [3.] That howsoever we have right unto remission of sins in Christ Jesus, yet we must seek to apply that our right to our daily faults and beg the use of our right for applying of forgiveness. [4.] That our sins deserve due punishment, even death, which is the natural merit of sin, which obliges us unto the penalty; therefore *sins* here are called *debts*. [5.] That the sin being forgiven, the vindictive punishment is forgiven also, for

to the same sense are we directed to say, *forgive us our debts* and *forgive us our sins*; whereby it comes to pass that there is no remission of sin and a retaining of vindictive punishment, but both the guilt and this sort of punishment are forgiven and taken away together. [6.] Wrongs done by others to us do oblige the doers of injury to repair the wrong and so do make them not only debtors to God but also *to us*, therefore does our Lord call such as have done wrong to us *our debtors*. [7.] Though public respects may move us to seek reparation of wrongs in the way of justice, yet not only must we renounce private revenge of wrong done to us but also forgive the same, especially when the offender calls for it at our hand, for

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Christ presupposes that he who seeks forgiveness of God *does also give forgiveness to men*. [8.] It is an argument to persuade us of forgiveness from God of our wrongs when we forgive men their wrongs done against us, for Christ will have him who says *Forgive us our trespasses*, to say also, *as we forgive those that trespass against us*.

*13. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*

From the sixth petition learn: [1.] That when our sins are forgiven us we are in peril to be overcome anew by the tempter Satan, of which our weakness and Satan's power, craft and malice, we should be so sensible as in fear to be ensnared, we should pray not to be led in *Satan's temptation*. [2.] Because we have so often yielded to Satan's temptation and of ourselves we are so prone to be tempted, and to be overcome of our own concupiscence, that God justly may give us over to Satan's temptation: Therefore it is necessary that we should request God not *to lead us in his justice into temptation*. [3.] If God for our trial and further humiliation shall suffer us to be tempted, we may with confidence pray and expect that we shall be delivered from that *ill one*, either that we fall not in his snare or that we be not kept therein; for as Christ warrants us to pray, so we may expect that *God will deliver us from that evil one* and from all ill; that is, from Satan, sin and perdition, for we say, *Thine is the kingdom*, power and glory. That is, unto thee our heavenly Father belongs the *kingdom* and sovereign government of all things, with right and *strength* to dispose thereof for bringing to pass all that we request for, and to thee belongs the *glory* of all things for ever. Whence learn:

[1.] That none is to be prayed unto but he only who only is able to grant all our requests, for *To him only belongs the kingdom and power*. [2.] That when we pray for that which is agreeable to God's will, his *Fatherly affection* on the one hand and his royal *power* on the other hand, may assure us that, as he is both willing and able, so he will grant our requests. [3.] That as it is his glory to grant the petitions of his people, so unto him should we *give the glory of all things*. [4.] That there is no end of

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his kingdom and power and glory, for *they are for ever*. [5.] That we should settle our belief on him and seal up his truth resolutely, nothing doubting to be heard, for so much does *Amen* import.

14. *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

15. *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

This is a reason of the clause eked<sup>4</sup> to the fifth petition of forgiving men their trespasses when we crave God to forgive us our trespasses; not that our forgiving wrongs done to us is the cause of God's forgiving wrongs done by us to him, but because giving forgiveness to men and receiving forgiveness from God are graces inseparably conjoined, so that the having or wanting of the one may prove the having or wanting of the other. DOCTRINE: [1.] Who so have gotten grace in the fear of God to forgive men their trespasses may assure themselves of God's gracious forgiving them their trespasses, and although the remission of their sins be not intimate<sup>5</sup> to them for the present, yet they shall be sure to have it manifested, for so says the text. [2.] Again, such as call God their Father and yet will not forgive men their trespasses may be assured that God will not forgive them their trespasses or that God will not speak peace to their consciences nor intimate remission of sins to their souls. For, although God's granting a remission of sin in his counsel goes before our giving remission of men's sins, yet God's granting to us remission of sins in the court of our conscience follows after our giving remission to men of their sin; for so long as we keep malice against our neighbours and will not forgive them, our conscience shall never be solidly assured of the forgiveness of our sins, for so imports the text.



16. *Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces,*

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*that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

17. *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face,*

18. *That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

The third head of doctrine, teaching us in our religious fasting to beware of vain ostentation such as the Pharisees used. It is not Christ's meaning here that men should refuse public fasts or therein carry themselves as in a day of feasting, anointing their head and washing their face, for that is not lawful. Neither is it his meaning that in secret fasts men must either carry the matter so closely that none of the family should know it, or else not fast at all, for that is hardly possible. But the meaning is that when God calls unto religious humiliation in prayer and fasting that we should be as far from feeling vain applause of men as if we were not at all about such a business. DOCTRINE: [1.] Causes of fasting and humiliation do attend Christ's disciples for this our Lord insinuates while he says, *when ye fast*. [2.] Such as in their fasting do seek men's approbation do lose their labour at God's hand and at the farthest do gain no more but vain applause of men, for of such Christ says, *Verily they have their reward*. [3.] Hypocrites do religious actions for worldly respects, for of hypocrites Christ says, *They seek that they may appear to men to fast*. [4.] That in all our religious actions we should be as far from seeking men's applause as if we were not at all about any such business and should so study to approve the secret sincerity of our hearts to God as we look not toward any applause of men, for Christ commands so to fast, *That you appear not to men*, &c. [5.] The secret sincerity of God's service is followed with the open blessing of God, *for he rewards such openly*.

19. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal:*

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The fourth head of doctrine is to beware of covetousness and cares of this world as of a special enemy to all true godliness which, because it is a rife evil and hard to be cured, he insists on the beating down of it, so much the more using to this purpose seven motives or reasons, which in substance are so many doctrines. In the first part of this verse our Lord insinuates: [1.] that every man is given to have some treasure and store of that which he most esteems, loves most to have, keeps best, and is most loath to lack, for this is imported in *Lay not up treasures for yourself*. [2.] That we are given by nature to choose some earthly and temporal thing for our treasure, and to have the earth the place of it, and so have need to be warned to lay up our *treasure not upon earth*. The first reason to dissuade us from covetousness of earthly things is because all earthly things are perishing and may in our time either rot or be taken from us, for what is on earth, *moth and rust may corrupt, or thieves may break in upon and steal it*.

20. *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

21. *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

The second reason: Heavenly things only are worthy to be our treasure, and heaven only is worthy to be the place thereof, therefore covet not things earthly but heavenly, such as faith and love and grace to abound in the good fruits of faith. *Lay up*, says he, *treasures for yourselves in heaven*. The third reason: Things heavenly and spiritual are to be kept and enjoyed *in heaven*, where all things are incorruptible and permanent, and such as cannot be taken from us by fraud or violence; *where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt*; therefore seek not those things that are earthly but those things that are heavenly. The fourth reason: A man's treasure takes his heart after it, therefore covet not earthly things but heavenly, that your hearts may be set on heaven and not on earth, for *where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*.

22. *The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*

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*23. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

The fifth reason: In general terms tending to this much: if your mind intends to treasure up heavenly things, the whole course of your life will be lightsome, holy and heavenly. But if ye intend to treasure up earthly things then the whole course of your life will be earthly, *dark* and unspeakably sinful. Therefore set not yourselves to treasure up earthly things but heavenly rather. This is imported in a similitude thus: as the eye by its light directs the whole body, so the intention of a man's mind or heart by its light directs the whole course and actions of a man's life. In the similitude these truths are held forth to us: [1.] That no less care should be had to have our judgment and intention sanctified than to have the eye of our body clear for *as the eye is the light of the body* so is the mind, the heart and intention the light of a man's life. [2.] *As when the eye of the body is clear, the whole body is illuminate* and well directed what to do, so when the intention of the mind and heart (which is the eye of the soul) is single and set upon the heavenly treasure, then the whole body of a man's conversation<sup>6</sup> shall be well ordered and full of light to direct him in the way how to get the heavenly treasure. [3.] *As when the eye of the body is corrupt* and ill-disposed the whole body walks in darkness without direction, so when the intention of a man's heart is not singly set on the heavenly treasure but is evil and set on the things of the earth, then the whole body of a man's course and actions is full of darkness, that is of ignorance and miscarriage, of sin and misery. When the intention of a man (which he sets up as a mark to shoot at, and uses as a light to direct him as to what means he shall use) is darkness, that is erroneous and sinful, then unspeakably great is the darkness, error and sinfulness of that man's course, for, says Christ, *If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* [5.] This general sentence may serve to loose a doubt about the lawfulness of making provision for a man's family and laying up for his children. Thus,

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if a man's *intention be spiritual and singly set on God*, for the obtaining of a spiritual treasure, then shall his *course be full of light* and well directed how to do duty to his family and children. But if under pretence of this

lawful care he shall make an idol of riches, intending only to abound in wealth, to seek and lay up his treasure on earth, then shall all that he does in a lawful calling be sinful to him; *his course shall be darkness.*

*25. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

A sixth reason under similitude of serving two masters: No man can serve God and mammon, or worldly riches, any more than a man can serve two opposite masters. Therefore beware to set yourselves to lay up *treasures in the earth*, but rather seek God and lay up your treasure in him. *To serve God* is to give up a man's mind, heart and whole man to know and do what God requires without care what shall be the consequences. *To serve mammon*, is to give up a man's mind, heart and endeavour to find out and follow all the ways he can to increase riches, whatsoever may come of it. Hence learn: [1.] That the man who takes God to be his Master must do nothing but as God allows him, neither in the matter of pleasure, nor of profit, nor of preferment, nor in any other thing, for *this is to serve God* as his master. [2.] If the care or love of riches, or any other thing, draw away the mind or heart of a man from the love of God or from his obedience, a man *becomes the servant of mammon*, or of that lust whereunto he so gives obedience. [3.] Although men conceive they can serve God well and their lusts also, yet it is impossible so to do, for *No man can serve two masters* opposite, such as is God and whatsoever thing comes into competition with him, for *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*. [4.] The man being put to the trial, that thing is a man's master which he loves most, holds most unto and prefers in competition. If a man will rather offend God than lose riches, pleasures or preferment when he must do the one, then is the man not the servant of God but the servant of the other thing

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beside God, for *he loveth that other and holdeth unto it*, and prefers it to God.

*25. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on: is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

A seventh reason, dissuading from covetousness drawn forth by consequence from the sixth reason. It is not lawful to be anxious about things necessary as food or raiment; therefore far less is it lawful to be covetous of earthly treasure or of needless riches. Hence learn: [I.] That although using of lawful callings and ordinary means for food and raiment may stand with God's service and his approbation, yet taking *thought* for them or being *anxious* about the success is unlawful and here forbidden as a mark of covetousness, and too much affecting of the creature and of distrust in God, for *Take no thought for your life*, says he. This distrustful anxiety for food and raiment in time to come (which is a branch of covetousness, covered with the appearance of necessity) our Lord refutes by eight reasons. The first is, God who hath given life, which is more than food, will take care to provide food for maintenance of life so long as he has appointed life to continue, and God who has framed the body which is of more worth than the raiment, will also provide for a garment. Therefore anxious care for food and raiment is unlawful, which teaches us that the most specious excuses which can be made for the cloaking of covetousness are rejected by God as naughty, *Is not the life more than meat?* says Christ.

*26. Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

The second reason, God who provides food for birds and fowls, will certainly provide for his own children; therefore anxious and distrustful cares for food and raiment in Christ's disciples is unlawful, for *Behold the fowls of the air*, &c. This reason is strengthened: [I.] By insinuation, that

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men have the ordinary means of some lawful calling (comprehended under sowing and reaping) which fowls have not, and therefore anxious and distrustful care for food and raiment is so much more unlawful in them as is imported in these words, *neither do they reap*. This reason is strengthened by comparison of us with birds and preferring of us in God's estimation, *Are ye not much better than they?* says Christ.

*27. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

The third reason: Anxious care about the success of means cannot produce any good effect, therefore it should not be entertained, for even when a man has eaten he cannot make himself stronger or more tall than it shall please God to dispose. To what purpose then does it serve to take thought or anxiety as if the use of means should not yield food and raiment, for *which of you by taking thought can eke<sup>7</sup> a cubit to his stature?*

*28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.*

*29. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

*30. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

*31. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

The fourth reason; God cares for the clothing of the grass and flowers of the field, with more curious draughts<sup>8</sup> and native colours than all the glory which Solomon's garment had. Therefore anxiety in God's children for food and raiment (as if God were not careful of them) is unlawful.

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*Consider the lilies*, says he: this reason is strengthened: [1.] By insinuating that God's own children are more dear to him than the grass and flowers of the field, which are made only to endure a little time for man's use and then to perish, for *Tomorrow it is cast into the oven*. [2.] By taking thought and anxiety as an evidence of small faith in God, *Therefore*, says he, *O ye of little faith*.

*32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

The fifth reason: Anxious seeking of the things of the earth is the fault of the Gentiles who are destitute of the knowledge of God and are ignorant of these heavenly things, prepared for God's children. Therefore Christians who are better instructed should eschew this godless anxiety, for *After these things*, says Christ, *the Gentiles seek*. The sixth reason:

Christians are not fatherless nor is their Father ignorant, unable or careless to do for them. God in heaven is their Father and knows all things whereof they stand in need; therefore godless anxiety for food and raiment is utterly unlawful, for *Your heavenly Father* knoweth that ye have need of these things.

*33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

The seventh reason by way of precept: You have the kingdom of God and his righteousness, whereupon to bestow your first and chiefest cares which, if you seek after earnestly, ye shall not need to be anxious for food or raiment, or any other needful thing on earth, for *All these shall be super-added* unto the grant of your chief desires, and shall be brought unto your hand. Therefore anxious caring for these meaner things is unlawful. Hence learn: [1.] That to be partaker of the kingdom of God's grace here, and of his glory in heaven, is worthy of our chiefest affections, and most intent endeavours, for *Seek first the kingdom of God* imports this. [2.] That we cannot be sure to be subjects of God's gracious kingdom here, nor of his glorious kingdom

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in heaven hereafter, except we also study to be sure of the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and of holiness and uprightness of life flowing therefrom, for *Seek the righteousness of God*, and *Seek the kingdom* are joined. [3.] That whosoever do earnestly seek after the kingdom of God and his righteousness shall not only be sure to have what they seek, but also to have whatsoever is necessary for them in this life, for these things, to wit, which concern food and raiment, *shall be super-added unto you*.

*34. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Christ repeats the discharge of anxious care for time to come and adds the eighth reason: the morrow shall bring with it troublesome cares of its own, and the day or the time present has sufficient trouble by itself. Therefore neither time present, nor time to come should be rendered more miserable by anxious anticipating of troublesome cares before they come. Hence learn: [1.] That we are ready to make our present time

miserable by anxious and distrustful care, for so imports, *Take no thought for tomorrow*. [2.] That relying on God's caring for us not only saves us from sin but also cuts off much misery, for so imports, *Take no thought for the morrow*. [3.] That the time to come has trouble proper to itself, as God's ordinary providence disposes, so that we have not need by sinful anticipating of cares to make ourselves more needless trouble, for *The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself*. [4.] That it is wisdom not to breed ourselves more trouble by sinful and distrustful cares and fears when already trouble sufficient is ordained by God for our exercise, for *Sufficient unto the day* is the evil thereof.

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## CHAPTER 7

Five other heads of doctrine delivered in the Sermon on the Mount are set down in this chapter, to wit, rash judgment (vv 1–5), discretion in dispensing of holy things (v 6), instancy in prayer (vv 7–12), concerning false teachers (vv 13–20), And about wise practising of the former precepts (vv 21–29).

### 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

The first doctrine is a forbidding of rash judging of men's persons and actions, or passing wrong sentence censoriously and uncharitably against others, whether in our mind or in our speeches, either for no fault or for lesser than we ourselves are subject to; for otherwise Christ forbids neither private nor public righteous judgment, but only rash, uncharitable and unrighteous censuring of others, whereunto naturally we are inclined, for *Judge not*, says he, to wit, unrighteously. The reasons are five. The first reason: If you rashly judge of others you have to fear lest God judge you justly, for *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, says he.

1. *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

A second reason: As you are charitable and sober in your judging of others, so may you expect God shall in his wise providence give you a meeting,<sup>1</sup> for *With what judgment* (charitable or uncharitable) *you judge, you shall be judged*, that is, have like measure given to you, to wit, a just meeting in mercy or in justice.

3. *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

A third reason: It is unreasonable that, having grosser faults yourself than those which are in others, you should pass by your own faults, gross-like beams, without observation and go pry in upon other men's infirmities, small-like motes in comparison. Therefore you should not judge rashly. Hence learn that self-love so blinds us that of our own great faults we

are not sensible, but the smallest infirmities of others we narrowly pry in upon and observe them, therefore, says Christ, *Why beholdest thou the mote &c.*

4. *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

A fourth reason: By rash and uncharitable censuring your neighbour, you shall never be able to benefit him so long as this gross beam of rash judgment or any such ill is found in yourself. Therefore judge not rashly. DOCTRINE: He that would benefit others by reproofing their faults must be blameless himself, or else both his counsel and reproof shall be turned back upon him, for how and with what countenance or hope of profiting his brother will he say, *Let me pull out the mote out of thy eye &c.*

5. *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

A fifth reason: Censorious and rash judging of others is the mark of a hypocrite, therefore judge not, for *thou hypocrite* he calls him because the censorious judger of other men's faults would make himself and others believe he were in no way tainted with any such faults himself. Our Lord by this speech does not hinder brotherly admonition but rather directs the way and order of it, for *First cast out &c.* says he. DOCTRINE: [1.] He that would reform others should begin in earnest to reform himself, for it is said, *First cast out the beam out of thine own eye*, that is, go about the reformation of thine own sins. [2.] The man who is

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about the removing of his own sins shall have spiritual light and wisdom to deal with others in the matter of their repentance and reformation, for it is said, *Then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote.*

6. *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you.*

The second doctrine, teaching us to use discretion in dispensing holy things especially by way of admonition or reproof, so that profane men may not be provoked to blaspheme God and abuse us. DOCTRINE: [1.] The truth of the gospel and the holy ordinances of religion are precious

pearls belonging only to Christ's disciples, therefore Christ calls them *Your pearls*. [2.] Some men are so profane and sensual that they have no reverence nor estimation of holiness or holy things, and therefore are justly called *dogs and swine*. [3.] Whensoever we perceive that there is no appearance of doing good by offering holy admonitions to men, but by the contrary that holy things shall be abused and we also suffer reproach for offering the same, our Lord gives us warrant to forbear, *lest they trample your pearls*, says he, *under their feet and turn again and rend you*. But lest under the pretence of this warrant (keep off contempt from holy things), we be too much afraid of contempt of ourselves, and for this cause may prove uncharitable censurers of others, as if they were dogs and swine who are not so to be accounted of, we must take along with us the former doctrine of *Judge not rashly*, praying the Lord withal to give us wisdom in all things.

7. *Ask and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

8. *For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.*

9. *Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*

10. *Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*

11. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father*

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*which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

12. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.*

The third head of doctrine serves to stir us up to instancy in prayer. DOCTRINE: [1.] Great is our need who like beggars want all things and must seek all of God. Therefore, *Ask*, says Christ. [2.] Although we obtain not at first what we lack, yet must we not fall off from prayer but

continue instantly *to seek and knock*. [3.] We shall not be refused of any needful suit that we make, nor shall we be excluded from fellowship with God if we knock to have entry, for *Every one* who in faith *seeks* (what God allows to be sought) *receives*. [4.] We may assure ourselves that the return of our prayers shall not be unprofitable, far less hurtful, for God will not deal worse with his children than men do with theirs, for *what man*, says he, *will give a stone for bread, or a serpent for fish to his child?* [5.] Whatsoever good could be expected by our children from us, their natural sinful parents, whose affections are corrupt, that and much more, yea everything that is good, may be expected in prayer from God, for *If ye being evil can give &c.* [6.] Such disciples of Christ as depend on God by prayer, are accounted God's children, for instead of *children*, he puts *them that ask him*. [7.] Such as would have their prayers granted must not live as they please but do to others as in reason they would be done to by others. Therefore, *As ye would &c.* says he, *do ye unto them*. [1.] The scope of the Scriptures is first to make men disciples to Christ and then righteous in their conversation, for *This is the law and the prophets*.

13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*

14. *Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

The fourth head of doctrine concerning the difficulty of the way to heaven. DOCTRINE: [1.] Every man is travelling

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in the course of his life either to life or to destruction; there is not a third way beside the *strait* and the *wide gate*. [2.] The gate which leads to life is *strait* and the way *narrow*, and full of difficulties to our corrupt nature; but the way which leads to destruction is *broad*, and the gate *wide* without impediments, a way not crossing men's corrupt lusts. [3.] Because of the easiness of the way to hell many go in thereat, nothing fearing the issue, but for the difficulty of the way to heaven few *do find it*, few *do walk in it*. [4.] Christ's disciples having this strait way revealed to them in the Word, should choose rather to go alone to life than go with the multitude to destruction, for *Enter in at the strait gate*, says our Lord, *for wide is the other*.

15. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

16. *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

The fifth head concerns false prophets or false teachers which either preach false doctrine or true doctrine in a corrupt manner, and for wrong ends, by whom the Lord's people are in no small danger to be led away from the power of godliness to the dead course of a powerless formality (2 Timothy 3:5). Of such Christ *bids us beware*, saying, *Beware of false prophets*. The reasons are three which yield so many doctrines: [1.] They will feign themselves to be true Christians that they may find room among the sheep of Christ: therefore beware of them, for *They come to you*, says he, *in sheep's clothing*. [2.] Inwardly and in effect such teachers are not for *saving* but for *destroying* of souls, for *inwardly* they are ravening wolves. [3.] They cannot so lurk, but you may discern them by their false doctrine or corrupt handling of the truth, or by their graceless conversation and their earthly ways and ends; *Ye shall know them by their fruits*, says he. Therefore beware of them.

17. *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

18. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

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19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire.*

20. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

Christ clears and confirms this third reason by a similitude from trees, teaching us that men gather not good fruits from thorns and thistles. But as good trees bear good fruit and cannot bear ill fruit as their kindly and ordinary birth, and ill trees bear ill fruit and cannot bear good fruit as their kindly birth, so true and false teachers are to be known by their fruits. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord seals the honesty of faithful teachers

with a holy life, and plagues false teachers with the outbreaking of their rottenness. [2.] As destruction abides the tree that bears not good fruit and much more that which bears ill fruit, so destruction abides the false teacher, for *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down.*

*21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

The sixth and last head of Christ's sermon concerning the necessity of believing and obeying his doctrine and putting it uprightly in practice, which our Lord presses by three reasons. The first is, Not everyone that esteems himself to be Christ's servant and confesses him to be his Lord shall be saved: but the man only who puts in practice God's will. Therefore it is necessary that faith and obedience of Christ's doctrine be carefully practised. DOCTRINE: [1.] A man may profess himself a Christian and seem to be zealous in avowing Christ to be his Lord and yet be disobedient to the doctrine, for Christ's word imports this, that *Some may call him Lord, Lord, who do not his Father's will.* [2.] Professors of Christianity without the practice of sound faith and repentance shall be excluded out of heaven, for the sentence is clear, *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [3.] Such as study to obey God's will revealed in the gospel, that is, to believe in the Son of God and to testify their faith by a holy conversation, shall be surely saved, for *He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven shall enter*

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*into the kingdom of heaven.* Now the will of God revealed in the Word is that he whom the law condemns should flee to Christ Jesus by faith and study to bring forth the fruits of newness of life.

*22. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*23. And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

The second reason to this meaning: Many conceive now that this plea of being prophets and workers of miracles in my name, will be sufficient for their salvation in the day of judgment, who then at that day will find

themselves disappointed of their hopes because they have not been workers of righteousness. Therefore real obedience of my doctrine is necessary. DOCTRINE: [1.] There is a day of judgment appointed for all men when Christ shall sit as Judge, for it is said, *Many shall come to me at that day* and *I shall say*, i.e. give the sentence. [2.] Many do build hopes of heaven upon great gifts and employments in the ministry given to them with some success who shall be rejected of Christ, for *Many will say to me, Have I not prophesied?* unto whom I will say, *Depart from me.* [3.] All men have need to beware lest they deceive themselves in the matter of their own salvation when they hear that preachers and prophets and workers of miracles deceive themselves, and may be destitute of saving faith and sound repentance which they preach to others, for it is said, *Many will say to me in that day, we have prophesied.* [4.] Such as Christ shall reject at the last day were never endued with saving grace or accounted by him for true believers, for Christ says, *I will profess to them, I never knew you;* that is, I never approved you for any of my true disciples. [5.] Such as are destitute of true faith and repentance, however specious their gifts and outward conversation seem to be to themselves or others, are in Christ's account but workers of iniquity, and shall not dwell in his company in heaven, for unto them who have no more but such stuff as is here spoken of, he will say, *Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* Let an unrenewed

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man preach or pray or cast out devils or convert souls, he is still but a *worker of iniquity*, because he is not drawn in the sense of sin to believe in Christ and to draw virtue out of him to sanctification.

24. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock:*

25. *And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

26. *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand.*

*27. And the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it.*

A third reason for the necessity of our putting the doctrine of faith and repentance in practice: He that does Christ's sayings, is like a wise builder whose work is able to abide the trial, and he that does not practise Christ's doctrine is like a foolish builder whose work is overturned when it is tried; therefore the practising of Christ's doctrine is necessary. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord is an accurate observer of the inward disposition of men's hearts and conversation, for so his careful urging of the doing of his word imports. [2.] The building of men's hope for salvation is not alike well grounded, for some lay their ground solidly, and in renouncing of all vain confidence they close by a lively faith with Christ as the only worker and supporter of their hopes and grow up in him unto a holy temple to the Lord; others lay their ground slightly upon outward hearing and profession, and suchlike weak and sandy foundations, and both of them seem to be alike before the trial come, for so does this comparison import. [3.] As the rain from above, the floods from beneath, and the winds round about beating at a house on all hands, make full trial of the well-grounding thereof, so shall the building of men's hope for salvation be no less exactly tried, and he that is a practiser of faith and repentance shall abide the trial and shall not be disappointed of his hopes, *but be found to be a wise*

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*man.* And he that is a hearer only of Christ's doctrine who does not labour to practise it, in believing and obeying his word, shall find his groundwork ruined in the day of trial and himself declared to be *foolish*, for this is our Lord's meaning. [4.] There is a great need for every man to examine himself and to make fast work of his faith in Christ and study of sanctification, because the ruin of the building of the hopes of salvation in a counterfeit Christian is horrible, for *Great is the fall of that house*, says our Lord.

*28. And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.*

*29. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*



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This is the effect of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. DOCTRINE: [1.] The power of Christ's word is able to convince all the hearers of it, and to force them to admire the truth thereof, for *The people were astonished at his doctrine.* [2.] Beside the authority of a faithful minister there was also sovereign majesty to be seen in Christ's teaching, proper to himself, as the Master and Lord of all men, for *He taught them as one having authority.* [3.] Such as study not to glorify God in their ministry do lose their own estimation also, for the scribes who, being ignorant of the nature of faith and repentance, did preach men's traditions, studied not to practise the truth but sought their own and not God's glory, and did lose their own authority even at the people's hand, for it is said, *Christ taught with authority and not as the scribes.*

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## CHAPTER 8

Our Lord gives evidence of his divine power, grace, sovereignty and wisdom in miraculous healing of sundry diseases (vv 1–17). In trial of disciples (vv 18–22). In rebuking the tempestuous winds and seas (vv 23–27). In trial of the Gadarenes (vv 28–34).

1. *When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.*

2. *And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

The first evidence of Christ's divine power and grace is the miraculous healing of the leper, in whose example these things are to be learned: [1.] That Christ's Godhead and divine power must be laid as a ground by everyone who comes to him, else nothing can be expected, according as this leper gives him the glory of curing a disease miraculously, saying *Thou canst make me clean*. [2.] We must submit ourselves to his will in temporal benefits, not having any certain promise to obtain them, and still give to him the glory of power to grant our desires whether he satisfy us or not, for, *If thou wilt, says he, thou canst make me clean*. [3.] Nothing can keep a needy soul from Christ when it sees relief in him; it leaps over all impediments as this leper, contrary to the prohibition of the ceremonial law, presses through a multitude and comes to him.

3. *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

In our Lord's hearkening to the leper, learn: [1.] That Christ abhors not the vilest of those who come unto him, however loathsome, and that he can touch the unclean and not be infected by pollution, but is able to cleanse filthiness by the touch of his power, for *He put forth his*

*hand and touched him*. [2.] That Christ did profess openly his own divine power, for absolutely he commanded in his own name and authority, as God, the departing of the sickness saying, *I will, be thou clean* and this

he proved in effect immediately by cleansing the leper in a moment, for *immediately the leprosy was cleansed.*

*4. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.*

In this direction given to the leper to show himself to the priest, who according to the law was judge in the case of leprosy, learn: [1.] That Christ's benefits will abide the trial, and be found to be solid, even his foes being judges; therefore he will have the *man healed, to go to the priest*, who was appointed judge of the cleansing of leprosy. [2.] That Christ will not allow any man to speak of him but as he is directed, therefore he would have the work found to be divine by the priest before it should be known that it was *his* work, for his own greater glory; therefore says he, *See thou tell no man.* [3.] That Christ would have the ceremonial law kept so long as the time thereof endured, saying, *Offer the gift that Moses commanded.* [4.] That if our Lord suspend the manifesting of his glory it is for manifesting of it in a fitter time, to the convincing of his adversaries, and confirmation of the faith of his own. Therefore he will have a *sacrifice offered unto God* for the cleansing, that the Godhead of the cleanser may be seen, and a testimony given against them who would not acknowledge his power to be divine.

*5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,*

*6. And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.*

Another evidence of Christ's divine power is the healing of the centurion's servant, wherein learn: [1.] that God's electing, calling and saving grace, runs to all ranks of men without exception, for here a man of war, a commander,

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endued with faith, a *centurion and a Gentile comes to him.* [2.] That faith working by love can make an errand to Christ for others no less than for itself, for *My servant lieth sick*, says the centurion. [3.] Faith accounts misery, laid before Christ, a motive good enough for mercy to work on. Therefore, says he, *My servant is grievously tormented.*

7. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*

In Christ's answer learn: [1.] How ready our Lord is to hear prayer proceeding from faith and love, for he answers quickly, *I will heal him*. [2.] That when the party afflicted cannot stir Christ will be content to make the travel, as here he says, *I will come and heal him*. [3.] The centurion did not expressly ask so much as is here granted, but half a word from faith serves Christ, who will give to it a complete answer; *My servant is sick*, says the centurion; *I will come and heal him* says Christ.

8. *The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

9. *For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

In the centurion's answer learn: [1.] That faith has a high esteem of Christ, and a low esteem of itself, as is seen in the centurion saying, *I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof* [2.] That faith is content with Christ's word, without bodily presence, and looks for no less effect from his word than from his presence, for, *Speak*, says he, *the word only, and my servant shall be made whole*. [3.] That faith acknowledges all power and authority over all things to be eminently in Christ; and in particular that all sicknesses are Christ's soldiers and servants to go or stay as he commands, in a far more excellent way than a centurion can command his soldiers, for, says he, *I am a man under authority*, &c. Therefore thou who art supreme in authority over all, mayest do more than I.

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10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

Christ is said to *Marvel*, not that he is ignorant of the cause of this glorious faith of the centurion, for Christ was author of it, and did give it to him, but because it was to be wondered at by the disciples, and Christ used some external gesture of wondering to make the centurion's faith to be so much the more taken notice of, and therefore, he is said to *Marvel*.

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Hence learn: [1.] That faith, the greater it is, the more it pitches on Christ's deity; the more work it puts upon him, it is the more pleasing to him; he delights in his own gift of grace wherever he sees it; he will marvellously entertain it and hold it forth as a rarity to others; this is it that *He marvelled at*, and *spake of* to his followers. [2.] That the more means and the more time that a man has had to grow strong in the faith, and yet has profited little, the more is he to be blamed, and to be reproached, in comparison of those who profit by few means: This is it which Christ says, *I have not found so great faith in Israel as in this centurion, a born ethnic.*

*11. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.*

*12. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Upon this occasion, our Lord prophesies of the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews (vv 11–12); whence we learn: [1.] That such of the Gentiles as believe in Jesus Christ are joined in society with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and that out of whatsoever nation they shall come to Christ, they shall be incorporated in the same fellowship of grace and glory, for they shall sit down in the *kingdom of heaven with Abraham &c.* [2.] Whatsoever was our Lord's purpose about the choosing of the sacramental signs of his Supper, we are sure that he esteemed *social sitting of the saints at table* a fit sign to represent their fellowship one with another in grace and glory, and that he

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thought it good before the institution of the sacrament to acquaint his disciples with such a form of speech as might express so much, for instead of saying, *Many shall be partakers with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of life, joy and honour*, he says, *Many shall SIT DOWN TO TABLE with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.* [3.] Whosoever are born within the compass of a national covenant with God are children of *the kingdom*, that is, have an external title to be heirs of *the kingdom*, for therefore are the Jews who were born under the covenant called *children of the kingdom.* [4.] If a man have no more but the external honour of a covenanter for the kingdom and lack faith in Christ, he shall be stripped naked of that external honour also,

for here it is said of such, *the children of the kingdom shall be cast out*. [5.] Such as are debarred from heaven are cast into *outer darkness*, that is, into extreme misery, confusion, horror and torment in hell; *where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, that is, where shall be nothing but desperate sorrow.

*13. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

After reproving and threatening the Jews, Christ turns about and speaks graciously to the centurion. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ will never be so incensed against his foes as to forget his friends. Therefore this threatening of the misbelief of the Jews makes not our Lord forget his respect to this *faithful centurion*. [2.] Christ will not disappoint the hopes of his own, but as they believe so shall it be: they that believe in him shall not be ashamed; therefore says he here, *As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee*. [3.] Christ's word and power needs not his bodily presence for bringing forth the effect promised, for the centurion's servant was healed, being absent in place, *in the selfsame hour*.

*14. And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever:*

*15. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them.*

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In this healing of Peter's wife's mother, learn: [1.] That marriage is lawful and honourable in the preachers of the gospel, for Peter, being called to the apostleship, keeps his wife and his house and entertains *his wife's mother*. [2.] Christ will not disdain to visit the families of his own, however mean they be, for he comes to *Peter's house*. [3.] The special thing our Lord takes notice of in the house he comes to is what ails any in it and what need they stand in of his help; therefore it is observed of him here that *he saw Peter's wife's mother lying sick of a fever*, as if there had been nothing else to see. [4.] Christ will show his goodness and power, as need is, for the comfort of his friends, as here: *He touched her hand, and the fever left her*. [5.] Although this might seem no great matter in comparison of other miracles, yet faith will observe Christ's divine power in a little

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matter as clearly as in the greatest work; therefore the Evangelist marks this miracle and tells us that *She arose and ministered unto them*. [6.] What benefit we receive of Christ ought to be employed for service to him and his followers, for this woman being healed, *arose and ministered*, or *served Christ and his disciples* in such entertainment as Peter's house could afford.

*16. When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:*

In this multitude of miracles, learn: [1.] That no time was untimely to Christ when people came to him, for *when the even was come*, when rest was due to Christ after all the day's diligence in his calling, *they brought unto him many sick*. [2.] Among other effects which sin has brought upon men, this is one, to be bodily possessed with devils: and it is justice that it should be so when possession spiritual is not regarded, as it is said, *They brought unto him many possessed with devils*. [3.] There is no way to liberate men of devils but that they come, or be presented by others, to Christ, as these were *brought to him*. [4.] Christ by his word or command can easily deliver men from deepest possession, for *He cast out the spirits by his word*. [5.] Never

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man came to him to be helped whom he cured not, therefore justly do they perish who come not to him, for of those who came unto him it is said, *He healed ALL that were sick*.

*17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.*

The Evangelist makes observation of the intent of these works. Hence learn: [1.] That all the miraculous cures which Christ used upon men's bodies was to make it evident that he was the promised Saviour of souls spoken of by the prophets, for *These things did he that it might be fulfilled*, or be known to be fulfilled, *which was spoken by Esaias*. [2.] This speedy delivering of the infirm, this universal healing of the sick, this welcoming of them, however untimely soever they came, proves that Christ not only took on him our infirmities, common to mankind, but also by compassion did bear our sicknesses so affectionately that he healed such

as came to him, so readily and shortly, as if the disease had been in his own body.

*18. Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.*

The report of his miracles being spread abroad, multitudes of the people flocked about him to gaze and wonder at him. Therefore Christ, no way loving idle gazing nor confused confluence of curious people, gives commandment to his disciples to go by ship over the lake of Gennesaret to the other side. DOCTRINE: [1.] Many do flock after Christ and his ordinances out of curiosity, and by respects, rather than out of desire to profit, as is here evident. [2.] Christ is not the author nor allower of confusion, be it under never so specious pretences, as here appears. [3.] Christ will rather depart than foster folly; he loves not to feed any man's curiosity but to be profitable; he loves not worldly pomp but to be believed into, and to be loved for salvation. Therefore, *He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.*

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*19. And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

*20. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

A scribe perceiving how Christ was esteemed of makes offer absolutely to be his disciple and servant: but first, with an eye to his own ease, profit and honour, as appears by Christ's answer; then rashly, not considering his own inability nor what hazards and difficulties he had to pass in case of following of Christ; and withal intruding himself in Christ's ministry, saying, *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* Our Lord, meeting the man's mind rather than his words, professes himself to be indeed the promised Messiah now incarnate and made the Son of man. Next, that he had voluntarily emptied himself so far of honour, riches and ease, as he had no certain place of residence, no, not so much as a fox's den or bird's nest, nor any household stuff whereon to lay his head. This did our sins deserve and this Christ was content to suffer, for ransoming of us, and procuring right for large allowance to us, and to



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season and sanctify every mean estate and degree of life to such as should be called unto it. Now whether this scribe made his offer good or not, it is not material, but howsoever we learn: [1.] That such as will follow Christ, must make resolution to be content with such allowance and fare as the Captain of our salvation was content with, for so does Christ's answer import. [2.] Whosoever offer their service to Christ, especially in the ministry, should look well what motives do induce them and that they be not seeking the world in his service, or else they may fall short of their intention and be disclaimed of Christ as unfit to be accounted his servants, for this is it which the answer speaks.

21. *And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

22. *But Jesus said unto him, Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.*

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Here is another man called to follow Christ, who desires a delay and puts off the matter with an excuse, till his old father were dead and buried. Hence learn: [1.] That such as Christ has a mind to call to the ministry he will find out, for here is a disciple who has no mind to follow Christ to the constant attendance of the ministry, and yet Christ intends to have him. [2.] A true calling may be met possibly at first with an unwilling mind, either altogether refusing the ministry or shifting off the calling for a time, for this man desires to be let alone till his aged father should die, that he might discharge the last duty to him ere he followed Christ's call. *Suffer me first to bury my father*, says he. [3.] Christ will not take a refusal of the man whom he intends to employ, and no pretence of doing duty to men's bodies shall be taken for an excuse for the not taking charge of souls when Christ calls, for Christ urges him still, saying, *Follow me*. [4.] Common civil duties may be done by any men, but the work of the ministry only by men chosen and called and sent. *Therefore follow thou me*, says Christ, *and let the dead bury their dead*; that is, men dead in their sins are sufficient for such a work as burying the dead, *but follow thou* this higher employment.

23. *And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.*

24. *And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves, but he was asleep.*

25. *And his disciples came unto him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.*

26. *And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.*

27. *But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?*

In this miracle observe: [1.] That our Lord of set purpose will lead his disciples into dangers for the stirring up and trial of their faith and for evidencing of his own glory, for *he enters into a ship* for this end, and makes his *disciples follow him*, wherein they might safely hazard indeed when he went before, and did give warrant to them to follow. [2.] His

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presence exemes<sup>1</sup> not his disciples from trouble and danger, for *There arose a great tempest in the sea*. [3.] Our Lord as he took on him our nature, so also he subjected himself to our natural and sinless infirmities, for being weary on the land he falls *asleep in the ship*. [4.] The Church may be like to be drowned and Christ may seem to neglect the matter, for the Church now in the ship *was covered with the waves but he was asleep in the ship*. [5.] The Church must believe Christ to be God and able to deliver them although he seem as it were sleeping among them, because he can carry himself as one asleep, and that of his purpose in his wisdom, to the end he may be awaked by their prayers as by the disciples here, *They came and awoke him and cried, Lord, save us, we perish*. [6.] As sense of danger and need is a choice argument when we deal with Christ for help, (for, *we perish*, speaks much) so is it an ordinary forerunner of deliverance and help, for *Save us, we perish*, went before the rebuking of the wind. [7.] It is a sinful misbelief to be too much feared to perish in Christ's company and service; therefore *He rebuked them*, saying, *Why are ye fearful?* [8.] He can put difference between small faith and no faith, and as he will reprove unbelief so will he not despise the smallest measure of belief; therefore says he, *O ye of little faith*. [9.] Whether he seem to

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sleep or to be awake he is Lord of heaven and earth, ruler and commander of wind, sea and land, whom all the creatures must obey, *For he arose and rebuked the winds, and there was a calm.* [10.] The glory of the deliverance which Christ gives to his people in their greatest strait is marvellous and far above all that they can apprehend ere it come: for when the disciples, looking as men on the Lord's work, saw the great calm, *they marvelled.* [11.] The faith which Christ's disciples had of his Godhead was little in comparison of what they had ground for, even from the works of the glory thereof demonstrated unto them, for say they, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?*

28. *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed*

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*with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.*

29. *And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

30. *And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine, feeding.*

31. *So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.*

32. *And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.*

33. *And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.*

34. *And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.*

The last part of the chapter contains the delivery of the two men possessed with devils. Wherein learn: [1.] That Christ went no whither but for a special errand; pity to these two poor possessed men moved him to cross *the sea or the lake of Tiberias*, and when he came to the other side his errand appears, *The two possessed men are presented unto him*. [2.] Christ can make the devils bring men to him, will they, nill they, for here there *met him two possessed with devils*. [3.] The malice of the devils is exceeding cruel where they can get liberty to show it against man: for they drive these men from the society of other men to the saddest spectacle of tombs or sepulchres, they embitter them with rage and fierce anger and move them to come against all other men, so *that no man could pass by that way*. [4.] How powerful soever devils be, yet they can neither stand out against Christ's power nor flee from him nor abide in his presence. Therefore *They cry out for fear of him*. [5.] The case of possessed souls, in whom the spirit of disobedience rules, is to be seen in these whose bodies were possessed with devils; the man is their lodging house; he is no more master of his own actions but is Satan's slave. The man's eyes look for Satan, his hands and feet work

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and walk for Satan, his throat is made Satan's blowing horn, his mouth speaks for Satan, and here they cry out by the poor man's throat, saying, *What have we to do with thee?* [6.] Devils did know Christ to be the Son of God, but they knew also that he came not into the world for their good but to be the Saviour of men; therefore, *What have we to do with thee?* say they. [7.] Although it be not in the devil's power not to yield to Christ, yet they retain their wicked averseness to obey him, being loathe to leave the possession they have gotten. They would be let alone by him if they could, and do wickedly plead for it, saying, *What have we to do with thee?* [8.] They know there is a time coming when they shall be more tormented than they are as yet, even the day of judgment, and this they tremble at, saying, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* [9.] They cannot hurt so much as a sow except Christ, Lord of heaven and earth, do suffer them; therefore the devils besought Christ, saying, *If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine*. [10.] Sometimes the Lord suffers Satan to have his will of men's bodies and goods, for

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their trial, as here to go into the Gadarenes' swine, to try the owners' minds; therefore Christ said unto them, Go. [11.] These wicked spirits love always to do evil and make it a sport to destroy what they are permitted. Therefore *they drove the swine headlong into the sea and made them perish in the water.* [12.] To the end that the trial of men may be perfected, Christ will have them to know the spiritual benefits of the gospel, as well as the temporal inconveniences following it. This is the reason that Christ will have the Gadarenes to know as well of the delivery of men possessed with devils as of the drowning of the swine, for *The swineherds tell them of all,* that so they might be inexcusable. [13.] Men left to their own selves will choose anything rather than Christ and will do no better than *these Gadarenes did.* [14.] Temporal loss of swine is so great in the worldly man's estimation that spiritual advantage is nothing esteemed of, for the Gadarenes are not so moved with the delivery of the souls and bodies of the possessed men as they are with the loss of their swine. [15.] If men see nothing of Christ's sweet mercies but only take up his power, they will be loathe to have him in their company; therefore these Gadarenes *beseech him to depart from them.* Such worldly

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men will rather quit the gospel than hazard their worldly goods. [16.] This is the greatest token of Christ's leaving a place, or not coming into a place, when the whole incorporation, city or place consists only of Gadarenes and all do consent that he should depart, for there, apparently, he has no errand to stay him, and wheresoever Christ has no employment, thence will he remove.

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## CHAPTER 9

Here are more evidences of Christ's divine power, authority and love to his people: In healing the palsy and pardoning of sin (vv 18). In calling of Matthew and defending of his disciples (vv 9–17). In removing of sickness and raising the dead (vv 18–31). In dispossessing devils (vv 32–35). In providing ministers for the conversion of souls (vv 36–38).

1. *And he entered into a ship and passed over, and came to his own city.*

He comes to Capernaum which is called his *own city*, not only because he dwelt in it but because he had a number of his own in it, as may be gathered from the history. Hence learn: [1.] That the more godly persons be in a city, the more the Lord will own it, and although a city for the most part be unthankful (as Capernaum was) yet will not the ungratitude of the multitude hinder him to be good to his own in it, for Christ here returns to *Capernaum* and makes it be styled *his own city*.

2. *And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

In the healing of the soul and body of the man sick of the palsy learn: [1.] That such as are seeking benefit of Christ will watch for opportunity to find him. When Christ comes to Capernaum certain men do bring out *one sick of the palsy to him*. [2.] As it is an act of lively faith to come to Christ, so also to help others to come unto Christ; for of those that bring the palsy sick to Christ as well as of the palsy sick himself, it is said, *Jesus saw their faith*. [3.] Our Lord loves to entertain faith with evidences of respect unto the believers, for *Jesus seeing their faith speaks comfortably*

*unto the palsy sick*. [4.] When Christ will heal sickness and miseries at the root he takes away sin and forgives it, therefore he says to the palsy sick, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*. [5.] When he remits sin he advances a man to sonship and regenerates him. Therefore Christ here calls him *son* while

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he pronounces *him forgiven*. [6.] The man whose sins are forgiven is blessed although his outward condition seems miserable. Therefore Jesus bids the sick *of the palsy be of good cheer* because his *sins were forgiven*.

3. *And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*

The adversaries of Christ conceive ill thoughts of this his ercy to the palsy sick. Hence learn: [1.] That it is no wonder to see Christ's followers misconstrued, for the scribes think of Christ himself *that he blasphemeth*. [2.] Even those who are of the learned sort, who should know him best, may be mistaken about him, for *certain of the scribes misconstrue* him. [3.] Any veil is sufficient to blindfold the wicked, for these men will not see Christ to be God, notwithstanding he demonstrates his deity daily, because they see him to be a man: *This man*, say they, *blasphemeth*. [4.] Christ's forgiving sins by his own authority was a plain avowing himself to be very God, for who can forgive sins so but God? And this is the ground whereupon the scribes do think Christ guilty of blasphemy, that being, as they thought, a man and no more, he did forgive sins by his own authority, which is the property of God.

4. *And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

Christ will prove himself to be God by discovering<sup>1</sup> their inward thoughts. Hence learn: [1.] That the more the Godhead of our Lord be opposed, the more will he show himself to be God in the face of his adversaries. And here he turns out the inside of the scribes' mind, showing himself the searcher of hearts, for it is said, *Jesus knowing their thoughts*. [2.] Thoughts go not free before God; men shall

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give account of them; for here the scribes are challenged of thoughts, *Wherefore think ye evil?* [3.] It is a sin, and a fearful one, to think in our heart that Christ is not very God, for which no man shall be able to answer, when he shall be challenged, more than these men were able, to whom Christ said, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

5. *For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and walk?*

6. *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.*

7. *And he arose, and departed to his house.*

He demonstrates himself yet more to be true God, even his enemies being judges, by discovering<sup>1</sup> so much power in his works, as they acknowledged to be divine. Hence learn: [1.] That our Lord's works are able to convince the adversaries of his Godhead, themselves being judges, for *Whether*, says he, *is it easier?* &c [2.] Christ's forgiving sins in his own name and authority, and his setting a man sick of a palsy whole and strong upon his feet in a moment, are both convincing evidences of Christ's Godhead. The argument may be framed thus: He who heals the palsy sick in a moment by his own power gives a convincing evidence of his Godhead, even the scribes, Christ's adversaries, being judges. But Christ does heal the sick in a moment by his own power, as he proves sensibly<sup>2</sup> in his healing the palsy before their eyes. Therefore Christ gives a convincing evidence of his Godhead, the scribes and adversaries being judges. Another convincing argument may be thus: He who has power *of himself* to heal the palsy does without blasphemy give out himself to be God in forgiving sins by his own authority, even in the judgment of his adversaries, who esteemed the healing of the palsy in his own name to be less easy than to pronounce forgiveness of sins in his own name. But Christ has power of himself to heal the palsy and sensibly<sup>3</sup> shows the same

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in healing thereof, to the intent his adversaries may know that he in the time of his humiliation in the flesh had power on earth to forgive sins. Therefore Christ without blasphemy gives out himself to be God in forgiving sins by his own authority, and so the adversaries of his Godhead, the scribes, were confounded.

8. *But when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.*

The Pharisees are put to shame and yet do not glorify God. But the multitude do acknowledge divine power manifested in this work. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the learned refuse to give to Christ glory, God



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can make others to glorify him, as the multitude here do glorify God for what they see in Christ when the scribes are dumb. [2.] The light of a miracle may convince a man and lift him up to see divine properties in Christ, and yet not be sufficient to settle him in the faith that Christ is God and Man in one Person, for here the multitude come short of a full testimony that Christ is God: they glorify God who had given such power to *men*, not yet having the knowledge that *The Man* was God incarnate.

*9. And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.*

In Matthew's conversion and calling to the Apostleship learn: [1.] That it is our duty, when we may edify others, to declare what proof we have of God's mercy toward ourselves, even though the glorifying of God by this means be joined with abasing of our own estimation; for Matthew here gives us an example so to do, in relating how himself, when Christ called him, was found in a base and odious office among the Jews, to wit, a Customer<sup>4</sup> who had sold his own credit and all men's kindness for love of gain. [2.] The grace of effectual calling is not prevented<sup>5</sup> by any goodness in man, for *Matthew is sitting at the receipt of custom*

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without taking notice of Christ all the time he had been in Capernaum, before this time: yet Christ with a special eye of compassion and love now looks on him, converts, and calls him to be an Apostle. [3.] The operation of grace is invincible, for Matthew here without more ado breaks through all impediments, arises, leaves the Custom-house *and follows Christ*.

*10. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.*

After this Matthew entertains Christ in his house: upon which occasion other publicans also come in unto Christ. Hence learn: [1.] That a soul which has tasted of the grace and love of Christ cannot choose but fall in love with him and his followers, for Matthew now cannot satisfy himself till he gets Christ and his disciples to eat with him at his house. [2.] Christ will not refuse to take and give signs of friendship and love

where he knows he is loved, for here he comes, and his disciples with him, to eat at the publican's house. [3.] The observation of Christ's kind respect to anyone sinner may give encouragement to the rest to draw near to him also, for because Christ will come to a publican's house to eat with him, *Many publicans and sinners came and sat down also with him and his disciples.*

11. *And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?*

The Pharisees cannot endure this his familiar conversing with sinners. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as are not humbled in the sense of their own sins will take occasion of carping against God if he deal otherwise with his own children than they can allow, if he show signs of favour to others whom they judge more sinful than themselves. This is the ground of the Pharisees accusing Christ, because *He eateth with sinners.* [2.] They who are least sensible of their own sins will be greatest enemies to such as in the sense of sin<sup>6</sup> are seeking communion with Christ. And no greater

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temptations have young Christians to waken them than from old hypocrites. The converted publicans are disdained. Christ and his disciples are quarrelled<sup>7</sup> for their kind carriage towards young converts only by the Pharisees: *Why eateth your Master with sinners?* say they.

12. *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*

Christ takes the defence of his disciples and clears himself and them also. DOCTRINE: [1.] All who suffer or are quarrelled for Christ's cause he will take the plea upon himself. The disciples here are questioned and Christ makes answer to the Pharisees. Christ justifies his own deed by three reasons. The first: the physician may converse with the sick, therefore I may converse with such publicans and sinners as find themselves sick of sin, although you who count yourselves whole and sound find no need of such a physician as I am. Hence learn: [1.] That sin is like a sore sickness which needs the true physician who is Jesus Christ alone, for so the comparison imports. [2.] All such as are dead in their sins and trespasses, and namely such as are puffed up with conceit of their own righteousness, are *whole* and sound in their own estimation and do misregard the physician Christ as if they stood in no need of him: such

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were the Pharisees hereby taxed. [3.] Such as are sick and sensibly troubled with sin, Christ will converse with them as with persons standing in need of him, for *They that are sick need the physician*, says he.

*13. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

The second reason: God never commanded a ceremony of the Levitical law to hinder a necessary duty of mercy or of the Moral law, as Hosea 6:6 teaches. Therefore no Levitical ceremony must hinder me to show mercy on these publicans and sinners. Hence learn: [1.] That proud men

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who are puffed up with the conceit of their own righteousness and disdain humbled sinners are ignorant of the Word of God, whatsoever they seem to be in profession of knowledge. Therefore Christ says to these proud Pharisees, *Go ye and learn what it meaneth &c.* [2.] God delights to show mercy to sinners and will not suffer any man to deny mercy to his neighbour under pretence of observance of some act of outward ceremony. Commands about outward ceremonies were not appointed to hinder but to further the work of mercy, for it is said, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. The third reason: My errand to the world is not to call to repentance such as are righteous in their own eyes, as you are, but to call such as these publicans who are sinners in their own eyes; therefore it is lawful for me to converse with them rather than with you. Hence learn: [1.] As many of the hearers of the gospel as are righteous in their own eyes lack a warrant to come to the comfort of Christ's mercy and mediation, so long as they remain proud and puffed up with opinion of their own righteousness, for he says, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*. All his doctrine to the conceited righteous is to show them their unrighteousness and deserved condemnation and God's imminent wrath and to exclude them from the benefit of his gospel till they be humbled. [2.] Such as are sensible of their sins and unrighteousness, who see themselves to have sin and to need repentance, are the very souls whom Christ is seeking and whom he came to call, that coming to him he might give them repentance, for, he says *I am come to call sinners to repentance*. [3.] The grace of Christ's gospel does not give liberty to looseness and sinful living but calls men to the course of repentance, that walking on in the way of mortifying sin, Christ may

lead them to salvation, for *I came to call sinners to repentance*, says he. Thus the Pharisees are refuted.

*14. Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?*

John's disciples now come and quarrel for<sup>8</sup> Christ's disciples' non-conformity with them in fasting. DOCTRINE: [1.] It

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is no wonder to see questions arise in the Church for non-conformity in ceremonies, for John's disciples do quarrel<sup>9</sup> with Christ that his disciples were not conformable to them in the custom of *frequent fasting*. [2.] Men are much in love with their own customs; they look more to ceremonies than to substance, and would have their own practice to be the sole rule which others should follow, for *Why*, say they, *do we fast, but thy disciples fast not?* [3.] Such as are given to urge needless conformity give advantage to the enemy and will readily join with Christ's adversaries in the controversy to strengthen themselves and to make their party good, for *Why do we and the Pharisees fast?*, say John's disciples. They side with the Pharisees and justify their course that they may burden Christ and his disciples, as the fewer number, with a prejudice.

*15. And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

Christ justifies his disciples by two reasons, in which he deals with John's disciples as with friends, more mildly than with the Pharisees. The first reason is: So long as I am in my disciples' company, it is the time of joy to them. Therefore to enjoin them fasting were untimely. Hence learn: [1.] That our Lord Jesus is Bridegroom and the Church is his Bride, which he espouses to himself to be partaker of all the riches of his grace, and Christ's ministers are the Bridegroom's men, for this the comparison does import. [2.] The disciples of Christ, so long as Christ was bodily present among them, had days of great joy, as children of the bridechamber daily beholding his glory and grace, in which condition they were not called to fasting. Therefore, says he, *The children of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them*. [3.] When the Lord withdraws

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his wonted presence and usual comforts from us we are called to fasting and mourning, for, *The*

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*days shall come wherein the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast,* says he.

*16. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.*

*17. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.*

The second reason, clothed with two similitudes, is this: The strong exercise of extraordinary fasting is no more fit for the tender and weak condition of my disciples than to put a piece of new stiff cloth upon a tender old coat which is not able to bear the seam, or than it is fit to put new wine into old and weak bottles; for this exercise of extraordinary and frequent fasting is fit for strong and exercised disciples only. Therefore my disciples are not charged to fast in this their tender condition. Hence learn: [1.] That the work of God's grace in young converts is very tender and easily hurt and must be discreetly entertained.<sup>10</sup> So does the scope of the similitudes import. [2.] When Christians are grown up to some strength and have their senses exercised they must be put to answerable pains and exercise in religion, for this is *To put new wine in new bottles*, that both may be preserved. [3.] If discretion be not used in proportioning the burden of outward exercises of religion, to the capacity and strength of the disciples, both the exercise is lost and the disciples are hurt, for this is the meaning of, *the hole in the garment is made more; the new wine and the old bottle both are lost.*

*18. While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thine hand upon her and she shall live.*

*19. And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples:*

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The dispute is broken off by the coming of a ruler, praying that his daughter might be raised from death. In the coming of this ruler to Christ, we learn: [1.] That Christ can find out means in his providence to honour himself in the midst of all controversies and disputations, for *A certain ruler, a man of place, comes and worships him while he is speaking,* and so breaks off the dispute. [2.] Christ can find an errand for the man whom he will draw to him, as here, by a daughter's death: so by some like trouble on a man or on his family, he can draw the parents to himself. [3.] All that come to Christ are not alike strong in faith. This ruler of the synagogue requires both Christ's presence and the touch of his hand that his daughter may be raised from the dead. *Come, says he, and lay thy hand on her.* [4.] Our gentle Lord refuses no man, puts no man away that comes to him: *He arose and followed him.*

*20. And behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment,*

*21. For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.*

While Christ is on his way a sick woman through faith is healed. DOCTRINE: [1.] Poor and rich are alike welcome to Christ, for here while he is going with the ruler, he neglects not this *poor sick woman*. [2.] That which separates us from the society of the holy must not separate us from Christ but rather drive us to him, for this woman, legally polluted and so separate from the Temple and all clean persons, draws near to *Christ to touch him*. [3.] Though all remedies fail and our evil be of long endurance, yet Christ must be ran unto, for this woman is diseased twelve years, yet comes with hope of help in Christ. [4.] Although Christ seem to take no notice of us, but to be about the helping of others only, yet must we take notice of him and draw in to him upon all occasions offered, *as this woman comes to Christ in his way to the ruler's house*. While grace is in dealing we must have our share of it. [5.] None can come to Christ rightly but such as believe to be the better of him; and such as come may be persuaded of help by him, as this

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woman assured herself of health, *if she might but touch his garment.*

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22. *But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.*

Christ will not have this work to be hid, but brought to light for good use. DOCTRINE: [1.] Though modest souls resolve quietly to creep to heaven, unknown of others, yet God will have his work in them brought to light for his own glory. Therefore *Jesus turns about* and draws her forth before the multitude. [2.] Faith in Christ gets a sweeter welcome than it can expect. It may come trembling but shall find joy ere it go, as this woman is *made whole*, and is declared to be a *daughter*, begotten by the word of the gospel and adopted among Christ's children, and is comforted and commended for her faith in the midst of her fears. [3.] Our Lord will not suffer any means of our devising to take the place of the means appointed by himself. Therefore Christ does not say, *Thy touching my garment*, but *Thy faith hath made thee whole*.

23. *And when Jesus came unto the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,*

24. *He said unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.*

Christ goes on to the ruler's house and does not forget his errand. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ may give grace to another before you, but if you be seeking him, the helping of another shall not hinder you, but help you rather, as the woman's healing helped the ruler's faith; and so Christ goes on where he is invited to come. [2.] Christ will have nothing counted desperate<sup>11</sup> which he takes in hand, yea, he will have death itself esteemed but as a sleep in comparison with his divine power. Nothing is too hard for him, in which sense he says here, *The maid is not dead, but sleepeth*.

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[3.] To speak of Christ's power to a misbeliever is but a jest; therefore these misbelievers *laughed him to scorn*.

25. *But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.*

26. *And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.*

In the raising of the damsel and consequent of it, learn: [1.] That Christ is the life and resurrection and that his power can easily raise the dead; for here he took *the dead maid by the hand and she arose*. [2.] The offer of Christ's mercy to one should make his name famous among all, as here his fame for this *one work went abroad into all that land*.

27. *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*

In the healing of these two blind men, learn: [1.] That our Lord wearies not to do good, the more he is employed the more good he works. When Christ departed from the ruler's house, *two blind men follow him*. [2.] When others get alms and mercy from Christ it should allure more to come to his deal, as these blind men hearing of many helped by Christ do come and cry, *Have mercy on us*. [3.] Such as seek good of Christ must look on him as he is described in Scripture, as he is the promised Messiah, the native King of Israel; *Son of David*, say they, *have mercy on us*. [4.] Such as believe to get good of Christ will find a way to follow him and come at him although they were blind; for these blind men *follow* and *cry*. [5.] More persons in the sense of one need may join in one suit to Christ, for these two blind men join in one cry saying, *Have mercy on us*. [6.] The incarnation of the Son of God is a noble prop to faith. *Thou Son of David*, say they, *have mercy*. [7.] Mercy is our only plea with God and Christ. *Therefore*, say they, *Have mercy on us*.

28. *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.*

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Christ suffers them to cry on till he lead them to his lodging. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord will seem not to regard the prayer which he minds to grant and so will train on the supplicant patiently to pursue his request, for no answer is given till the blind men come to his lodging and follow him within doors. [2.] Who so love to have any thing from Christ had need to have a right estimation of his power and to have their faith fixed; therefore, *Believe ye*, says Christ, *that I am able to do this?* [3.] In things belonging to this life it is sufficient to believe his *power*, leaving the matter of his *will* to himself. Therefore here it is asked only, *Believe ye that I am able?* And they answer, *Yea, Lord*, and no more.



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29. *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*

30. *And their eyes were opened, and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.*

Our Lord touches their eyes and opens them. DOCTRINE: [1.] Where any faith is the Lord will strengthen it as need is; therefore although no touching was needful, yet to strengthen their faith, *He touches their eyes.* [2.] Faith shall not be frustrated. Therefore, says Christ, *According to your faith be it unto you, and their eyes were opened.* [3.] Our Lord loved no rash applause, but that his miracles should be kept in silence a while, that men might take heed to his doctrine the more resolutely and praise his work the more solidly. Therefore charged he them saying *See that no man know it*, to wit, till I give you warrant.

31. *But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.*

They, not taking heed to the command but consulting their Own wit, do contrary to the commandment, therefore is their disobedience marked: *but they spread abroad his fame.* Whence we learn, that the most specious pretences that can be made are not able to save a man from guiltiness if he disobey a command.

32. *As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.*

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33. *And when the devil was cast out the dumb spake: and the multitude marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.*

In the healing of the dumb, learn: [1.] Where Satan gets possession, he mars the right use of what a man has of God in one thing or other, insofar as he is not restrained. From some he takes the wit away, as from the lunatic. From some he takes their strength and bows down their back. From some he takes their hearing: and from this man he takes his speech: *He is a dumb man possessed with a devil.* [2.] The only remedy of all sort of possession is, to bring the person infested by Satan to Christ, as this man is brought to him. [3.] When Satan is cast out the man is set

free, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, for *when the devil is cast out, the dumb spake*. [4.] Where God's work is rightly seen, the glory of divine and superexcellent power is perceived. Therefore is it that the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel; meaning, that never any such work was done.

*34. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.*

Satan moves their dogs to blaspheme Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is a dangerous thing to oppose Christ, for such will at length readily blaspheme him and will give the glory of his working rather to the devil than unto him; as here the *Pharisees said, He casteth out devils by the prince of devils.*

*35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

In Christ's care of the salvation of the multitude, learn: [1.] That diligence in teaching and preaching the gospel is the proper way to convert and save souls, which Christ himself has appointed and practised in his own person, *He went about all cities and villages, teaching and preaching*. [2.] Justly is the gospel called the *gospel of the kingdom* both

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of grace and glory, seeing it is the light which shows the *kingdom*, the furnisher of weapons to fight for it. It is the sceptre whereby the subjects of the kingdom are guided. It is the rule and law for the subject's life and it contains the evidences of the subject's right unto the *kingdom*; and being received in a man's heart it brings with it a begun kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy. [3.] The best opportunities of peoples' convening must be taken for teaching the gospel and no pains should be spared for that purpose, as men have their particular calling, for Christ, the Prince of pastors, *went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues*. [4.] Christ's miracles were all of them profitable to men. *He healed sicknesses and diseases*. [5.] There is no evil or malady of soul or body among people which our Lord is not able and willing to heal in all those that employ him, for *he healed every malady and every disease*, in those which came unto him.

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36. *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

Our Lord compassionately looks upon the condition of the people under their ordinary teachers the Pharisees. DOCTRINE: [1.] Misery of God's people is a reason to show pity when he pleases and specially when they are convened in a multitude, for it is said, *When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion, because they fainted.* [2.] They are all as wandering sheep who are not gathered in to the saving faith of Jesus Christ. Therefore these multitudes not yet converted are compared to scattered sheep. [3.] Those men are no pastors in Christ's estimation who do not teach people righteousness and salvation in Christ, who are idle and unfruitful shepherds, such as were the priests and Levites at that time. Therefore the multitude here are counted as *sheep having no shepherd*, because their teachers did not their duty to them in any profitable way.

37. *Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few.*

38. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

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This his commiseration he lays forth before his Apostles, that they might be affected therewith also. DOCTRINE: [1.] People made willing to hear the gospel are like a field ready to be cut down; so the comparison imports. [2.] Sometimes the people are more in number and more willing to hear than there are able and willing ministers to teach, and *Then is the harvest plenteous, and the labourers few.* [3.] The true disciples of Christ should carefully observe this and lay it to heart; therefore it is that Christ lays this case before his disciples. [4.] True labourers and faithful preachers are God's special gift to a land, worthy to be sought from God by prayer; therefore says he, *Pray the Lord to send labourers.* [5.] God himself must fit men for the work of the ministry and must thrust them forth and give them their commission, for no man can further the harvest who is not sent; therefore says he, *Pray that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

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## CHAPTER 10

In this chapter is contained the first commission given by Christ to the Apostles to go preach (vv 1–15), wherein he doth guard them against all difficulties in their ministry: and in particular, poverty and persecution (vv 16–42).

*1. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.*

Here Christ calls and furnishes his Apostles. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ does not admit every man to the work of the ministry but chooses out and calls whom he will; as *Here he calleth unto him twelve*, and no other. [2.] Christ will have such as shall preach the gospel to be disciples ere they be ministers, trained and prepared a while in his company, ere they be put in public charge, for here, *He called unto him his twelve disciples*. [3.] He fits whom he sends with all gifts and abilities necessary for the discharge of their office, as here he gave them power against unclean spirits &c. [4.] Our Lord Jesus is very God, having divine power in himself which he will put forth by what instruments he pleases, as here, *He giveth power to his Apostles to work miracles*, in his name and authority.

*2. Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these, The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.*

*3. Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the publican, James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.*

*4. Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

In the names of the Apostles we learn that there must be an order among the ministers of the gospel, although, without stately<sup>1</sup> subjection of all to anyone, there may be a priority of order which nature requires, without

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supremacy of jurisdiction: yea, there may be priority of order without a superiority of *degree in office*; let be, without superiority of jurisdiction, for here there is *afirst*, without naming a *second*. *The first, Simon who is called Peter*, who in the meetings of the Apostles might for order's cause speak in the name of the rest as older than the rest, or as Moderator; but had no lordship nor superiority of office over the rest: for this he disclaims (1 Peter 5:4). Next we observe, that although for a man's own salvation his conversion and sanctification be necessary, yet want of true grace and sanctification does not disannul the office of a man outwardly called, nor hinder the lawfulness of his ministry; for *Judas Iscariot* is here called and authorized to preach the gospel, as Peter was, and is sent out in a common commission with the rest; for it is said, *He called unto him the twelve, and gave them power*, of whom Judas Iscariot is named for one.

5. *These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not,*

6. *But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

7. *And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

In the direction learn: [1.] That it was necessary that the Jews should have the first offer of the gospel, being the visible church for the time; the people first and before all other in covenant with God; therefore in this first commission the Apostles are commanded to keep *within the Jews' bounds*, and not go to the *Gentiles as yet*, nor unto the Samaritans, which were composed of the offspring of the mixed multitude of pagans who, after the captivity of the ten tribes, were planted in their room. Go *not in the way of the Gentiles*, but rather to the *lost sheep of Israel*, says Christ.

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[2.] The office of ministers is to bring home to the true shepherd, Christ Jesus, lost sheep going astray from Christ. Therefore says he, *Go to the lost sheep*. [3.] The consideration of the danger of people's souls ready to perish must stir up the ministers to faithfulness in their charge. Therefore he calls his people *lost sheep*. [4.] The means appointed by Christ for salvation of souls is *preaching*, however foolish it may seem to the world;

for, *Go*, says Christ, *and preach*. [5.] The sum of John the Baptist's preaching. (Matthew 3:2) and of Christ's (Matthew 4:17) and here of the Apostles', is all one, to wit, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*. [6.] By the preaching of Christ's ministers the kingdom of heaven is brought near at hand to men; for righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost is offered to every soul who in the sense of need shall embrace Christ. *Preach*, says he, *the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.

8. *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.*

It is worthy of observation that the Lord for confirmation of men's faith has given power to the first preachers of his doctrine to deliver men from miseries both of soul and body, from sickness and devils, that in all time coming the power of his gospel might be believed, for *Heal the sick*, says he, *cleanse the lepers, cast out devils*. [2.] To show the freedom and rich grace of the gospel, whereby whatsoever belongs to righteousness and salvation is bestowed upon the unworthy without money and without price, he gave the first preachers of his grace a command to take no reward for their miraculous cures, saying, *Freely ye have received, freely give*.

9. *Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses:*

10. *Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.*

In this temporary commandment to the Apostles in their first commission, our Lord teaches: [1.] That such as have a calling to preach need not be solicitous for their living,

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and that they should not aim at the conquest of money or means to themselves, but to bring in souls to God. Therefore says he, *Provide neither gold nor silver &c*. [2.] Christ esteems and declares the preachers of the gospel to be worthy of their sustenance and their hearers to be obliged in equity to sustain them, saying, *The workman is worthy of his meat*. [3.] When the preachers are sustained by the hearers, Christ esteems their sustenance to be *no reward*, neither to be any thing considerable, to hinder their bestowing of the benefit of the gospel to be esteemed a free gift; for after he says, *Freely give*, he subjoins, *The workman is worthy*

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*of his meat.* [4.] As Christ assures painful preachers that they shall not want, so he gives no order for sustenance of idle men, for there is no servant of his spoken of here but the *workman* only, *The workman is worthy of his meat.*

11. *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence.*

Christ gives direction about their lodging and company. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as are known lovers of religion and to be ready to entertain according to their power the preachers of his word, are the only persons worthy of the company and guesing<sup>2</sup> of Christ's servants, the only persons in whose houses ministers should choose to lodge, for *Enquire*, says he, *who in the city is worthy.* [2.] Christ will have his servants maintained in a seemly way and not as beggars basely going from house to house. Therefore says he, *Abide in the house which is worthy till ye go out of that place.*

12. *And when ye come into an house, salute it.*

13. *And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*

Our Lord shows them how to make trial of the house fit for their lodging. DOCTRINE: [1.] Beside the good report

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that men have of their respect to religion, Christ will have his servants trying them ere they trust them much, and the means whereby he will have them tried is by their respect to the gospel and offer of *peace*, through Christ's grace: for every seeming holy person is not a friend to the doctrine of grace; therefore, says he, *When ye come to a house, salute it*, that is, offer peace by the gospel unto it. [2.] In Christ's reckoning no house is worthy but that which receives the offer of God's peace by the gospel of grace through Christ, and to such only Christ allows peace, for he says, *If the house be worthy, let your peace*, according to your doctrine, come upon it. [3.] If any receive not the offer of peace by the gospel of grace in Christ they are debarred as unworthy or unfit to have the fellowship of Christ's servants or any benefit of the gospel; therefore says he, *Let your peace return unto you.* [4.] Although the offer of Christ's peace do to the refusers thereof no good, yet shall it testify of the fidelity

of the servants of Christ in offering peace for their part, and so do good to the preacher; therefore, *Let your peace*, says he, *return to you*.

14. *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*

15. *Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

From this to the end of the chapter Christ encourages the Apostles and all his disciples to follow the profession of the truth of the gospel without fear by sixteen reasons. The first reason or motive: Such as receive you not shall be severely punished, for the shaking off the dust of the feet served to show that the Apostles were free of their blood, and that God did despise the refusers of the gospel as a man does the dust of his feet; and that in the last day the dust of the ground where despisers of the gospel did dwell should bear witness against them, although there were no other witness to be found. Hence learn: [1.] that such as despise the gospel, God shall despise them, and cut them off from the society of himself and all his servants. [2.] There is an appointed day when justice shall be executed

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to the full upon all the wicked; and namely, on the despisers of the gospel, and this is *at the day of judgment*, says Christ. [3.] There shall be degrees of torment in hell as there are degrees of offenders, for the case of *Sodom shall be more tolerable* than of some other. [4.] The sin of a city refusing the gospel is greater than the *sin of Sodom*, for so does the comparison of the refusers to hear Christ's messengers and of Sodom import. The reason whereof is because the people of Sodom had not the gospel and offer of God's grace made to them, did not sin against such a convincing light, and did not despise in so high a degree the remedy of sin as despisers of the gospel do.

16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*

The second reason: Though your danger be great yet remember you are in my service: *I send you out*. Therefore care for no more than prudently



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and holily to carry yourselves in my service. DOCTRINE: [1.] Preachers must prepare themselves, not only not to be received by all to whom they offer the gospel, but also to be persecuted and put in hazard of their life: for Christ says, *I send you forth as sheep among wolves*. [2.] Resolution must be made for the worst entertainment that can befall preachers (that so the lesser crosses may be the better endured) even for what sheep may suffer of wolves, to wit, beastly cruelty without pity. Because that many preachers suffer of people, Behold, he says, *I send you forth as sheep among wolves*. [3.] Christ's commission to his servants may encourage them and comfort them against whatsoever cross may befall them. *Behold, I send you forth*. [4.] Except the great Shepherd of souls defend his own servants they have no more strength to resist their enemies than *sheep* in comparison of *wolves*. [5.] Preachers must be wary and circumspect, to keep themselves from the harm of their wicked adversaries, that neither their body nor soul be hurt by them. Therefore it is said, *Be wise as serpents*. [6.] They must also take heed that they harm not the flock of their adversaries by any passage of unfaithfulness in their calling, for it is said, *Be harmless as doves*.

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17. *But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.*

18. *And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

The third reason: You are forewarned of witty<sup>3</sup> and powerful enemies in Church and State against you. But remember it is for my sake and for a testimony against them; therefore *Fear not*. Hence we learn: [1.] That there is no less danger to Christ's servants from unrenewed men who seem to be civil and courteous and observant of the laws than there is danger from the most beastly and cruel adversaries. Therefore says he, *Beware of men*. [2.] There is great danger for Christ's servants in civil courts and judgment seats under pretence of law; yea, civil judicatories and ecclesiastical may both turn adversaries to Christ's servants and conspire to persecute them, for it is said, *They will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues*. [3.] When inferior judicatories are found unjust against the servants of Christ, remede<sup>4</sup> in law by superiors is hardly to be expected: at least, small confidence is to be put in appellations

to supreme judges, but Christ's servants must prepare themselves for the enmity of chief governors and kings also; for it is foretold that they shall be brought *before governors and kings*. [4.] Whatsoever be the pretence of people against the preachers of the gospel, the main quarrel is for Christ's sake, for it is said, *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake*. [5.] A testimony given to the truth of Christ's gospel before persecutors, which may stand against them at the last day, in case it prevail not with them to conversion, is worthy all the sufferings of those that be persecuted. *Ye shall be brought for a testimony against them*. [6.] There are a number to whom the word of the gospel comes only for their conviction, who receive no benefit thereby, for so imports this *testimony against them*.

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*19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*

The fourth reason: You shall be furnished by my Spirit as you have need in your sufferings and speeches for the defence of the gospel, therefore fear not. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is good to be resolved and prepared for the cross ere it come. Therefore our Lord brings it, as it were, to the time of compearance,<sup>5</sup> saying, *When they deliver you up*. [2.] The main matter which a true disciple should consider and will take notice of is not what he may suffer or what he will say, but what way he may glorify Christ and maintain the truth best. Therefore it is said, *Take no thought how or what ye shall speak*. [3.] Christ's servants must not be perplexed what to do or say in his cause, for Christ forbids us to be anxious (ordinary means of preparation are not forbidden, but anxiety only), saying, *Take no thought what or how ye shall speak*. [4.] The Lord will not forsake in the day of trial such servants as are more afraid to offend than to suffer, but surely will be present with them to make them give a fair testimony, for he promises to such, *It shall be given you in that same hour*. [5.] It is not necessary that God should give beforehand what is needful for the hour of trial. It is sufficient that assistance be given when the time of need comes, for he says, *It shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak*.

*20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

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For confirmation of our faith he assures such servants of the communion of his Spirit. DOCTRINE: [1.] A testimony or suffering for Christ concerns the Father and the Spirit no less than it concerns Christ, for in this case the Spirit of the Father *owns* Christ's cause, for *it is the Spirit which speaketh*. Christ's cause is not upheld by learning or human wisdom, but by the Holy Spirit, for *It is the Spirit of your Father which speaketh*. [2.] The servants of Christ are but

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instruments whose mouth the Lord borrows in his own cause, for Christ says, *It is the Spirit which speaketh in you*.

*21. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death.*

*22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

The fifth reason: You must resolve to be hated for my sake of all men, but if you go on to the end you shall be saved. Therefore, *Fear not*. DOCTRINE: [1.] The world's hatred against Christ and his gospel, and against grace in his servants, is stronger than natural love and is able to dissolve all bonds of blood or friendship between the ungodly and Christ's disciples, for *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death &c*. [2.] Christ's servants are obnoxious, not only to be destitute of all men's comfort, but also to be hated of all sorts of men for Christ's cause, for it is said, *Ye shall be hated OF ALL MEN for my name's sake*. [3.] There shall be an end of the troubles of all Christ's true disciples, for so imports, *He that endureth to the end*. [4.] There is certain salvation after the troubles are past, for *He that endureth shall be saved*. [5.] There is need of patience and enduring of the trouble to the end, lest if a man *faint and give over*, he lose his reward, for none *but he that endureth to the end shall be saved*.

*23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.*

The sixth reason: I will reserve you some time for further service, and will open a door for your escaping of persecution, and you shall not lack some place to welcome you; therefore, *Fear not*. DOCTRINE: [1.] The

Lord allows ministers in case of persecution to flee at some times, namely, when their life shall serve more for God's glory and the Church's good than their death can. In such a case, he

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says, *When they persecute you in one city, flee &c.* [2.] Preachers must still follow their calling and seek occasion of preaching in another place. Therefore says he, *Flee to another city.* [3.] When one place refuses to hear Christ's servants God will provide another place where they may preach; therefore he says, *Flee to another city.* [4.] He answers a doubt. What if thy servants be persecuted in each city and, having gone through all, shall find no city kindly to them, whither they may retire? He answers, that till the second coming of the Son of man (which second coming now only rested,<sup>6</sup> he being come the first time already) there should not be wanting some city of Israel, some kindly place to receive his servants, which speech is not fitted for the Apostles in their first out-sending, wherein there was no persecution, nor yet only for the Apostles in their second commission to all the world, but for all preachers of the gospel to the world's end, who in the Apostles' persons are spoken to. Under the name of the *cities of Israel*, is to be understood places where his servants will be welcome to preach the gospel if other places cast them out. Whence this doctrine is afforded, that howsoever some ministers may be so persecuted that they cannot flee, or fleeing, shall not escape the sword of the persecutor but must glorify God in their martyrdom, yet there shall be other ministers one after another, till the second coming of Christ, preaching the gospel from place to place in spite of all the persecutors in the world, for of this our Lord gives assurance, saying, *Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.*

24. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.*

25. *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord: if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

The seventh reason: It may content you that you shall not be worse used than I, your Lord and Master am and shall be used: therefore, *Fear not.*  
DOCTRINE: [1.] There

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are very near and sweet bands between Christ and us, for he is our schoolmaster and we his disciples; he is our Lord and we are his servants; he is Goodman of the house, his Church, and we his domestics and household men. So import his words, *The disciple is not above his master, &c.* [2.] Christ is a pattern of sufferings, from the cradle to the cross, from his birth to his burial, for here he sets forth his own sufferings to encourage us to suffer by like example. [3.] To seek or look for freedom from persecution is to seek that we who are Christ's disciples should be better dealt with than our Master was, which is unreasonable, for *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* [4.] Conformity with Christ in suffering may sufficiently comfort any man who suffers for Christ, for *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master.* [5.] The comparison of Christ's excellency and our base condition should make us willing to undergo any sort of humiliation; therefore says he, *It is enough that the servant be as his lord.* [6.] Beelzebub was the idol of Ekron, and one of the chiefest devil's names. There is no blasphemy so great against Christ but Satan will find mouths to vent it, for it is written, *They called the master of the house Beelzebub.* [7.] No wonder that Christ's servants be called devils when Christ was called a devil. So reasons Christ, saying, *How much more shall they call them of the household Beelzebub?*

*26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known.*

The eighth reason: The truth of my doctrine and your innocency must both be brought to light upon all hazards. Therefore, *Fear not*, but avow my gospel boldly. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's servants are in danger to diminish their testimony concerning Christ's truth for fear of men. Therefore are they warned not to fear them. [2.] Although the holiness and innocency of Christ's servants be overclouded and borne down for a time by scandalous speeches of persecutors, and they esteemed no better than Beelzebub, yet shall it be brought forth to light in God's time, for our Lord has said: *There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor secret which shall not be known.* Thus may this

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general sentence serve the purpose in this place. [3.] Because at last the light of the gospel shall break forth and overcome all obstacles, therefore

ministers should boldly preach Christ's truth. And thus also does this general sentence serve Christ's intent, as the next verse makes it plain.

*27. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*

Christ commands his Apostles to publish as openly as they could whatsoever he should reveal to them in any manner of way, putting the *housetops* for the most patent<sup>7</sup> places where a man might be best seen and heard, for the houses of Judea were covered platforms. DOCTRINE: [1.] The matter of preachers' sermons should be nothing but truth revealed by Christ; therefore says he, *What I tell you, that speak.* [2.] Christ does not reveal anything to his servants, whether ordinarily by ordinary means, as by reading or meditation, or extraordinarily by his Spirit, but it is able to abide the light and the trial of all who shall hear of it, and is worthy to be avowed openly, for he says, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak you in light, and what you hear in the ear, that preach you on the housetops.*

*28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

The ninth reason: You must fear me who am able to kill both soul and body: therefore, fear not man who cannot harm you so much. DOCTRINE: [1.] Plain and faithful preaching of Christ's truth may readily be met with persecution and hazard of life, and a man must be master of death and delivered of the fear, not only of smaller losses but even of the loss of life also, if he would preach all Christ's truth as he should. Therefore Christ says, *Fear not them which kill the body.* [2.] All that men can do against a faithful witness of Christ's truth is to take the life of the body; they cannot reach to the soul to destroy it, or

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to take away from it righteousness or peace or joy in the Holy Ghost, for *they are not able to kill the soul*, says he. [3.] The true remedy for all base fear of the creature and of death is the true fear of God. Therefore says he, *Fear him rather which is able to destroy soul and body in hell.* [4.] If a man suppress the testimony which he should give to Christ for fear of being killed by men, he falls into the danger of being cast into hell and losing soul and body. This is imported in the saying, *Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

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29. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.*

30. *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

31. *Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

The tenth reason: God's providence which reaches to sparrows and to the hairs of your head to preserve the least of them, may encourage you sufficiently against fear of men; therefore, Fear not to preach my truth. DOCTRINE: [1.] God's providence is very particular toward all the creatures, so that the least of them is not taken or slain without God's dispensation, for *One sparrow*, says he, *shall not fall to the ground without your Father*. [2.] The Lord's care of his servants reaches to the preservation not only of their life, but also to the smallest thing that concerns them, for *the very hairs of your head are numbered*, says he. [3.] God esteems much more of his servants than of other creatures for his children are bought with his Son's blood. Therefore says he, *Ye are of more value than many sparrows*. [4.] The consideration of God's estimation of his servants and of his particular providence about them may give them assurance that tyrants and persecutors shall do them no further hurt than God pleases, and so may deliver them from all fear in the discharge of their message. This Christ infers, saying expressly, *Fear ye not, therefore*.

32. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

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33. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*

The eleventh reason: If you confess me confidently before men I will confess you before God, but if for fear of men you deny me, I will deny you. Therefore, fear not to avow the truth of my gospel. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ will not only have preachers but also all Christians to avow his name and his truth before all men, and that for God's glory and men's edification. This is it he says in general, *Whosoever shall confess me before men*. [2.] Men by confessing Christ's truth cannot honour him as much

as he shall honour them who boldly do avow him, for *him will I confess before my Father*, says he. [3.] If men refuse to stand for Christ or for his truth or cause, or for his servants troubled for his service, they deny Christ and in substance say they know him not, and that they will not be for him in danger; for not to confess Christ is here to deny him, for *whosoever shall deny me*, says he, instead of saying, *whosoever shall not confess me*. [4.] Such as refuse to avow Christ and his cause before men, he will disclaim them before God as men that belong not to him, for he says *Him will I also deny before my Father*. This threatening strikes not against such as do slide at a time, and afterwards repent, and are ready to confess Christ in no less hazard, as Peter did: for such men do not refuse to avow Christ, but resolve to confess him; and keep their resolution, although in some surprisal they slide.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

The twelfth reason: You must resolve for trouble, even from your nearest friends, and not look for worldly peace if you follow me. Therefore, *Fear not*. DOCTRINE: [1.] We are ready to promise to ourselves worldly ease and wealth and honour and friendship by professing of the gospel, although we have no warrant for it: therefore will our Lord have us purged of such conceits, saying, *Think not that I am come to send peace, &c.* [2.] Christ's errand is indeed to bring peace, heavenly peace between God and man, but not to bring earthly peace between the godly and wicked;

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therefore says he, *Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth*. [3.] Although it be true that the gospel of Christ is not the cause of persecution, contention and war, but the cause is in the wickedness of men and malice of Satan, who cannot endure the gospel, yet the setting up of Christ's throne in any place is so frequently the *occasion* of contention and trouble and wars that Christ is esteemed by men to be a raiser of trouble in the world, while as his part is only this: he chooses that contention, trouble, persecution and wars should come rather than his kingdom should not be erected and promoted<sup>s</sup> in and among men. Therefore is it that he says, *I came not to send peace but the sword*. [4.] Although the gospel be not the cause of war but by accident of man's wickedness, yet Christ will take it on him that in some sense he came to send the sword, because he has appointed troubles, persecution, wars, and all that may be



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comprehended under the sword, to come that he may make use thereof, as of a fan in his hand, for the trying and purging of his followers. And therefore, howsoever he be not accessory to the sin of persecutors, yet is he the author of the purging of his own Church, and the appointer of all the means tending thereunto; in which sense he says, *I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

35. *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

36. *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

This is explained in these verses, wherein the most bitter sort of contention for the gospel is foretold. DOCTRINE: [1.] The natural hatred which men have against the gospel will make them break all the bands of alliance and nature, and persecute their dearest friends for hatred of Christ's gospel, and this trouble we must resolve to endure, for it is told us that there shall be variance *between children and parents, father and son, mother and daughter.* [2.] As this variance is a part of the trial and exercise of his own people, Christ will avow himself to be the cause of it, saying, *I came to set a man at variance.* [3.] In the case of persecution

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for the gospel, at no unrenewed men's hands is friendship or favour or help to be expected, but rather the contrary may be looked for. The more obligation of friendship be between them and us we shall have the more opposition by them, for *A man's foes shall be they of his own household,* says Christ. [4.] The gospel does not work on all alike, but may take effect in one and pass by the rest. *A man's foes shall be they of his own household* doth import so much.

37. *He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

The thirteenth reason: Whosoever shall choose to please kindred, friends or alliance<sup>9</sup> rather than me, I will disclaim them. Therefore stand<sup>10</sup> not to avow the word of my gospel although nearest and dearest friends should storm at it. DOCTRINE: [1.] In the case of persecution for Christ's cause, he who, to please friends, stands<sup>11</sup> not to disavow Christ's cause,

and chooses to offend Christ rather than his friends, is unworthy of the name of a Christian, for *he is unworthy of me*, says Christ. [2.] Love to Christ hinders not love to friends, but only seasons it and keeps it in the own<sup>12</sup> place, for Christ only says, he that loveth them *more* than me.

38. *And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

The fourteenth reason: If any man refuse trouble for me I will disclaim him; therefore, fear not to profess me. DOCTRINE: [1.] Whosoever is not content to submit himself to whatever trouble can be imagined may befall him for following of Christ and his cause is unworthy of the name of a Christian, for so much does the text import. [2.] Such damage, pain and ignominy as Christ endured must every Christian resolve to endure for Christ's cause; therefore is trouble for Christ called by the name of the cross, while

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he says, *He that taketh not up his cross*. [3.] The weight of the cross cannot be borne except Christ be looked to, be followed and adhered to; therefore he commands every believer both to take up his cross and to follow him. [4.] If this condition please not a man, to have Christ and a cross both, Christ will reject him, for of such he says, *He is not worthy of me*, that is, he is not fit for me, I will not own him.

39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

The fifteenth reason: If any shall seek to save his life with disadvantage of my gospel, he shall lose his life, and if any shall not regard his life to do me service, he shall save his life. Therefore fear not to avow the truth of my gospel. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's truth should be dearer to us than our life, for so do Christ's words import. [2.] Whosoever finds out or follows a way to save his goods or his life with the disadvantage and loss of Christ's cause, he brings eternal perdition on himself, for Christ says here, *He that findeth his life shall lose it*. [3.] Whosoever shall hazard or in the hazard lose his life temporal for Christ, he shall know by experience that he has made a good bargain and preserved his life for ever, for it is said, *He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it*.

40. *He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.*

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*41. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.*

*42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

The sixteenth reason: Whatsoever respect or kindness is done to any of my disciples for my cause, I will take it as done to me and will reward it. Therefore, fear not to profess the truth of my gospel upon all hazards.

## DOCTRINE:

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[1.] Receiving the message of salvation *from* Christ's servants, or kindness shown *unto* Christ's servants, is reckoned by Christ as done to himself, and done to the Father, in whose name the preacher comes, for he says, *He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me* &c. [2.] The cause for which a man does any respect to Christ's servants is mainly looked to by God, whether it be done to a preacher because he is a preacher, to a righteous man because he is such, to a believer in Christ or disciple (how little or despicable soever he seem) because he is a disciple. Therefore says Christ, *In the name of a prophet*, in the *name* of a disciple; for what good is done to any of Christ's followers for other respects, as for friendship, hope of receiving gain by it, or such like, does not come in account. [3.] The smallness or meanness of the benefit, whereby any of Christ's followers are helped or refreshed, shall not diminish Christ's estimation of the man's good affection, for *even a cup of cold water shall not lose a reward*. [4.] This doctrine, how hardly soever it be believed, is worthy to be received, for Christ confirms it by a *verily*, and that, to purchase to this saying the more credit.

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## CHAPTER II

After closing up of the Apostles' commission, we have John Baptist's message to Christ, with Christ's answer and testimony of John (vv 1-19). Then Christ upbraideth those cities which did not receive or make use of the gospel (vv 20-24). And inviteth needy sinners to come unto him (vv 25-30).

1. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.*

In closing the commission of the Apostles, learn: [1.] That the Apostles had not unlimited commissions, but were restricted to commandments, for the former directions given to them are here called the *commanding of them*. [2.] Acts of base fear or witless impudency done in a perilous time to the dishonour of the gospel, or to the disadvantage of any point of the truth belonging to the gospel, are breaches of Christ's command: for here all Christ's exhortations to his servants wisely and stoutly to bear out the profession of his truth in all points are likewise called *commanding of them*. [3.] Christ so employs his servants in teaching and preaching, that he will also go about the work himself, for, having commanded his disciples to preach, *he departed to teach and to preach in their cities*.

2. *Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,*

3. *And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

John being in prison sets himself to confirm his disciples in the faith of Christ, and to this end he sends them to Christ with a question, wherein he knew Christ would give them solid satisfaction. DOCTRINE: [1.] The world will readily reward the labours of the most excellent saints of God

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with injuries, for *John Baptist here is in prison* for his pains. [2.] The news of the prospering of the gospel Christ can cause to be carried to the prisons where his servants lie, thereby to refresh them. Therefore John must hear of Christ's works *in the prison*. [3.] A faithful servant of Christ should study to make Christ's name known by whatsoever means he can

and to have all those who belong to him acquainted with Christ, for John even in prison takes course to have his disciples to know Christ better than they did. [4.] Beside what we can do in solving the doubts of others, we shall do well to send the weak in faith to make known their doubts to Christ himself. Therefore John commands his two disciples to make known their questions to Christ, saying *Art thou he?* &c, knowing that he was most able to satisfy them.

4. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see.*

5. *The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

From the answer learn: [1.] That Christ despises not the weakness of the faith of his own, for here he answers John's doubting disciples both with words and deeds, saying *Go and show what you hear and see.* [2.] Our Lord deals prudently with weak ones, for as John covers the disciples' doubting with a question put forward as it were in his own name, so Christ covers their doubting also by giving the answer as it were to John rather than to them, *Go and shew John again,* says he, although it is sure John had no doubt about Christ, for at Christ's baptism he was confirmed abundantly that Christ was the very Messiah. [3.] That which disciples may hear and see and observe in the real and experimental putting forth of Christ's power among men is sufficient to prove that he is the true Messiah. Therefore, says he, *Tell John again those things which ye do hear and see,* even as the ordinary and daily working of Christ still unto this day upon such as are converted from time to time may prove that he is the true Messiah. [4.] He in whom all those things which are prophesied to be done by the Messiah

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are accomplished is the only true Messiah. But Christ Jesus is he in whom all prophecies are accomplished, for *he maketh the blind to see, the lame to walk* and the poor to take the gospel. Therefore Christ is the only true Messiah, for this is the proof whereby Christ confirms John's disciples that there was no other Messiah to be looked for [5.] The remedy of all sin and misery is to be found in Christ both for body and soul, for it is he by whom *the blind receive their sight* and *the poor receive the gospel,* &c

[6.] The poor and needy soul sensible of its own sin and misery is the proper object of the gospel. The righteous and the rich in their own opinion do not smell any worth in Christ's word, for it is the poor *who receive the gospel*. [7.] The gospel affects the poor and needy soul so as it puts, as it were, a stamp of the good news of God's grace upon it, for so imports the passive word in the original, which says that the poor are *evangelized* or stamped with the preaching of the gospel.

6. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

Our Lord obviates any temptation which might arise from his outward humiliation. DOCTRINE: [1.] Many stumbling blocks are to be met within a man's way towards Jesus Christ, such as were his taking on of the shape of a servant and his outward humbling of himself to the cross. This is imported *in his mentioning of men being offended or stumbling at him*. [2.] Such as do not stumble at Christ, nor start back from believing and professing of him, for whatsoever cross or impediment laid in their way, shall surely be saved, for *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*, says he.

7. *And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*

Now follows Christ's testimony of John Baptist wherein John is commended in eight respects. The first is his constancy. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ gives his servants a good meeting, he bears witness of their faithfulness as

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well as they bear witness that he is the true Messiah; as here for instance, when John's disciples are departed, *Christ speaks to John's praise before the multitude*. [2.] The reasons which move us to go and hear the sermons of any preacher should be well examined, for we must answer to Christ's question, *What went ye out to see?* [3.] It is the commendation of a preacher of the truth that he be constant in the truth and not wavering hither and thither, for this is the ground of John's commendation, *that he was not a reed shaken with the wind*, as the interrogation having the force of a negation imports.

8. *But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.*

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The second point of the commendation of John is for his holiness and high measure of mortification. Hence learn: [1.] That it is the commendation of a preacher to be mortified to the glory, ease, pleasure and riches of this world, for on this ground Christ commends John by way of interrogation, denying him to be *a man given to soft raiment*. [2.] A true preacher must be so mortified to this world that all the allurements of court be not able to corrupt him, for such as love to wear soft raiment will affect to be in respect at court for that very end; therefore he says, *They that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses*.

*9. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.*

The third point of John's commendation is the clear revealing of Christ and of the shortest course to come to Him, wherein John was above any prophet. Hence learn: [1.] That the right reason of going to hear sermons is because the man that speaks has warrant to speak and to reveal God's will: this is it which he says, *Went ye out to see a prophet?* [2.] John is called more than a prophet specially because he pointed out Christ more clearly and fully than any before him, as Christ shows hereafter; teaching us that those are the greatest men in the ministry who do most point

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out Christ to the world, and do most sincerely lead men unto him.

*10. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

The fourth point of John's commendation is from his special employment to be Christ's harbinger, to make way for Christ; for although every minister of the gospel be Christ's messengers to carry ambassage to the world, yet John Baptist was such in a special manner, for of him it was prophesied by Malachi, *Behold, I send my messenger*. [2.] Although it be the office of every minister, by the preaching of Christ's doctrine to make way for Christ's entry into the soul, to dwell in it by his Spirit, yet John Baptist was harbinger in an odd<sup>l</sup> way, assisted by the doctrine of repentance, in humbling proud sinners and fitting them for mercy in Christ. [3.] He was in a special manner employed for pointing out of Christ to be the Lamb of God, not only in doctrine but also with the finger of ocular demonstration.

11. *Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

The fifth point of John's commendation is in comparing him with and preferring him above all the prophets which came before him, because: [1.] Singular predictions were made of him more than ever of any of the prophets. [2.] His bringing into the world had more extraordinary passages of providence than any of the prophets. [3.] His authority and office to bring in a new sacrament was singular. [4.] Beside the baptizing of our Lord and converting of such multitudes, his ministry was countenanced with the clearest vision and revelation of the ministry of the Trinity, that ever was. [5.] The sanctification of his person

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from the womb to his martyrdom was singular. [6.] The clearness of his knowledge of the way of righteousness by Christ and of the application of types of the Messiah to Christ, as that true Lamb of God, was singular. These and suchlike other excellencies are reasons why our Lord said, *There hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist among them that are born of women.* Meantime, lest John should be too much esteemed of, Christ having thus preferred him to all that were born of women, excepts *himself* and justly prefers *himself* to John, saying, *he that is least, or no man in the kingdom of God is greater than he.* So Christ describes himself as he was esteemed of by the rulers of the Church, for who could be less in the kingdom of God, in their estimation, than he whom they did excommunicate? Now the rulers excommunicated Christ and for his cause also cast out of the synagogue all that confessed him. He was the stone which the builders refused; whom the chief priests and elders did not esteem worthy to be a member of the Church or to have any place in the building of God's temple. So Christ was, in their estimation, *the least*, that is, no man, *in the kingdom of heaven*, as this phrase is taken (Matthew 5:19,20). And who except Christ can be greater than John who is called greater than any of all the prophets, yea, of all which were born of women? It is true that Christians who lived since Christ ascended have the history of many particulars concerning Christ which John did not live to see. But who shall persuade us that the least member of the Christian Church, or the least preacher of the gospel, sees more of Christ in the word of history than any of the prophets, or than John, who is greater than any of the prophets, saw in the Spirit and word of prophecy?



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And put the case that in regard of historical knowledge, they did know many particulars which John did not know, yet this sort or measure of knowledge does not make them simply *greater* than John. Now the comparison here with John with the least in the kingdom of heaven, is not simply in respect of knowledge, but in respect of *greatness*, which *greatness* comprehends all the above-named six points of excellency and also whatsoever other respect may contribute to excellency. And thus if we take *greatness*, none can be called *greater* than John, except Christ who in the estimation of the rulers of the Jewish church at that time, was

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*the least*, that is, *no man, in the kingdom of God*, and the stone of offence which the builders rejected. Hence learn: [1.] That whenever any greatness or excellency of man is spoken of, the excellency of our Lord Jesus must not be obscured but rather lifted up thereby: for where he is, a greater than Solomon is, a greater than John Baptist is. [2.] Whosoever shall dishonour Christ, he will not deny himself. He will take unto him his own glory for he declares himself here greater than John, though the rulers of the Church and others esteemed him to be the least, or no man, in the kingdom of heaven.

*12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

The sixth point of Christ's commendation of John is the fruitfulness of his doctrine, that by the clearness of John's preaching the gates of heaven and the way of the Church were made so patent that men did not stand upon the bar and partition of ceremonies, or upon any orderly way of the proselytes coming into the Church; but multitudes did leap over all the Levitical ceremonies, so that publicans, sinners, heathen, legally unclean, and the naturally loathed lepers, did thrust themselves all in upon the company of converts and upon the grace manifested by John's doctrine: and indeed obtained grace to enter into the kingdom of Christ by this their ingyring<sup>s</sup> themselves upon him. Hence learn: [1.] That the legal ceremonies were never appointed to hinder people from Christ, but to lead them to him, and that therefore when the observation of these ceremonies might be a hindrance of people coming to Christ, (as for example so many days behoved to pass ere a leper were legally purified, that he might come into the company where the Word of God was preached) in such a case, God was not displeased that men overpassed

and violently ran over these impediments to come to God's grace manifested in Christ, for says he, *The violent take it by force*. [2.] Yea, the doctrine of grace being clearly revealed, no impediment of bygone sins or sense of unworthiness present

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should hinder a humbled soul from entry into the kingdom of grace, for this kingdom *is taken by force*. If we cannot remove impediments, let us set our foot on them and make stepping-stones of them, thrusting ourselves so much more on Christ's grace as we find ourselves unworthy: laying hold so much more on his offered salvation as we find ourselves otherwise to be lost.

13. *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*

The seventh point of commendation is that John pointed at Christ now already come, at grace already laid open; whereas the law and the prophets only did prophesy and foretell that it was to come. And this is a reason of the fruitfulness of John's ministry. Hence learn: [1.] That the pointing forth of the fulfilling of the promises and prophecies in Christ is a means to bring men in multitudes to the kingdom of heaven, and this is imported in the word 'for', wherein a reason is rendered of what is said in the former verse, for, says he, all the prophets and the law *prophesied* until John, but John showed the *accomplishment*, and therefore multitudes did thrust themselves into the kingdom of heaven. [2.] The Church of the Old Testament had a dark time in comparison with what we have now, for their light was prophecies of things to come, but ours is preaching of what is already come, for *The law and prophets prophesied until John*.

14. *And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come.*

The eighth and last point of John's commendation is that John was that Elias prophesied of to come before Christ (Malachi 4:5-6). John is called by the name of Elias because of like zeal for God and successful employment in the reformation of religion, for as Elias in his days, so John in his days did in the power of the same Spirit stir up men to seek the true God in Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] When truth is told to people never so clearly, yet will they hardly believe it, no, not though Christ himself should speak it. Therefore, says Christ, *If ye will receive it*. [2.] Whether men

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believe or not, truth must be told them to make them inexcusable: *This is Elias*, says Christ, *if ye will receive it.*

15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

If Christ's testimony of John had been believed, then John's testimony of Christ had been believed also, for John testified that Christ was the promised Messiah: therefore Christ did so much the longer insist in this commendation of John, and having said sufficiently, he closes with this speech, *He that hath ears &c*, thereby teaching: [1.] That every man has not a hearing ear, but some are deaf misbelievers of God's Word, imported in these words, *He that hath ears*. [2.] Even those who are elect, of them it is said, *Let them hear*. [3.] If the elect shall hear unto believing, it suffices God's intention, although the rest remain ignorant misbelievers, for *He that hath ears, let him hear* is as much as, Let the rest go their way, come of them what may.

16. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,*

17. *And saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented.*

Our Lord perceiving the unbelief of the multitude regrets their obstinacy, who neither by John's austere ministry nor by his own sweet dealing could be moved to repent or believe, and this he does by comparing their disposition toward the gospel with the disposition of the rude people toward music; for as they cared for no melody and could not be moved either with piping or lighter springs, nor with mourning and sadder songs, as the minstrel boys used to sing, so the Jews could neither be moved to sorrow unto repentance by John's austere preaching of repentance and judgment, nor to rejoice at Christ's sweet offers of grace and salvation made to them in a more gentle and loving way. Hence learn: [1.] That the obstinacy and rebellion of the hard hearts of Christ's hearers affected and moved his tender heart with grief, for *Whereunto shall I liken them* imports so much. [2.] The more are found in

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the guiltiness of despising the gospel, the more our Lord resents the wrong and regrets sinners' misery. Therefore he says, *this generation*. [3.]

Hardly can any comparison express the sin of despising of the gospel, for *Whereunto shall I liken them?* imports this. [4.] The most obvious by-word shall be made use of to condemn the wickedness and folly of them who despise the gospel in the conceit of their own wisdom; for it is like little children, says he, who when they find no respect had of their music do put up their pipes with this regret.

*18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.*

*19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.*

It is said here that John *neither did eat nor drink*, that is, not after the ordinary diet of other men, as appears if we compare this with Matthew 3:4. Whence we learn: [1.] That God's Word is not to be pressed captiously but the true intent of it is to be looked to, one place being compared with another. [2.] God uses to send out his ministers with diverse dispositions: some are more austere in life and more thundering in their doctrine; others more social in their carriage and more gentle in inducing people to repentance: *Of the former sort was John Baptist, . of the latter, Christ.* [3.] People have ever some fault to allege in the preacher, why they will not receive his message, for here the people say, The devil is in John because he chose to live more austerely than other men, and when they see Christ converse sociably with sinners, *to eat and to drink with them*, and to take the fare as he found it, they say of him that he was a *glutton, a drunkard*, and a companion to wicked and vile men. [4.] All hearers are not alike ill-disposed; though many do misbelieve, yet some are begotten to God by wisdom or by the doctrine of God's grace, for *Wisdom hath her own children.* [5.] Such as are made wise to salvation will bear witness by their faith, by their profession and godly life, to the doctrine of God, and will glorify the wisdom of God preached to them, for *Wisdom is justified*

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*of her own children.* [6.] How many soever they be who despise the gospel, it does not work a reasonable prejudice to wisdom. God will content him with the testimony of elect and true believers, for to God it is sufficient, that *Wisdom be justified of her own children.*

*20. Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.*

Seeing the main scope of the following speech is expressly set down to the upbraiding of these cities and the agreeing<sup>3</sup> of their sin, it is without ground to argue from hence the ability of man to repent and believe without the special operation of God's grace; and it is an idle and profane deed to move<sup>4</sup> questions why God did not grant such means to Tyre and Sidon, upon such and such suppositions: for it is sufficient to Christ's purpose that Chorazin and Bethsaida had so abused the means of grace as they had hardened themselves in the sinfulness of nature above Tyre and Sidon: so that more might have been expected in the matter of repentance from Tyre and Sidon, and from Sodom and Gomorrhah, even according to the principles of nature, than was found in these cities; for if so much pain had been taken on them as was taken on Capernaum, &c, in much appearance of reason, it might have been expected that they should have repented in some sort and have given such signs of repentance at least, as with Ahab and Nineveh, they might have escaped temporal judgments. This being the scope we should not stretch the words beyond and contrary to it. Hence learn: [1.] That the miracles of Christ were done by his own power, for here they are called *his* mighty works in a proper sense, and so they do prove him to be true God. [2.] The use which should be made of the miracles of Christ and mighty works done by him is repentance, for that which is found fault with here is, they repented not. [3.] Whosoever will not repent, when God calls for repentance, and will not give glory to God when he calls for it, he will pour shame

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on them, for here he upbraids these cities which did not honour him.

*21. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

*22. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.*

Here is the doom given forth against these cities. DOCTRINE: [1.] Over and above the wrath due to sinners for transgression of the law, a higher degree attends the abusing the means of grace, and so much the greater as the means have been the more largely granted: for, *Woe unto thee, Chorazin*. [2.] God is free to send the offer of the gospel where he pleases. He had his own reason why he did not send the gospel to Tyre and Sidon, and yet would offer it to Chorazin and Bethsaida. [3.] Such as do hear the gospel daily may readily be found more hard hearted than they who never heard it; Chorazin more impenitently disposed than Tyre. [4.] There shall be proportion of judgment at the last day as there has been of sin in this life, and the torment of such as perish without the means of the gospel shall be less than of such who under the means are found impenitent, for, *It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida*.

*23. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

*24. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.*

The like judgment is threatened against Capernaum. DOCTRINE: [1.] The honour of a town is the gospel, and where it is most clearly preached that place is exalted most and made nearest heaven. Therefore is *Capernaum* said to

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be *exalted to heaven*. [2.] Abused means of grace, if they prevail not to true conversion, do bring a man deeper in the state of condemnation. Therefore, says Christ, *Thou, Capernaum shalt be brought down to hell*. [3.] Abuse and contempt of the gospel, impenitent unbelief and misregarding the offers of God's grace, do weigh heavier in God's balance than the grossest sins against the law, and are attended with heavier wrath, for this the comparison of Capernaum's sin and judgment with Sodom's sin and judgment makes evident.

25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, o Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

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26. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Sometimes one is said to *answer*, when he opens his mouth and speaks to those who were expecting some speech from him, although none have spoken before, as here in this speech, Christ glorifies his Father, for the wise and free dispensation of saving grace, manifested in the good success which his disciples had (as recorded in Luke 10:17,21) whom he had sent forth to preach and work miracles (vv 25,26). He declares his own power to give light and life to as many as came to him (v 27). And last of all he exhorts the needy to come unto him, with sundry motives to induce them, (vv 28,29,30). Learn: [1.] That the mystery of salvation is at God's disposing, to hold it from, or show it to whom he pleases; for says he, *Thou hast hid it from the wise; thou hast revealed it unto babes.* [2.] The worldly wise and prudent men in this world are not those for the most part to whom the gospel is revealed, for thou hast hid it, says he, *from the wise and prudent.* [3.] The people of weaker understanding, and babes in comparison of others, are found to be the Lord's choice in election, and the persons who get the saving light of the gospel for the greatest part, for he says, *Thou revealest these things to babes.* [4.] Christ will not lack followers, despise him who will, for whose conversion, however base they seem, God is to be praised. Therefore Christ, for those little ones, says, *I thank thee, o Father,* and rejoices in them, however contemptible they

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seem to be, no less than if they had all the excellencies of the world in them. [5.] God's supremacy over heaven and earth makes him free to choose or refuse whom he pleases. I thank thee, says he, *Lord of heaven and earth.* [6.] The cause of election of some and reprobation of others, of this or that man, rather than of others, is to be found only in God's good pleasure. Therefore, says Christ, *O Father, for so it seemed good in thy eyes.* [7.] Christ heartily consents to and approves the Father's decree of election and reprobation as it stands. Therefore says he, *Even so, Father,* and *I thank thee,* for God and Christ are glorified in both.

*27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Here Christ proclaims his riches and authority, that he may make way for the offer following. DOCTRINE: [1.] Beside the right and power which

Christ as God has unto and over all things, he has received of the Father as Godman, or God incarnate, right unto and over all things, in and for the Church, nothing being excepted, except him who has delivered all things unto him; for *All things are delivered to me of my Father*, and Christ has taken the gift of all things for our behove,<sup>5</sup> as power to gather his Church, appoint ministers, bestow the Spirit as he will, open and close heaven and hell as he pleases, and dispose of all his enemies and of all the creatures as they may best serve for the well<sup>6</sup> of his people. [2.] The excellency of the Son of God is a mystery, which neither, man nor angel can know comprehensively, as he is indeed, but the Father only; for, *No man knoweth the Son, but the Father*; and so, except a man be taught of the Father and learn of the Father, he can never attain the right knowledge of the Son. [3.] The distinction of the Father from the Son, and the glory of the Father's Person, is a mystery which neither man nor angel can know perfectly; *No man knoweth the Father, but*

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*the Son.* [4.] Any measure of right knowledge of the Father which we can attain to must come by revelation from the Son, who is the engraven character of his person, who by his word and Spirit makes the Father known unto so many as he pleases. Therefore says he, *No man knoweth the Father, but he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

*28. Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

From the former doctrine, Christ draws forth two exhortations: the first, unto faith in himself; the next, unto new obedience. DOCTRINE: [1.] The right use of the doctrine of election and reprobation (v 25), and of the riches which are in Christ, and of the mystery of the Father and of the Son, is this, to draw near to Christ, and to seek communion with him: for having spoken of those, he calls upon us, saying, *Come unto me.* [2.] All things being delivered unto Christ, he cannot be quiet, till he have needy souls made partakers of the riches which are in him. Therefore he calls unto us, saying, *Come unto me.* [3.] Such as have wearied themselves in seeking in themselves, or in any of the creatures, something to quiet their souls and cannot find rest, have warrant to come to him, for he says, *Come unto me, ye that labour.* [4.] Although a soul find nothing whereby to commend itself to Christ, but a fruitless life and a loathsome burden of sin, nothing but that which yields restless unquietness, yet without exception of any person all such may come to Christ for relief;



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none of those who acknowledge their inability to help themselves are excluded. There is no bar to put back a soul from Christ which desires to come to him, which desires to believe in him and to have communion with him, for he says, *Come unto me, all ye.* [5.] Although there be no bar put to hinder any man from coming to Christ, yet none will come until they be sensible of a burden whereof they cannot be freed by any other means. Therefore he speaks expressly to such, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,* not excluding lukewarm Laodiceans, or any other, who desire to be made sensible of sin, who desire to repent, who desire to believe in God and to fear God. [6.] Seeing all things are delivered unto Christ, and

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all that have need are commanded to come to him, it is a miserable and damnable folly to seek anything belonging to righteousness and eternal life except in Christ Jesus only, for he tells us, *All things are delivered unto me,* and says, *Come unto me.* [7.] God can sanctify the love of our selves so far as to make it a motive and allurement to draw us to him: for such as are unquiet about the condition of their soul or are burdened with any trouble which they are not able to bear, have a promise of relief, if they shall come to him who can show them the true cause of their trouble and the right outgate<sup>7</sup> also, for, *I will give you rest,* says he. Now rest is opposed to labour and burdens and so imports full relief from all the sin and misery which can trouble any man.

*29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek  
and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

The next exhortation teaches us, [1.] To stay with Christ under his discipline, after we are come unto him, and so to join the study of obedience with faith: the duties of faith and obedience must not be severed, for he enjoins, *Come to me and take on my yoke.* [2.] Although Christ's commands be our true liberty, yet in respect of the untowardness of our nature, the tie of doing all holy duties belonging to sanctification, of bearing the Lord's chastisements, and suffering persecution, is a yoke wherein we have need to be bound. Therefore says he, *Take on my yoke.* [3.] It is necessary that we willingly submit ourselves to this yoke and burden, however contrary it seem to our nature, for *Take ye up my yoke* does the word in the original bear; or *Lift it, as it were, upon your shoulders.* [4.] When we have consented to submit to Christ's yoke, we have need as disciples daily to learn how to bear it. Therefore he commands, saying,

*Learn of me.* [5.] As unto the right bearing of the yoke of Christ the virtues of humility and meekness are necessary, so are they to be learned and had only from Christ, blessing to us not only his doctrine but also his example; for it is said, *Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly.*

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Now no command given to him of the Father was grievous, no suffering made him grudge, no pains made him shrink from his duty or to faint: his plaints of his enemies, and his answers to them, were full of meekness: he stood<sup>8</sup> not to abase himself for the Father's glory and men's good: and it is he who must give us grace to do so also. [6.] True rest to the conscience is to be found in Christ's satisfaction given to justice for us; true peace in his service, for he says, *Come to me, and ye shall find rest.* [7.] It is sufficient in this life that we find rest to our souls, although our bodies be troubled. Therefore it is said, *Ye shall find rest to your souls.* No more is promised.

30. *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Another motive to take on his yoke is, *My yoke is easy.* Hence learn: [1.] That although Christ's discipline and manner of exercising of his followers be a yoke and burden to our corrupt nature, yet it is an easy yoke, and a light burden to a soul seeking liberation from sin and seeking salvation through Christ. Therefore says he, *My yoke is easy* &c. Now it is called an *easy yoke* in comparison of the covenant of works wherein men lack the help of a Mediator, and are bound to do all in their own natural strength; but we have Christ to help us, who works all our works in us and for us. [2.] It is an *easy yoke* in comparison of sin which makes a man draw and bear his own ditty<sup>9</sup> to condemnation. [3.] Christ's yoke is easy because although the ten commands, renewed and repeated in the gospel, do require no less perfection to be aimed at in sincerity of obedience than under the covenant of works, yet the cords to bind on the yoke are not terror but love. That little which is done in faith and upright obedience is well accepted: and much joy and peace, much courage and comfort, is bestowed on such as uprightly aim and endeavour to obey the commands of God in Christ. Thus says he, *My yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

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## CHAPTER 12

There are three controversies between Christ and the Pharisees: the first is about his disciples plucking of ears of corn (vv 1–8). The next about the healing of the withered hand of a lame man, &c (vv 9–21). The third about the casting out of devils (vv 22–45). After which we have his estimation of his carnal<sup>1</sup> and spiritual kindred (vv 46–50).

1. *At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat.*

In the first controversy learn: [1.] that our Lord took much pains in going from place to place about what the Father had given him to do, for even on *The Sabbath* he went from place to place, *through the corn field*. [2.] The work of the ministry and attending on the Lord sometimes may be so urgent that his servants will forget to provide their meat, for here, *his disciples were an hungred*. [3.] God may put his chosen children to straits in this world and suffer them now and then to taste of want, for his disciples must for hunger, at a time, *pluck the ears of corn* and eat them for bread.

2. *But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.*

The Pharisees find a fault where there was none and quarrel with Christ for his disciples. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is no new thing to see men who are otherwise learned and are in account for their holiness in the church, to be adversaries to Christ and his disciples, for the Pharisees here do quarrel

with Christ for his disciples' cause. [2.] Christ's disciples readily shall be mistaken and misconstrued, do what they please; for their plucking of ears of rough corn to satisfy their hunger does not escape censure. [3.] Hypocrites urge ceremonies, and external observations, more than the greater things of the law: for here the Pharisees quarrel with the disciples for plucking of the corn and purging of it from the aunds<sup>2</sup> and eating of it on the Sabbath in the case of necessity, as a breach of the Sabbath: misregarding charity to the hungry and fainting disciples, saying, *Why do they that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day.*

3. *But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him:*

4. *How he entered into the house of God and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?*

Our Lord defends his disciples by four reasons. The first is this: it was no sin for David and his men, in a case of necessity, to eat the shew-bread, which by the letter of the law was appointed for no man's use ordinarily, save the priests: therefore without sin likewise may my disciples pluck the ears of corn and eat thereof on the Sabbath: for notwithstanding the letter of the law forbids all manner of work upon the Sabbath, yet the intent of the law and meaning thereof was neither to forbid the shew-bread to be made use of in such an extraordinary case of necessity, nor to forbid meat to be made ready on the Sabbath to suffice a man's hunger. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the mind of the law-giver and the intent and the end of the command is not contravened, the precept is not broken: for this is the ground of Christ's defence. [2.] Not reading nor considering the Scripture, whereby the meaning of the law may be understood, is the cause of error and mistaking of duties. This is it he says, *Have ye not read?*

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5. *Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?*

6. *But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the temple.*

The second reason is: the priests for promoting<sup>3</sup> of the service of the temple, do bodily work on the Sabbath, which in your language is to *profane the Sabbath*, and yet are blameless. Therefore although my disciples for promoting my service (who am greater than the temple) do pluck ears of corn and eat thereof on the Sabbath, and so seem to you to profane the Sabbath, yet they are also blameless. Hence learn: [1.] Whatsoever bodily work is necessary for the promoting of the service and worship of God upon the Sabbath is not a breaking of the Sabbath: for the priests *did bodily work* in the temple *on the Sabbath day and are blameless*. [2.] As

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the body is above the figure, or shadow, so is Christ greater than the temple, which is a figure of him. Therefore says he, *In this place is One greater than the temple.*

7. *But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*

The third reason is this: the Lord never appointed the outward ceremonies of his service in the first table to hinder works of mercy prescribed in the second table: but by the contrary, when at one time both cannot be done, he will have the work of mercy done, and the ceremony of a sacrifice left undone for that time. Therefore it is agreeable to God's will that my disciples should rather pluck corn and eat it on the Sabbath by way of mercy to their own body than harm their health under pretext of keeping the Sabbath: which, if you had understood and considered, you would not have condemned my disciples without cause. Hence learn: [1.] The true meaning of God's Word being known, it is able to prevent rash judgment. Therefore it is said, *If ye had known.* [2.] Condemning of

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the guiltless draws the judge, being rash, under guilt. Therefore says he, *Ye would not have condemned the guiltless.* [3.] It is not every man, no, not every learned man, who is acquainted with the true meaning of the Scriptures: for in saying, *If ye had known*, he taxes both the *Pharisees* and *scribes* with ignorance.

8. *For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.*

The fourth reason: I whom you see to be a man am also God and Lord of the Sabbath, having authority to prescribe or allow for my service on that day what I please: to judge and to punish, or pardon the breach, as I please. Therefore, if I judge this work of my disciples to be no fault, neither should you. Hence learn: [1.] That the incarnation of the *Word*, or Second Person of the God-head, made the Son of God to be the Son of man: but it did not diminish his divine authority, as he is the Son of God: for he says, that *the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.* [2.] Christ can maintain the authority of the fourth command and appoint anyone of the seven days as he pleases for the observation of the command: for he is *Lord even of the Sabbath.*

9. *And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.*

10. *And behold, there was a man which had his hand withered: and they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him.*

11. *And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out?*

12. *How much then is a man better than a sheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.*

Here is another dispute about the Sabbath in the synagogue, whether it was a breach of the Sabbath to heal a man of a withered hand miraculously. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ went on to follow his calling, notwithstanding

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enemies and opposition, for after his disputation in the fields with the Pharisees he goes into the synagogue where he might do good to the people. [2.] When Christ's enemies have no just quarrel against Christ or his followers, they invent one: as when they could find no sin at all in him, they sought to accuse him for miraculous healing of men on the Sabbath, for want of better ground of accusation, for *they asked, that they might accuse him.* [3.] Malice makes men blind, reasonless and absurd, for *they ask if it be lawful to heal a man miraculously on the Sabbath day*, wherein there can be no apparent ground of doubting. [4.] The more impudent Christ's enemies be against him, the more shame and confusion the Lord will bring on them, for our Lord refutes his adversaries by their own confession that it was lawful to do more on the Sabbath to a beast than they did question him for doing to a man (vv 11,12).

13. *Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand: and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

The Lord goes on to heal the impotent man. DOCTRINE: [1.] Whatever impediment be put in Christ's way to hinder him to do good he will go on to do what he intends, for *he saith to the man, Stretch out thy hand.* [2.] There is no need to presuppose power to obey in those to whom God gives commands; for he can call things that are not, and make them to be. He says here to the man whose hand was withered, who was unable to stretch forth his hand, *Stretch forth thy hand.* [3.] Although we know

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we have no power to obey what is commanded, yet at God's command it is good to essay and set to as if we had power; for the man, at command, *stretched forth his hand*. [4.] While men are in the way of obedience of a command, however difficult it be, God can bless the beginning of obedience with ability to perform what is commanded, for *his hand was restored whole as the other*. He pleased<sup>4</sup> to stretch forth a withered arm and it became whole in the stretching forth.

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14. *Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.*

Now the Pharisees being confounded in dispute by Scripture and experience, they resolve to kill Christ. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ's enemies, when arguments fail them, fall to violence, for *The Pharisees seek now, how to destroy Christ*. [2.] Christ's adversaries take help one of another and combine against him with joint wit and power, as here, *They took counsel to destroy him*.

15. *But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all.*

Christ withdraws himself from these murderers. Hence learn: [1.] It is lawful for Christ's ministers to go out of the way of furious persecutors for a time, when the adversaries plot to kill them, for even Christ, who was able to resist, *withdrew himself from that place where they consulted to destroy him*. When a minister perceives that his life may do unto God and his Church more service than to be killed at such a time and in such a way, it is no wisdom for him to be stouter than his Master. [2.] It is better that such as love the gospel should follow the persecuted preachers thereof than that they should lack the benefit of the gospel; as here multitudes follow persecuted Christ. [3.] None follow Christ in earnest and for the right end but they shall obtain their desire, for *he healed them all that followed him for obtaining health*.

16. *And charged them that they should not make him known.*

Although it was not Christ's mind that his miracles should be buried, yet (having his own means and men and time, how and by whom, and when he will be made known) he loves not that himself or his great works should be the subject of common news rashly and idly to be

divulged, and talked of by every man. Therefore, *he chargeth them that they should not make him known.*

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17. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,*

18. *Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*

The Evangelist observes a design of God, by this means to fulfil, or rather make manifest the fulfilling of a prophecy of Isaiah (chapter 42:1) wherein it is foretold, that Christ should work great and glorious works discreetly and with little din. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ's coming into the world was not with worldly pomps and much noise, as worldly princes carry themselves with much show, for so was it foretold of him by the prophet. [2.] As for the words of the prophet, they are worthy that notice should be taken of them and that men should attend to them. Therefore is *Behold* prefixed. [3.] Christ is the Father's servant in regard of his human nature and in regard of his office of a Redeemer, and Mediator, being employed in the noblest service that ever was, that is, to bring those who are the elect, for God says, *Behold my servant.* [4.] He is a person singled out for the purpose: in heaven or earth there is none like to him, for this is *he whom I have chosen*, says the Father. [5.] The Father loves Christ as himself, for his own worth, as the Son of his love; as the engraven form of his own Person; and in this sense, he calls him, *my beloved.* [6.] In Christ God is well contented and satisfied every way and namely as he is surety and under-taker for us; the Father craves no more, no other thing for our full ransom, than what Christ has laid down, and no more in us than he has promised to work in us, for of him says he, *In him I am well pleased.* [7.] He is so thoroughly well pleased in him for us and in our name that he wished no more: *My soul is well pleased.* [8.] Christ as man is furnished fully unto all the employment of a Mediator for ever; and the Spirit of God is bestowed on him as he is man, without measure; for, *I will put my Spirit upon him*, says he. [9.] Not only the elect of the Jews, but also the Gentiles were designed to be Christ's flock, that he should labour among us and teach us how to behave ourselves



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towards God and man, how God will save us and how he will be served of us, how he governs the world now and what he has decreed to do hereafter; for it is said, *He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles*. Now *judgment* is whatsoever God would have us believe or do.

*19. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*

From these words learn: [1.] That the manner of Christ's first coming was not to subdue by strong hand, as an earthly conqueror, as many supposed he should have done, for it was prophesied of him, *He shall not strive*, that is, by external force he shall not set up his throne. [2.] Though in zeal and affection to his Father's glory and men's salvation he uttered his voice and cried, yet not the voice of contention, the voice of ostentatious ambition, and imperious proclamations, for in this respect he uttered it not. *He shall not cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*

*20. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*

Another point of Christ's commendation, teaching us: [1.] That there may be much weakness and tenderness in the beginning of God's work of grace in a converted soul, comparable to *a smoking flax or bruised reed*. [2.] Christ will not despise these weak beginnings, nor reject such weaklings, for *he will not quench the smoking flax &c*, but will tenderly encourage the spunk<sup>s</sup> of begun light and affection, and will bind up and strengthen *a bruised reed*. [3.] Whether the weak work of his grace be in a particular person or in a society, he will fight for the maintenance of it till he have the victory, for *judgment shall at last be brought forth unto victory*; that is to say, truth shall have sentence pronounced by him in favour thereof at last, and shall have the victory against all opposition, for *he shall bring forth judgment unto victory*.

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*21. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.*

The last point of the commendation of Christ is that he shall not only perfect his commission among the Jews, but also shall prevail among the Gentiles. DOCTRINE: [1.] The power of the gospel is able to persuade

the greatest strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel to come to him, for it is said, *In his name shall the Gentiles trust.* [2.] It is as sufficient for faith to have Christ's name preached as to see his Person, for *The Gentiles shall trust in his name*, that is, in him as he is set forth to the audience of all, in the preaching of his truth.

22. *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.*

There follows a notable miracle in dispossessing Satan of a blind and dumb captive, with the divers censures of Christ's works by the people and Pharisees, whose wickedness Christ rebukes. Wherein observe: [1.] That the fearful condition of men spiritually possessed by Satan (as are all unrenewed in whom the spirit of disobedience reigns) may be seen in bodily possessions; and among the rest in this man on whom Satan shuts all doors, that he can neither let in comfort nor let forth the sense of his misery, for *he makes him blind and dumb*, which dumbness is ordinarily accompanied with *deafness* also. [2.] Such as Christ will deliver from Satan, although they cannot come of themselves to him, yet he can furnish means to bring them to him, for *this blind and dumb man was brought unto Christ.* [3.] Christ is the powerful physician of evils inflicted by the devil, as here he gives evidence in *healing this man perfectly*, for he came to loose the bands of Satan.

23. *And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?*

The people are moved at the sight of this work and see a glimpse of his Godhead, and of divine glory in him. DOCTRINE: The miracles of our Lord were so demonstrative of his divine power that the beholders were overcome and

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forced to acknowledge his works to be worthy of the promised Messiah: *Is not this (say they) the son of David?*

24. *But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*

The Pharisees, perceiving the people to be affected with the miracle, grow mad and blasphemous. DOCTRINE: [1.] Satan, the more he is like to

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lose his prey, the more does he rage, for the Pharisees do blaspheme Christ so much the more that they perceive the people to acknowledge him to be the true Messiah. [2.] What Satan loses one way he labours to recover and make up another way, in opposing Christ and misconstruing his work so much the more violently and wickedly as he sees himself like to be overcome, as is here to be seen in the Pharisees. [3.] Such as fall in opposing Christ readily grow worse and worse, till they come to a height, as may be perceived in these proud men. [4.] How impudent and malicious is the devil and how desperate are his slaves who dare call Christ by the name of *Beelzebub*!

25. *And Jesus knew their thoughts and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.*

26. *And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?*

Christ clears himself and convinces his adversaries by five reasons. The first reason: Seeing every kingdom, city and family set against itself is ruined, so also is the kingdom of Satan; if he should assist me to cast himself out, it is no more reasonable to say that I cast out devils by Satan's help and assistance than to imagine and say that Satan will consent that his kingdom should fall; therefore I cannot with any colour of reason be thus blasphemed. From the description of the sin of these Pharisees learn: [1.] That in pondering men's sins the Lord looks much to the inward disposition, mind and affection of sinners, whether they sin of infirmity or of presumption, of ignorance or

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against their light. Therefore it is said, *Jesus knew their thoughts*. [2.] The way to preserve all societies is *union* and the way to ruin them is *dissension*, for *Every kingdom, city, house, divided shall not stand*. [3.] Satan has a kingdom among men which by all means he goes about to maintain, and will be loath, really and in effect, wholly to dispossess himself, both of the soul and body of any in whom he hath power and place, for, *If Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?*

27. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.*

The second reason for clearing of Christ and convincing his adversaries, is this. You grant that your children and carnal friends, when they cast out devils by the gift of miracles, do it by the power of God. Therefore that shall condemn you of malicious partiality for your saying that I cast out devils, not by the power of God, but by Beelzebub. Hence learn: [1.] That malice moves men to misconstrue the best actions of the most innocent, for the Pharisees out of malice ascribe Christ's works to the devil, which they knew were of God. [2.] The process of justice against the wicked must be short, when their conscience and common reason in their dearest carnal friends is sufficient to bear witness against their wickedness, and to condemn them for it: upon this ground Christ says, *By whom do your children cast out Satan? therefore they shall be your judges.*

*28. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*

A third reason to convince these men of blasphemy: Seeing you know that I cast out devils by divine power of God's Spirit, you cannot be ignorant that I am the Messiah, and that the kingdom of grace promised in the Messiah is come: and therefore you are malicious opposers of the kingdom of God in my person. Hence learn: [1.] Christ's manner of casting out devils was with such heavenly majesty and authority, as that his enemies knew it was by the Spirit of God, for here our Lord takes that for granted, saying,

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*If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, &c* [2.] Seeing that Satan's kingdom is cast down by the doctrine of the gospel and souls are converted through the divine power of God, it is certain that the promised kingdom of God's grace in Christ is already come, for *If I*, says Christ, *cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you.*

*29. Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.*

A fourth reason: If I by the supreme power of God's Spirit did not cast out Satan, it were as impossible to thrust him out as to spoil a strong man's house without overcoming him first. Therefore you are wilful blasphemers, who ascribe this work to the devil. Hence learn: [1.] That Satan is powerful to take and keep possession of men when God permits

him so to do: and may be compared to a strong man who brings his conquest within doors and maintains the house against all that might spoil him: so does the comparison import. [2.] Christ is powerful to overcome Satan and to spoil him of his possession, and may be compared to a stronger man. [3.] Satan will not shed with the possession of a sinner except by strong hand he be overmastered, for *he must be bound, before he be spoiled.*

*30. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*

A fifth reason: Wheresoever I come to set up my kingdom, all those who do not help forward my work are really my enemies. Therefore you who oppose me are much more my enemies, and so your speeches against me are to be esteemed malicious blasphemies. Hence learn: [1.] Wheresoever Christ sends his gospel all that hear it are either for him or against him; none are neutrals; for so he says, *He that is not with me is against me.* [2.] None are for Christ but such as do their best to gather in others unto him (*as corn to his barn*) according to their calling, and whosoever does not promote Christ's kingdom is culpable of hindering of it, for he says, *He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*

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*31. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.*

*32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*

Thus are these men convicted: now the Lord shows how near they were to perdition, and this he does by laying before them the desperate condition of such as sin against *the Holy Ghost*. Each other sort of sin is pardonable, and in some person, one or other, is actually pardoned. Even sins committed against the Mediator are pardoned. But the sin against *the Holy Ghost* is never pardoned, neither in this world by the ministerial application of the gospel, nor in the world to come by the authoritative absolution of the Judge at the last day. The Scripture in Mark 3:29, Luke

12: 10, Hebrews 6:4,5,6 and 10:26, gives us to understand that not every sin against conscience or against the gospel is this sin: but that this sin is an open, wilful, deliberate and malicious rejecting and opposing of Jesus Christ totally, and of the way of salvation by him, and that, after the Holy Ghost has by a supernatural operation convicted the person of the salvation offered to the world through Christ. And therefore it is called a *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* because this sin devilishly opposes the supernatural work of the Holy Ghost who convinces the mind that *Jesus is the Son of God*, the only Saviour of the world; for otherwise, in a common manner, every sin against God is a sin against all the Persons. Now this sin is called unpardonable, not because it cannot *be* forgiven, but because it never *is* forgiven. The man that falls into this sin never repents nor gets grace to desire to repent, but does as a devil desperately go on to oppose Jesus Christ. Therefore, *whatsoever sin it be* for which the man is sorrowful and penitent and flees to Christ to be relieved of it, it is not this sin which the Scripture calls the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, however heinous it be. Hence learn: [1.] That there is no sort of sin except this one which may not, yea, has not been

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forgiven in one man's person or other, for it is said, *All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men*. [2.] The sin against the Holy Ghost, as it is formerly described, cannot fall out in the person of a penitent believer in Jesus Christ, to whom pardon is promised, for *This sin shall not be forgiven*. [3.] The Son of God is also the Son of man, verily partaker of our flesh and blood, in whose Person the nature of God and man is united, for a ground of confidence to sinful men, that they may come to God through him, for here he is called *The Son of man*. [4.] It is possible that some of the elect, appointed for life, may fall into the sin of blasphemy against the Son of God out of ignorance, or fear, or some sort of deception, and thereafter may repent, and find mercy; for it is said, *Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him*; to wit, upon the conditions and in the manner set down in Scripture, to wit, if he repent and flee to Christ. [5.] It is a dangerous matter to oppose Christ and his gospel in any part of his truth or kingdom, or to blaspheme and speak ill of the work of grace in his children, especially out of hatred of the truth, and good way of God, for this draws near to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

33. *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*

There were two things which might weaken the power of his threatening. [1.] The conceit of the holiness of these Pharisees. [2.] That their blasphemy was but a matter of words; therefore for the people's edification, Christ breaks down these sconces,<sup>6</sup> showing these men to be most wicked (vv 34–35) and God's judgment to be strict, even in the matter of words (vv 36–37). As for the first, he proves these men not to be holy but wicked, by four reasons: the first is, because their *fruits were evil*, set down in the comparison of trees, which being good bring forth good fruits, and being evil do bring forth evil fruits. Hence learn: [1.] As a tree is known to be good or evil by the fruits, so is a man known by the course of his deeds, for this is

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the intent of the similitude. [2.] As a man carries himself for Christ or against him, so is he good or evil; and though he were as blameless otherwise as these Pharisees, yet he is a wicked man if he be against Christ; for *the tree is known by his fruit*.

34. *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

A second reason: because the whole sect of the Pharisees were a wicked pack, seeming to be friends to the law, but adversaries to Christ, the true intent thereof, adversaries to the grace of God and to righteousness by faith: and so not only by nature, but also by succession to their predecessors in holding their poisonous doctrine, they were a generation of vipers, the worst sort of adders, who being evil could not speak good; and having their heart full of poison, could not but speak as their heart dited<sup>7</sup> to them. Hence learn: [1.] It is impossible for unrenewed men to speak good, far more impossible to do good, for, *How can you that are evil speak good?* says Christ. [2.] Men who glory in their forbears, as these men did in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and do not follow their footsteps, are in God's account to be fathered on Satan and are the viperous brood of his children. Therefore justly our Lord calls these men *generation of vipers*. A third reason: because the overflowing of their hearts in blasphemous words did prove them to be wicked blasphemers. DOCTRINE: [1.] The heart is the fountain of a man's words and works; as it is set, so is the

current of a man's words and works, good or evil, for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. [2.] Whenever evil breaks forth in a man's words, for that time at least evil abounds in the heart for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*.

35. *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

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A fourth reason: proving them to be wicked because they delighted to lay up wickedness in their heart and to bring forth ill out of their heart. DOCTRINE: Whether a man be renewed and a good man, or an unrenewed and evil man, it may be known by the stuff which deliberately he lays up in his heart and deliberately brings forth out of his heart; for, *if it be a good treasure* he is a good man; if it be *an evil treasure* he is an evil man: for, here, such as the man is, such is his treasure; for *A good man out of the good treasure &c, an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth &c.*

36. *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

Thus Christ has removed the pretext and conceit of the Pharisees' holiness: now he removes the conceit of the smallness of their sin, in respect it was a matter of words, for two reasons. The first is: Idle words should be punished; much more blasphemous words. Hence learn: [1.] However little men esteem words, yet in God's balance they weigh not light: for not only *wicked* words, but also *idle words*, such as serve for no good purpose or for no lawful end, shall come in reckoning as so many sins. Therefore, says he, *every idle word they shall give account thereof* [2.] There shall be a day of judgment wherein all sins, even *words*, shall come to be judged: for here *a day of judgment* is set and this judgment shall pass upon particulars, even upon words, whereof men have not before given account and received pardon.

37. *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

Another reason, showing that words will be respected by God whatever men think of them; because the course of a man's words being naughty



shall be sufficient to be a ditty<sup>8</sup> to prove a man unrighteous, and being well seasoned

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shall be a sufficient evidence to prove a man righteous. Therefore words are not to be slighted. Hence learn: that as a well-governed tongue and the course of wisely ordered speeches is and shall be in God's judgment a sufficient evidence of a man renewed and justified; so also a loose tongue is and shall be an evidence of the contrary.

*38. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.*

Another dispute about signs which the Pharisees craved of Christ, wherein learn: [1.] That Christ was exercised with divers sorts of temptations by his adversaries; some openly blaspheming, some subtly insinuating as if they would deal reasonably with him. *Master, say these men, we would see a sign*, as if they had never seen any of his miracles before: or, as if upon the doing of some miracle they minded to believe in him. [2.] Christ's miracles were sufficient to clear that he was the Messiah; for even his enemies can crave no more but to have a sign, for, say they, *we would see a sign from thee*. [3.] Obstinate unbelievers will not be satisfied with any of God's words or works, but still will crave new ones, as these men, after numbers of signs, crave yet a sign. [4.] Misbelievers are also limitators<sup>9</sup> of the Holy One of Israel; nothing will satisfy these men but a sign at their direction: *we desire to see a sign*, they say.

*39. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*

*40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Our Lord refuses to give them any sign save this, that after they had killed him he should rise from the dead, as Jonas came out of the whale's belly, and so they would

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not prevail over him, for all their malice. In this answer, learn: [1.] That a people that do not embrace the Lord, as he is pleased to offer himself,

is a people alienated from God and is a follower of another God of their own devising, for therefore he calls them, *adulterous generation*. [2.] As when Jonas's doctrine was rejected by the Jews God made him accepted in Nineveh, so shall it be with such as will not receive Christ offering himself to them; he shall find others to take the offer. If the Jews refuse, the Gentiles shall receive him: this is one way of the *sign of Jonas*. [3.] Again, the enemies of Christ who will not cease to persecute him shall know by Christ's victory over them that he is the Messiah: for as Jonas was proved to be the Lord's prophet by his miraculous delivery from death, so shall Christ be found to be the true Messiah by the resurrection from the dead and by his victory over the persecutions of his adversaries: and this is another way of having *the sign of the prophet Jonas*: signs of both these sorts are proper to misbelievers.

*41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

Christ, after refusing to give them a sign or to work any miracle at their pleasure, certifies them that they shall be condemned for their misbelief by two witnesses. The first witness is the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonas. Whether this repentance was better than the repentance of Ahab it skills<sup>10</sup> not to dispute, because, presuppose it was no more than may be in a natural man, upon the historical believing of temporal judgment coming upon them, like unto Ahab's repentance, yet it was more than these hard-hearted people did, who were obstinate unbelievers, and were moved neither with the preaching of mercy nor judgment. DOCTRINE: [1.] Any sort of repentance, presuppose it be only temporary, is better than obstinate unbelief and no sort of repentance: for Nineveh's humiliation is *better* than the Jews' hard-hearted carriage.

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[2.] There is more fruit of one sermon to be expected from pagans than of many sermons from the abusers of ordinances of religion: for *Nineveh repents* at one sermon, Judea repents not after hearing many. [3.] The sin of the mis-believers and its judgment is the greater by so much as the means of believing have been more frequently applied, and Christ has shown himself more in the use of means: for, therefore was the condemnation of the Jews' unbelief the greater because *Christ*, who was *greater than Jonas*, was not believed after long preaching and miracles wrought.

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*42. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.*

Another witness is the queen of the south. DOCTRINE: The example of such as have taken pains to get knowledge or obtain any virtue, whose names are recorded in Scripture, must either be made use of, unto imitation of their faith and diligence, or else their example will serve to aggrege<sup>11</sup> sins to deeper judgment: for the queen of the south shall rise in judgment against those that regard not the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.*

*44. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.*

*45. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.*

The last answer serves to show them their own miserable condition, and that, by a parable of a supposed case of

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Satan's being cast out of a man, in respect of one sort of possession, and coming back to a worse and more dangerous sort of possession. The scope of the parable is, to show that this people by their refusing to receive the grace of God and to believe in Christ, were in a sevenfold worse condition than if the gospel had never been preached to them: for Christ by his doctrine had made them see the only true way of righteousness and eternal life, and so in regard of the refutation of their former error, and removing the ignorance wherein they did formerly lie, Satan was in some sort cast out: but in respect of their not receiving Jesus Christ and his grace to dwell in their hearts by faith, the devil had obtained a sevenfold stronger possession of them now than before. From this parable we may learn: [1.] That Satan is an unclean spirit, for so

here is he called. [2.] He may be cast out of a man in some sort and yet the man not be renewed. As for example, he may be cast out of a bodily possession and the man remain unrenewed. He may be cast out in regard of a man's outward polluted life, as he was cast out of these, who after abjuration of their ungodly life at their baptism, did return again to their former filthiness (2 Peter 2:22). He may be cast out of a man's mind by refutation of his former errors, and illumination of him by sound doctrine, and yet the man may remain unrenewed: such as was the casting of Satan out of this *evil and adulterous generation*. [3.] In case a man be not taken up by the Spirit of grace, in whatsoever other respect Satan is cast out of him, he shall be more deeply possessed by him than before.

*46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.*

*47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.*

Concerning the coming of Christ's friends and kinsfolk to him, whatever was their errand, their pretence is to speak with him: but untimously<sup>12</sup> do they call for conference

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while he is about another work. Hence learn: that Christ is indeed very man, having kindly consanguinity with other men, and natural relations unto them grounded upon the verity of his human nature: for he has mother and brethren or cousins-german, persons near in blood to him, who are called in Scripture, brethren. [2.] The virgin mother was not so free of sin but she might and did fall in escapes,<sup>13</sup> as here in joining with friends: at least, in an untimous<sup>14</sup> troubling of Christ's sermon (to say no more) and preferring her own conference with him unto his Father's service: which conference might have been delayed until his teaching of the people had been ended and a more eminent work, which was now in hand, perfected.

*48. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

*48. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren.*

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*50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.*

From Christ's answer learn: [1.] That respect to kindred and friends must not be prejudicial to any higher service of God; for when Christ's mother and friends called to speak with him while he is teaching, he asked, *Who is my mother?* [2.] Whosoever believes in Christ and endeavours to do God's will gives real demonstration of faith, and may be assured of Christ's love and estimation, no less than if all the relations of *brother* and *mother* and *sister* in one were put upon him; for *Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same, says Christ, is my brother and sister and mother.*

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## CHAPTER 13

The constitution of the visible Church and the dispensation of God's grace in it unto the end of the world, and how the separation shall be at the day of judgment, is set down in divers parables (vv 1–52); and what small respect our Lord's countrymen carried towards him (vv 53–58).

*1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.*

The time is marked of this following sermon, and the place also, to teach us that nothing could hinder Christ from spreading the doctrine of salvation. No opposition of foes, no misconstructions of friends, was able to discourage him from his calling, for *that same day* wherein he had a bitter conflict with the Pharisees and interruption from his friends, *that same day* without wearying or fainting in labour, he goes *to the seaside to teach*.

*2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.*

The gathering of great multitudes to hear Christ teach is marked to show us that when Christ's enemies set themselves most to disgrace him, then can he and does he glorify himself most: for when the Pharisees had set themselves, by bitter blasphemies, to scare the people from following Christ, so great a confluence of people is gathered to him that he must, for eschewing the crowd and prease<sup>1</sup> of the people, go *into a ship*.

*3. And he spake many things to them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;*

*4. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.*

*5. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no depth of earth:*

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6. *And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away.*

7. *And some fell among thorns: and the thorns sprung up and choked them.*

8. *But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.*

The scope of this parable is to show that not all hearers of the word profit thereby, but some only: and this is set down under comparison of sowing seed in divers grounds (vv 1–9). Then is it enquired after what may be the meaning of it, and expounded<sup>2</sup> (vv 10–23). From this parabolic similitude, learn: [1.] That Christ, in his care which he has of his Church, is like a diligent husbandman labouring; the people are like to the field or ground; and the word preached is like to seed sown. [2.] Although the word as seed be one, yet the ground is of sundry sorts, the hearers are of divers kinds: some comparable to *stony* ground; some to *thorny* ground; some to *highway* ground; and some to *good* ground. [3.] The Lord makes trial of all and does not spare to cast seed on all sorts of ground. [4.] In most hearers, through their own default, the seed of God's word brings not forth fruit.

9. *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

The parable being proponed,<sup>3</sup> our Lord cares for no more but that so many only as should have grace to understand it shall make use of it. DOCTRINE: [1.] Of outward hearers of the Lord's word some are destitute of the inward ear of understanding, destitute of belief; other some have an open ear to understand and believe, for this is imported by *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear*. [2.] It is Christ's

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intention that his own to whom he gives understanding and faith should profit by hearing; and when these do believe, he rests satisfied; therefore says he, *Let him that hath an ear, hear*, whatsoever may become of the rest. [3.] This doctrine being proponed to a people in common, without application to any particular person, serves much to waken and stir up the hearers to study, and to understand, and to make use of what is spoken; as appears in the disciples' questions which follow: for this saying,

*Let him that hath an ear, hear,* imports as much; as God will not regard the loss of such as do not regard to understand his word, and to make use of what they hear.

10. *And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?*

The disciples ask the meaning of the parables and a reason of this manner of Christ's teaching. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is a duty of love to be solicitous for the common multitude; therefore the disciples do regrate<sup>4</sup> their case, saying, *Why speakest thou to them in parables?* that is, in a way which they will not understand. [2.] Our questions about the manner of the Lord's dealing with people and manner of speaking to them should be put to the Lord himself and satisfaction sought from him; for *Why speakest thou to them in parables?* say they. The question otherwise proponed by way of quarrelling is dangerous.

11. *He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.*

Our Lord answers them in a very satisfactory way, teaching that the matters of the kingdom of heaven are mysteries which none can understand until it be given to them from God, and that there are some to whom God minds not to give understanding of his mysteries, they being reprobate; therefore, *To them it is not given,* says he. [2.] There are others, to wit, his elect ones, to whom he will give the understanding of the mysteries of heaven, for he says

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*To you it is given.* [3.] The cause of putting difference betwixt one and another in the matters of the kingdom of heaven is in the will of God the giver, for so does Christ reckon, saying, *To them it is not given; to you it is given.*

12. *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*

Our Lord clears and confirms his answer by showing the course kept by God in the dispensation of grace, wherein *having* and *not having* is to be understood of saving grace. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as find grace in God's



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eyes through Christ have indeed a gift or possession worthy to be called a *gift*, for so he describes the elect, *Whosoever hath*. [2.] Such as are reprobates or are not elected and do not find grace in the Lord's eyes, whatsoever they have of other gifts, it is nothing in effect but a seeming to have; for such are described thus, *Whosoever hath not*. [3.] Whosoever have gotten the fountain-gift of saving grace, or of God's love in Christ, shall have all other gifts which tend to perfect salvation, for it is said, *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and that in abundance*. [4.] Whosoever has not this gift of grace, and favour in God's eyes, shall want and be deprived also of all other gifts tending to salvation; or at least of the right use of them, for even that which they seemed to have of common' gifts and means of salvation *shall be taken from them*, so as they shall not reap eternal life thereby.

13. *Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.*

From this ground, that this multitude was reprobate, our Lord gives a reason of his speaking to them in parables. DOCTRINE: [1.] Some do see with their natural eyes God's works and wonders and do hear his Word also outwardly, who do not by the spiritual eye of faith perceive or take up the Lord's glory shining therein; for, *Some in seeing, see not; in hearing, hear not*. [2.] Concerning such as God has reprobated, he will so dispose of the means of salvation

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toward them as they shall profit nothing by them unto salvation; therefore says he, *I speak to them in parables*.

14. *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.*

Lest they should have thought this an hard saying, Christ shows that Isaiah threatened the like against the wicked in his time and did prophesy of the righteous judgment of God in this sort to come upon the reprobate in Christ's time. Hence learn: [1.] That the prime reason of the withholding of saving grace from such as do perish is in God's decree of reprobation; for of the reprobate it may be said, though the Lord's words be outwardly and in a common manner seen by them and his Word be found among them, and be outwardly, or in a common manner heard by them; yet

this shall be without profit to them, or use made of by them; for *such, hearing, hear and perceive not*. [2.] When God's judgment pronounced in Scripture has taken hold of one fleece of wicked persons in one age, it goes on to be executed upon others after them of that same sort; for the words of Isaiah spoken to the people in his own time are to be fulfilled even upon the wicked in Christ's time, some hundred years after Isaiah's prophecy; and the same words are fulfilled in our time, and shall take hold of the wicked in time to come.

*15. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*

The Lord shows the righteousness of God, in execution of this decree of reprobation, by this, that there is in them a voluntary hardness of heart, going before the juridical induration<sup>5</sup> inflicted upon them. Hence learn: [1.] That

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beside the natural senselessness of things spiritual and the natural ignorance and unbelief of the gospel, there is an affected and voluntary blindness of mind and hardness of heart which men draw on by custom of sinning: this is it he says, *Their eyes have they closed*. [2.] Whereunto *natural* blindness and hardness of heart, men superadd a *wilful* blindness and hardness of heart; it is justice with God to give them over to a *judicial* blindness of mind and hardness of heart, as the comparison of this place with that of Isaiah chapter 6 (vv 9–10) gives ground, for *here* their voluntary blindness is set down, *They have closed their eyes*, and *there* the judicial blindness and hardness is set down, *Shut their eyes, make their heart fat*. [3.] This plague is proper to the reprobate, whom God will not save, to whom God has resolved to give no saving grace, *lest he should heal them*. [4.] Whosoever get grace to turn from their sins to repent and to believe in Jesus Christ are not given over to a reprobate sense, but shall surely be saved. For while he says, that he *will not grant them grace to hear and understand*—that is, to believe and repent, lest they should be healed—he imports, that if they did believe and repent, they behaved<sup>6</sup> undoubtedly to be healed, the exercise of faith and repentance being infallible marks of saving grace.

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16. *But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.*

17. *For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

By showing the reprobation of this people Christ commends the estate of his disciples. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as have received grace to perceive salvation offered in Jesus Christ, and to lay hold thereon, are truly blessed, for, *Blessed are your eyes*, says Christ, *for they see*. [2.] The miserable condition of the reprobate, and such as are given over to misbelief, commends the blessed estate and condition of such as get grace to believe, being compared therewith.

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This is imported in *But blessed are your eyes*. [3.] The estate of the Church after the manifestation of the Messiah in the flesh, is more blessed than the condition of the Church before Christ, in respect of the grace of the gospel, now more clearly proponed<sup>7</sup> without shadows and figures; and in this happiness the Apostles, who conversed with Christ bodily, justly have the first place. *Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them*. [4.] Such as get a saving sight of Christ earnestly desire to see more of him, for prophets and righteous men, who believed in Christ to come, ardently desired to see him in the flesh.

18. *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.*

In the exposition of the parable, learn that the Lord will teach his own the meaning of his Word so as they may be edified thereby, and what they do not understand at one time, he will cause them to understand at another: for, *Hear ye*, says he to his disciples, *the parable of the sower*.

19. *When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

From the exposition of the seed sown by the way side, learn: [1.] That the gospel is the word of the kingdom of heaven, and other words in comparison are to small effect: but this word shows the way and gives right to the kingdom; it gives an earnest and a beginning of the kingdom of heaven; therefore it is called *the word of the kingdom*. [2.] Satan is busy waiting on where the word is preached to mar the hearing or understanding and believing of it, for, *when one heareth, that wicked one cometh*. [3.] Where men understand not the gospel preached, and by the preaching of it are not made sensible of their own sinfulness and danger, on the one hand: and of the grace of God offered in Christ to relieve them, on the other hand, the word is

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lost to them; for, *the wicked one catcheth away that which was sown*.

*20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.*

*21. Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

From the exposition of the seed sown in stony ground, learn: [1.] That some hear the word, and receive it with joy readily, upon temporal grounds and natural motives: for excellent truths, and offers of remission of sins and eternal life may affect a natural man in a natural way. *Such is he that receiveth the word in stony places*. [2.] Where sound faith is not mixed with the word received, there the word is not engrafted, for *he hath no root in himself*. [3.] Where the word is not received, so as the root of true faith and God's grace is in the man, his seeming faith will not endure, whatsoever lustre it may have; for *he endureth but a while*. [4.] When a man receives the gospel for some motive of a temporary good, the fear of some temporary evil (such as is threatened in persecution) will be able to drive him from his professed faith; for *when persecution cometh, by and by he is offended*; and so affliction is a touchstone whereby to try the sincerity of professors.

*22. He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word: and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

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From the exposition of the seed sown in thorny ground, learn: [1.] That however the Word seem to be received, if it does not bring forth fruits of amendment of life, if it beget not faith working by love, it is like seed choked with thorns, and the word is lost in such a heart. [2.] Whatsoever things pertaining to this life go so near a man's heart as to take up the room, time, travel and affection which heavenly things should have, they are but thorns which choke the seed of God's word. [3.] When the care

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of getting and keeping or governing of riches, under fair pretences of a lawful calling, of caring for our family, and not neglecting the benefits of God, do steal away the heart, and waste a man's time and strength, which should be bestowed upon heavenly things, then all these pretences are but the deceitfulness of riches. [4.] If a man's works do not proceed from the virtue of God's word, whatsoever be his works from other principles, they are nothing in God's account; for, *if the Word be choked, the man becometh unfruitful.*

*23. But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it, which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

From the exposition of the good ground, learn: [1.] That only such are worthy receivers of the word who believe and obey it in their conversation,<sup>8</sup> for *these only are like good ground*, receiving the good seed, and rendering the fruits of good seed. [2.] Every true believer is fruitful, although everyone does not bring forth fruit in a like measure, but some more, some less, *some an hundred, some sixty, and some thirtyfold.*

*24. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

*25. But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

*26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

27. *So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?*

28. *He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?*

29. *But he said, Nay: lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

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30. *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

Another parable serving to teach that the visible Church shall not lack a mixture of wicked persons joined with the godly to the world's end: [1.] That we must not dream of a possibility to make a perfect separation of good and bad in the Church. The chief doctrines to be observed herein are, first, that the external visible Church is worthy to be called and counted the kingdom of heaven, even in regard of the external constitution of it in this world, notwithstanding of the mixture of wicked hypocrites in it; because therein Christ rules as King, and has his subjects, all professing him to be King of saints, but especially in respect of his own elect therein, who honour him in spirit, in whom he doth begin eternal life, and draws it on unto perfection. [2.] The visible Church is like a cornfield wherein are sown good seeds and noisome weeds, sound converts begotten of God and wicked hypocrites who are the children of Satan; for, *the enemy sows tares among the wheat*. [3.] There is no more possibility for men to eschew the incoming of hypocrites into the Church than for any husbandman's servants to hinder an enemy to cast in the seed of weeds in their master's field, in the night when men sleep. [4.] It is a matter of grief and offence to see in the Church of God so many unprofitable and noisome weeds, so many wicked hypocrites and naughty persons; this the servants coming to regrade<sup>9</sup> the matter imports. [5.] The rash zeal of servants, before they consult the Lord their Master, is ready, with the hazard of the Church and true members thereof, to have such

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a constitution of the visible Church as they should suffer none to be a member who are not inwardly regenerate, but have all others, of whose inward regeneration they are not assured, plucked from among professors: this is imported in, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* [6.] The Lord, although he has given order to censure the scandalous

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offenders, yet discharges<sup>10</sup> his servants to press toward such a separation as to have all the weeds and wicked in heart to be cast out, lest, while they gather out the graceless tares, they should root out also the gracious wheat with them, for it is not possible for any man to discern the renewed from the unrenewed so clearly, but he may be mistaken; this Christ means by *Nay, lest ye root up the wheat with them.* [7.] The Lord accounts it less hazard to suffer many hypocrites to be in the visible Church than to hold out or cast out of it anyone of the weakest of the elect and converted children, for, so he reckons here, it is much safer to suffer many weeds to grow in God's field than to hazard one grain of good wheat by seeking to root out the weeds. *Nay, says he, gather not out the tares, lest ye root up the wheat with them.* [8.] This mixture in the visible Church Christ the Lord is minded to permit, and commands to be permitted till the day of judgment; and then, but not till then, shall a full separation of the godly and the wicked, of the elect and the reprobate, be made. *In the time of harvest I will say, gather the wheat, &c* [9.] At last the separation shall be such that all the wicked shall be cast into hell fire, and the godly placed in heaven. *The tares shall be burnt, and the wheat gathered into the barn.*

*31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.*

*32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree: so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

Another parable, the scope whereof is to show that the visible Church, in regard of the power of the gospel in it, and of the true grace of God in the true members thereof, however small it may seem in the beginning, yet shall grow up wonderfully. This is set forth under the similitude of mustard seed, which for example's cause in the parable, after the nature

of a parable, is presupposed to be the least of all seeds: and again is presupposed to grow

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up to such height that it should become the tallest of all trees: which parabolic supposition being made, then shall it be fit to resemble the work of God by the grace of the gospel, which however small the beginnings of it be, yet shall it be the most glorious of all God's works, ere all be done. Hence learn, that the work of the gospel and planting of God's Church, however small beginnings it seem to have, yet shall by the blessing of God have wonderful increase. The day of small things is not to be despised, for as the disciples were encouraged to spread the gospel, so should all the Lord's servants be encouraged to be diligent to sow the seed of grace, by holding forth the doctrine of the gospel, according to their calling.

*33. Another parable spake he unto them; the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

Another parable tending to this same purpose, namely, to show that the work of God's grace by the gospel in the visible Church, however small appearance it has, will notwithstanding spread and prevail according to the measure appointed of God. DOCTRINE: As good leaven, after a competent time, will leaven all the lump, to the leavening whereof it is appointed, so will the work of God's grace in his Church by the gospel powerfully affect, and prevail to the conversion of all those for whom God shall send it, and therefore we should not judge of God's works in his Church by outward appearance. This served then and should serve now to make men faithful in teaching the truth and to wait for a while till God shall work and give his blessing to the hearers in his own time.

*34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:*

*35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.*



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Here is rendered another reason why Christ spoke to the people in parables, to wit, that he might fulfil what the prophet as the type foretold that Christ should do, and how Christ should by speaking in parables stir up his hearers to search what was meant by this sort of speaking, as the Psalmist stirred up his hearers to attend the more to what he was to deliver in parables (Psalm 78:2); to the intent that such as would understand might learn, and others who would not search for light might be justly left in blindness. DOCTRINE: [1.] Both the matter and manner of Christ's doctrine is worthy to be maintained and vindicated from all misconstructions, for here we have the Evangelist for a precedent. [2.] Preachers should teach nothing for matter or manner, but what they have a precedent for in the Scripture, for even Christ did so.

*36. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

*37. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man.*

*38. The field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one:*

*39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels.*

*40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.*

*41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,*

*42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

43. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Here the speaking in parables takes good effect in his own disciples; they are made sensible of their own dullness

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in understanding and are moved to ask light of the Lord, and so they receive satisfaction; for the Lord declares what the parts of the parable were in their intent and signification. Hence learn: [1.] As the visible Church is not without reason called *the kingdom of heaven* (as is shown before), so also, not without reason is called here *the world*, for it contains all sorts of people in *the world*, and is spread throughout *the world*, and is not limited to anyone place. *The field*, (to wit, the universal visible Church) where the seed is daily sown, is called *the world*. [2.] The elect, the true believers begotten by the gospel, and true subjects of Christ's kingdom and heirs of heaven, are the only proper children of the kingdom, for *the good seed are the children of the kingdom*. [3.] Such as have nothing in them save outward profession and do remain wicked and unrenewed men are nothing else for their inward estate but children of Satan, for *the tares are the children of the wicked one*. [4.] Satan, as an enemy to the glory of God in his Church does what he can to have hypocrites and wicked men mixed among the godly as members of that same Church, for *the enemy that sowed them is the devil*. [5.] This mixture of good and bad is to endure to the end of the world, that is, until the day of judgment wherein the angels shall have work to separate the wicked from the godly, for *the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels*. [6.] In the end of the world, every man shall have the fruit of his labour, as his seed, that is, as his good or evil works have been, for *then is the full harvest*. [7.] Openly profane persons and secret hypocrites, workers of iniquity, shall have no place among God's people any more after the day of judgment, but their place shall be hell, the place of unexpressible torment, for *the tares shall be gathered and burnt in the fire*. [8.] Such as are justified by faith in Christ and do study by his grace to live righteously, however base they may appear in this world, shall in the world to come be wonderfully glorious, for *they shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. [9.] It is sufficient for the main end of Christ's doctrine if such as have grace to understand and believe shall make use thereof, for the rest he regards not; for he says, *They that have ears to hear, let them hear*.

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*44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

Another parable teaching us: [1.] that the Church in regard to the precious doctrine of grace and salvation to be had by Christ in it, is a rich treasure, able to relieve and supply all wants and necessities, therefore called an *hid treasure*, which the misbelievers, however wise in the world, cannot perceive. [2.] The believer who finds it will make no reckoning of the worth of any earthly thing in comparison of it, but will part with whatsoever is pleasant or profitable to him in this life rather than be deprived of this grace; for, *he selleth all to buy it*. [3.] As he labours to have this treasure, so he has a care to keep it, that neither by violence nor deceit it should be taken from him; for, *he hideth it*, and selleth all to have the means of enjoying of it, and to have right to the field of the visible Church where this treasure is to be found.

*45. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls:*

*46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

Another parable teaching us: [1.] That the Church, in respect of the true subjects thereof, that is, in respect of the elect and true believers, is like merchantmen occupied about the purchase of those things which may truly enrich them and make them happy. [2.] That among all things which can be conceived to be fit to bring men to happiness, there is only one means able to make blessed, one pearl of price, to wit, Christ Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and grace. The wise man will content himself with Christ, and what is to be found in him, and will renounce all other things which come in comparison with him.

*47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.*

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*48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*

49. *So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.*

50. *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

Another parable teaching us: [1.] That the visible Church, in the way of gathering members, and manner of constitution thereof, is like a draught-net, taking in all who profess subjection to Christ in his ordinances; good and bad, true and false professors; for it gathers of every kind, to wit, whosoever professes faith in and promises subjection to Christ. [2.] That not before the day of judgment, but then precisely, separation shall be made of the just and wicked, and then shall the wicked be punished for ever, in whatsoever place or estimation they have been in this world. This parable and that of the tares tend to one end, to strengthen us so much the more against the stumbling block of the unavoidable mixture of wicked hypocrites in the Church visible. The godly shall not fare the worse for the wicked being among them in one field, in one draught-net, nor the wicked fare the better at the latter end, for their society with the godly in the visible Church.

51. *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.*

Christ takes account of his disciples, whether they understood his speech. DOCTRINE: [1.] Hearers of the gospel should labour to understand what they hear; for, *Have ye understood?* says Christ. [2.] The ministers by catechising should take account of their hearers, for so does Christ, saying, *Have ye understood?* [3.] People of whatever quality should be willing to give account to their teachers of their profiting in knowledge, for the disciples answer, *Yea, Lord.*

52. *Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

Christ teaches them still to be gathering more knowledge and to make use of their hearing. DOCTRINE: [1.] Every minister should be furnished

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for his employment, for he is *a scribe unto the kingdom of heaven*. [2.] Ministers should be faithful stewards, distributing unto the necessity of the people out of the abundance of their furniture; for *they are householders*, who should be provided with store, as it were of the last year's growth, and of this year's gathering also.

53. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.*

54. *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*

55. *Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Judas?*

56. *And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?*

Christ departs that place and goes into Galilee where he is not well received. Hence learn: [1.] That when Christ has perfected his work, and not till then, will he remove from a place, for it is said, *When he had finished, then he departed*. [2.] He neglected no bands of common duty. He visits *Nazareth* and *Galilee*, where he was brought up, and gives them an offer of his grace: teaching us by his example that the greatest evidence of kindness to our friends or acquaintances which can be given is, according to our calling, to draw them to God, for *he came unto his country and taught them in their synagogue*. [3.] By the preaching of the gospel, however clearly and convincingly it be preached, the reprobate and obstinate unbeliever will not profit, but at most will only admire it and let it go. He may be convinced by it, but will not be converted. When he can object nothing against the doctrine, he will without all reason except against the person of the preacher or his kindred, and his parentage, or his outward condition, or some such one thing or other to debar himself from believing and

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obeying the doctrine, even as these men did. *They were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom &c?*

57. *And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.*

Christ's extraordinary wisdom should have made them take up his excellency, but it turns contrary. DOCTRINE: [1.] These very things which are inducements to belief will prove stumbling blocks to the wicked, to hinder them from belief, as here is seen. [2.] Ministers despised by their carnal friends must comfort themselves with the ordinary lot of godly teachers who of all sorts of men are least esteemed amongst their own friends and acquaintance, graceless nature having more enmity against preachers and instruments of grace than against any other sort of men; for so did Christ comfort himself; saying, *A prophet is not without honour save in his own country.*

58. *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.*

This despising of Christ turns to the disadvantage of the despiser. DOCTRINE: [1.] Despising of the ministers prejudices men of the blessing of the ministry, and misbelief is justly punished by the Lord hiding his power from the misbeliever, for therefore *Christ did not many mighty works among them because of unbelief* for as unto the believer God manifests himself, so from the misbeliever God hides himself.

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## CHAPTER 14

Here is set down the history of John's beheading (vv 1-12), the miracle of the loaves and Christ's walking on the sea (vv 13-33), and the healing of the sick in the bounds of Gennesaret (vv 34-36).

1. *At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,*
2. *And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.*

Herod hears of Christ and takes him to be John Baptist risen from the dead. DOCTRINE: [1.] Whatever opposition Christ meets with, he sees ever to the spreading of the glory of his own name, for here *his fame comes to Herod after John is beheaded*. [2.] God can clear the cause of his martyrs in the conscience of their persecutors, as Herod here counts John Baptist a man righteous, whom God would honour, by making him an instrument of mighty works.

3. *For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.*
4. *For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.*
5. *And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.*

By this occasion, John's death, which was bypast, is here recorded, in which history learn: [1.] Faithful ministers will not spare to tell even kings their sins, as John here reproves Herod for his incest and adultery. [2.] It is no new thing that kings and great men take it evil to be reproved of their sins, and are ready to persecute faithful

preachers, for *Herod here imprisons John for his free speeches*. [3.] The Lord can make any means serve to keep his servant's life so long as he pleases, as here he makes *the fear of the people* a means of John's safety for a time. [4.] Wicked men do not abstain from any sin but for worldly reasons;

they do nothing for regard to God. Nothing else did Herod look to, but *he feared the multitude.*

6. *But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.*

7. *Whereupon he promised with an oath, to give her whatsoever she would ask.*

8. *And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.*

9. *And the king was sorry; nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.*

10. *And he sent and beheaded John in the prison.*

11. *And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.*

At last the Lord's appointed time comes and John is beheaded: in which history, learn: [1.] When a man has a mind to an evil work, a time shall be found fit for the doing of it, as here a time is offered to Herod. [2.] A time of carnal feasting is a time fit for plotting and practising against God's servants, as here *Herod's birthday* is fit for John Baptist's beheading. [3.] A foolish and graceless heart is easily taken with a small delight, as Herod is marvellously pleased with a *damsel's dancing*. [4.] A foolish delight is able to ensnare a man for practising a wicked work, as Herod's vain delight engages him in a rash general promise and oath; and so he is engaged in the murder of the Lord's servant. [5.] Such as the parents are, such is the education of their children readily, *Such mother here, such daughter*. [6.] The malice of the wicked against reprovers of their sin is deadly; for *John Baptist's head must pass for his reproof of incest*. [7.] Malicious persons will prefer the satisfaction of their malice to anything else, for *Herodias had rather have John's head than half a kingdom*. [8.] A graceless soul may have a wrestling with his lusts ere he commit a



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sin, and may be sorrowful for carnal reasons to do some wicked deed, as Herod here is loath to kill John. Natural conscience may tell a man of sin, and vex him also, and yet for no right reasons, as *the king is sorry to behead John*. [9.] A natural conscience is not able to resist a temptation, though it may restrain a man for a time, for *Herod, though he be sorry, yet he yieldeth*. [10.] A sinner ensnared is held by bands which he might lawfully break, as Herod here by a rash oath: *nevertheless for the oath's sake he yields*. [11.] That which indeed is a man's shame will appear to a foolish sinner to be his credit; and when credit appears, it will more prevail with the wicked than either conscience or carnal fear. Herod here, for *their sakes that sat with him at meat, yields* that John shall lose his head. [12.] God's dearest servants may be taken away by a light occasion after that the Lord has ended his work by them, as here *John dies at the desire of a wanton lass*. [13.] The bodies of the saints may be abused after death at the pleasure of the persecutors, as *John's head here is made a spectacle to his foes*.

*12. And his disciples came, and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*

From the history of John's burial learn: [1.] That the faithful must not be ashamed at the suffering of the saints, but testify their respect to the living and to the dead, for *John's disciples came and buried John's body*. [2.] When pastors are cut off men must resort to the chief shepherd so much the more, as the disciples of John came to Christ and *told him of John's death*.

*13. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.*

*14. And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*

From the history of Christ's departure, learn: [1.] That Jesus has reason to depart from the place where any of his servants are slain, and others of them are in danger,

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for when he heard this, he departed. [2.] Such as have need of Christ will find him out and follow after him, refusing no travel nor pains to seek him; for, *the people follow him to a desert place.* [3.] Christ is compassionate toward such as seek him, and of such as seek him he will put none away; the needy and sick find health from him, for here it is said, that *he was moved with compassion, and healed the sick which followed him.*

15. *And when it was evening his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.*

16. *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

17. *And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves and two fishes.*

18. *He said, Bring them hither to me.*

19. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

20. *And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.*

21. *And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.*

Here is the miracle of the loaves, occasioned by the disciples' care to have the multitude dismissed timously.<sup>1</sup> DOCTRINE: [1.] It is wisdom to have regard to people's infirmity, and to what they may endure in attendance of divine worship, as *the disciples here have a care of the people's want of food.* [2.] If God call for extraordinary attendance, he will furnish ability and provide for the bodies of such as prefer the feeding of their souls to the refreshing of their bodies, providing they tempt not God

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herein by neglecting wilfully ordinary means. Therefore Jesus says, *They need not depart; give ye them to eat.* [3.] Where God gives a

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call to his servants to feed people they must look to himself for ability and not be discouraged for the little furniture which they conceive they have, for here the disciples have no more but five loaves and two fishes, and Christ contents himself with them. *Bring them to me,* says he. [4.] It is good in an ordinary call to any work to look to ordinary means, as the disciples here, not apprehending as yet any more than the ordinary, do make objection that they have *but five loaves and two fishes.* [5.] The Lord will have our weakness for his work to be seen, to the end his power may the more appear; as here, the paucity of loaves and fishes must first be seen, ere he work the work. [6.] In working of miracles our Lord did so dispose of all circumstances as might most profit the people, and glorify the Father, in whose name and power, as being one with the Father, he did the work; as here, *he orders the people in their places, looks to heaven, and powerfully blesses their provision,* that there might be bread and fish enough by his divine operation. [7.] Christ's ministers shall lose nothing in distributing their gifts to the feeding of his people; for the disciples, after more than five thousand have eaten of their few loaves, do take up twelve baskets full, a great deal more than they had laid down.

*22. And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.*

*23. And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.*

*24. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.*

Another miracle tending to show that as Christ is Lord of the earth and the lives of the creatures therein, so he is Lord also of the sea and winds: wherein he exercises his disciples with a piece of trouble, to make them profit in the knowledge of his spiritual kingdom. The reasons of this short dispatch and constraining of the disciples to go to sea without his

bodily presence may be seen in John 6 and Mark 6. Here it is sufficient to learn: [1.] That we should be sure of an urgent calling before we undertake

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a hazardous voyage, for *Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship*. [2.] Christ will not have men diverted from their places and callings under pretence of waiting on him, nor to expect to live by miraculous means, but to attend upon the ordinary blessing of each man's vocation: and therefore *he sends the multitude away*. [3.] Christ, although the Son of God, yet because he had taken on our nature and the office of Mediator therein, upon all occasions of retiring he prays and intercedes with God for his people. *He went and prayed apart*. [4.] When the godly are in trouble and under trials the Mediator is praying for their upholding; when the disciples go to sea Christ goes to the mount to pray. [5.] Christ's disciples must be in trouble and hazards when others are at ease, as here it fares with these disciples. [6.] Although men have Christ's warrant for their voyage, yet are they not exempted from trouble and danger therein, for here is an instance. [7.] Men may have fair weather in the beginning of a work, and danger and trouble may be kept back till they be so far engaged as it is more safe for them to go forward than to return; so fares it here with the disciples, for *the storm arises when they are in the midst of the sea*.

25. *And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.*

26. *And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.*

27. *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.*

Christ does not stay all night from them but comes to them in due time. DOCTRINE: [1.] God keeps back comfort and delivery till it be time, as Christ suffers the disciples to be exercised long and comes not to them till the fourth watch of the night: but then he comes in due season. [2.] Christ is Lord of sea and land and can make way to his people's relief through the most stormy sea; no impediment can hinder him nor hold him from his disciples' society, for *Christ here comes, walking on the sea*.

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[3.] The Lord's coming to his own sometimes is fearful, and sometimes destruction is apprehended when delivery is most near,

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as here *they cry out for fear*. [4.] Apparitions of spirits in bodily shapes is possible and the truth of it in all ages has been received; as here, *they say, It is a spirit*. [5.] When the Lord's disciples are in the greatest extremity, then uses he to comfort them speedily and to reveal himself unto them most kindly, as here straightway he cries, *It is I, be of good cheer*. [6.] Wherever Christ shows himself present there is no reason to be afraid of any trouble or danger, for he is able to deliver his own in whatsoever strait; therefore says he, *It is I, be not afraid*. [7.] When he speaks he makes his word to be discerned by his people, and so satisfies them, for he makes his own know his presence; *Be of good cheer, it is I*, says he.

28. *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it, be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.*

29. *And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*

Zealous Peter cannot stay till Christ enter the ship, and so comes to be exercised a little. DOCTRINE: [1.] Fervent love hastes to be at Christ; it looks to no danger but will hazard through fire and water to be at him; as here, *Peter's heart flitters<sup>2</sup> to be at the Lord* when he sees him. [2.] When men mistake the measure of their own strength and gifts they are ready to seek a calling ere it be given them and to enterprise things too hard for them: as here Peter says, *Lord, bid me come unto thee on the water*. [3.] If God give a calling, howsoever it seem to be procured, a man may rely on it and has reason to believe for assistance in following of it, for *Peter hears Christ say, Come, and presently he casts himself on the sea, and his faith for a time upheld him, so long as he kept the gripes*.<sup>3</sup>

30. *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.*

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The storm continues and Peter begins to fear and doubt and sink. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is not Christ's presence, but his will and command which makes a storm calm. Christ and trouble may be both present together; for notwithstanding Christ is come, the wind is boisterous still.

[2.] The continuance of the trial of faith brings to light the weakness of faith; for a man may hold out a while, who at length may faint, as Peter does here. [3.] When men look more to the dangers than to God calling them to it, no wonder that their faith be brangled:<sup>4</sup> for Peter sees the wind too much and Christ's presence too little. [4.] It is safest to ponder all that faith is to meet with, if we can overtake it, before we enter in the conflict with difficulties; for Peter should have prepared against the wind as well as against the sea and waters. [5.] Sometimes peril presses a man more when he is in the dangers than before; and a man may seem stout before the experience of the danger who shall prove feeble in it. Men know not readily their own weakness till they be put to a proof; Peter doubts nothing to walk on the sea till now. [6.] As faith grows feeble, courage and strength and all begin to fail; as soon as Peter doubts he begins to sink. [7.] When our faith grows weak our prayer should be strong, for doubting Peter *cried* in prayer. [8.] Whatever be our danger let Christ's power be exalted as sufficient to help us, as Peter does, saying, *Lord, save me*. [9.] Seen danger and felt weakness cuts off presumption and puts faith to rely on God altogether, for now Peter cries, *Lord, save me*.

31. *And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, o thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

Christ draws near quickly and helps him. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although our Lord be displeased with our sins, yet will he not delay to help when need calls for present relief; as here suddenly, *he stretched forth his hand*. [2.] To doubt where we have warrant to believe is worthy of a reproof; therefore says Christ, *Why didst thou doubt?* [3.] Christ will neither deny that to be faith which is mixed with doubting,

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nor refuse to help the weakness thereof, by gripping by his powerful grace such as do but faintly grip him by their faith, as here he *caught Peter*, and said to him, *O thou of little faith*.

32. *And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*

33. *Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.*

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Now the exercise is ended, the disciples' weakness and Christ's strength is manifested. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the trial is at an end, the trouble is at an end. Christ and Peter come *up into the ship and the wind ceaseth*. [2.] It is a blessed trouble which ends in glorifying of Christ and in the increase of knowledge, for *now the disciples come and worship Christ*. [3.] New experience furnishes deep impressions of Christ's divine power and God-head; for now, say they, *Thou art the Son of God*. [4.] Delivery out of imminent death speaks more of God's power to the humble person than the greatest works speak to the secure, as the delivery of the disciples from the raging sea makes them more sensible of Christ's God-head than the miraculous feeding of five thousand with so few loaves in the wilderness, for now it is, and not till now, that they say, *Of a truth thou art the Son of God*.

34. *And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.*

35. *And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about and brought unto him all that were diseased.*

36. *And besought him, that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

Now the Lord lands and goes to Gennesaret and heals the sick. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord goes ever where he has an errand, delighting to do good wherever he goes, and as the common Saviour of all sorts of persons, in all places, he heals all who, in the sense of their need, seek the benefit of him, as here, all the sick in Gennesaret that come to

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him *are made whole*. [2.] Then have people right knowledge of Christ when they know his power and grace and give him employment, as this people do. [3.] Such as know Christ aright will not only make use of him themselves, but also bring in unto him all whom they can move, each man according to his calling, as this people do. [4.] The greater the measure of faith be, the less will be the prescribing of signs to God; for *the hem of the garment* suffices these believing people. [5.] Where God sees need of signs to help the exercise of the faith of miracles, he gives

to the person' the instinct also of the sign, which may suffice to confirm them, *for as many as touched, were made whole perfectly.*

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## CHAPTER 15

Christ defends his disciples against the challenge of the Pharisees for not observing ceremonies of religion devised by men (vv 1–20); heals the woman of Canaan's daughter (vv 21–28); heals many and feeds miraculously a multitude by the Sea of Galilee (vv 29–39).

1. *Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,*
2. *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.*

In this contest between Christ and the Pharisees about traditions, learn: [1.] That it is no new thing that Christ has adversaries; and these chiefly corrupt Churchmen, even such as bear office in places most famous for religion, for here *are scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem*, going about to divert disciples from following of Christ, and to put a disgrace (if they could) on our Lord for his disciples' cause. [2.] It is no wonder to see Christ and his Church molested with the controversy of non-conformity in human inventions of religion. *Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions?* say they. [3.] Antiquity and Fathers without Scripture is the old charter of superstitious formalists, for *Why* (say they) *do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?* [4.] That which otherwise is lawful in itself while it abides within the limits of civil fashions may be left undone, and be discountenanced, when it is set up in state within the limits of religion: therefore the disciples did not wash their hands before meat, in the company of Pharisees, who made washing at that time to be a holy and religious act.

3. *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?*

Christ puts the Pharisees to defend their traditions and refutes them. Hence learn: That God in wisdom brings men's ceremonies to a dispute and so to be refuted and condemned then especially when men do press them most, for now Christ takes on the plea and answers for his disciples and confutes the formalists by four reasons. The first reason: By the

authority of your traditions ye transgress the command of God; therefore such authority is not to be regarded by my disciples. Hence learn: [1.] That traditions may be fathered or mothered on those that maintain them, no less than upon those who invented them, for Christ says, *Why do ye by your traditions transgress?* [2.] Such as are most zealous for human traditions shall readily be found transgressors and condemners of divine commands, and God's traditions given by Scripture, for, *Why do ye transgress the command of God?* says he. [3.] When the authority of human tradition loosens or weakens the obligatory power of a moral command in any thing, it may and should be despised altogether, and rejected as unworthy to be a rule for a man's carriage in anything, for, *Why do ye also by your traditions transgress the command of God?*

4. *For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

5. *But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me,*

6. *And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*

Christ proves the challenge, because their traditions did warrant the children to dedicate unto the Churchmen, for a religious offering or gift, all that they might spare above their own maintenance; and so, for their own filthy lucre, they deprived parents of all maintenance from their children, contrary to the fifth command; for when the parents or the poor should seek support of them, their tradition bade them answer thus, *That which thou seekest, and every other thing whereby thou mightest be helped or profited by me, or any thing of mine, it is a gift already dedicated to the Church,*

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and therefore hold me excused. Hence learn: [1.] The duty of children to parents is straitly urged by God's command: and the wicked transgression of it is made capital, for the law says, *He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.* [2.] It is a part of the honour due to parents that children sustain them in their need, as they are able: for not helping is here as much, *as not honouring of their father or mother.* [3.] Such traditions as

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directly or by consequence do prejudge<sup>t</sup> the true intent of any of God's laws (whatsoever pretence of religion be made) are wicked; for he says, *You by your traditions have made the command of God of none effect.* [4.] No gift nor voluntary offering presented to God pleases him when the duty of love owed to others is neglected or contravened thereby, for Christ calls such a *gift* a breach of the fifth command. [5.] To dispense with God's law by human authority, and to urge men's traditions more than God's commands, is in effect the abolishing of God's law; for so says Christ, *By your traditions you have made the command of God of no effect.*

7. *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,*

8. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me.*

The second reason, from Isaiah 29:13. By way of retorting, the challenge is: This urging of your traditions is but the betraying of your hypocrisy and counterfeit drawing near to God in external rites when your affections are no wise toward God. Therefore my disciples should not receive them. Hence learn: [1.] Zeal for human ceremonies, especially joined with the neglect of God's precepts, proves gross hypocrisy, for so says Christ, *Ye hypocrites draw near to me.* [2.] The Lord esteems nothing even of the outward exercises of religious ordinances appointed by himself when men do not labour to perform the same with affection. It is the heart which he looks to in worship: therefore says he, *Their heart is far from me.*

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9. *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

A third reason from the Scripture also, Isaiah 29:13: When men's inventions and precepts are made the rule of God's worship, God rejects such service: and therefore your challenge of my disciples is unjust. Hence learn, that it is the Lord's prerogative to prescribe all the parts of his own worship, and if man presume to prescribe what shall be worship to him which he has not prescribed, it is a sufficient cause to reject man's ordinance; for, *In vain do they worship me, &c.*

10. *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand:*

11. *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

A fourth reason delivered unto the multitude by way of apology for his disciples: This sort of pollution which comes to the mouth by unwashed hands is not a sin which defiles the conscience; but the wickedness of the heart vented by the mouth. Such as is these wicked men's quarrelling of my disciples, that indeed pollutes the man. Therefore these Pharisees, rather than my disciples, are polluted. Hence learn: [1.] That contesting against Christ's disciples, slandering and reproaching of such as do not observe human traditions, is a pollution of the slanderer, and more dangerous than the omission of human ceremonies which may be omitted without pollution of sin, for *that which cometh out of the mouth polluteth*. [2.] Although to mocking adversaries we need not always give reasons of what we do or omit, yet to indifferent spectators it is good to give a reason, for their edification and our own clearing, as here Christ gives satisfaction to the common people; for *he called the multitude and said ...* [3.] The fountain of the pollution of a man's actions is his heart, conscience and affections not being rightly disposed; for, *out of the heart cometh such and such evils*.

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12. *Then came his disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?*

The disciples wonder that Christ did regard so little to displease the Pharisees. Hence learn: [1.] Truth must be taught, whosoever may be displeased; for so did Christ preach although the Pharisees were offended. [2.] Nothing will vex false teachers more than the discovery<sup>2</sup> of their false doctrine before the multitude, as the Pharisees for this *cause were offended*. [3.] Men are ready to stumble and take offence at the teaching of truth where no stumbling block is laid before them, as at Christ's doctrine; *The Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying*.

13. *But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.*

Our Lord's answer serves for a reason, [1.] Why he spoke against the Pharisees' false doctrine: and [2.] against their traditions; and [3.] why he misregarded in this case their offence-taking, because both their

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ceremonies, their false doctrine, and they themselves also, being altogether reprobate stuff, were plants which God had not planted in his field, but Satan; and therefore they were all to be rooted out, for the good of the vineyard, and field of the Lord's Church. Hence learn: [1.] That in the visible church and garden of the Lord, there may be some plants not of God's planting but of Satan's; such as false doctrine, corrupt inventions of men, thrust into God's worship, and wicked men defenders of both; for this is imported in *Every plant which my Father hath not Planted*. [2.] God, the good husbandman, will have these evil weeds discovered and cast out as God gives a calling and occasion; therefore says he, *They shall be rooted out*.

*14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

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Christ cuts off any more speaking of these wicked men. DOCTRINE: [1.] Obstinate maintainers of false doctrine and of corrupt traditions, enemies to Christ and his disciples, are given over of God, and are worthy also to be given over and let alone by men; that is, fellowship is not to be kept with them. Therefore he says, *Let them alone*. [2.] Where the teachers and people follow men's tradition in religion, and not the rule of God's Word, the leaders and they that are led are both blind. This is what he says, *They be blind leaders of the blind*. [3.] The following of false teachers and blind guides will not be an excuse before God for people to plead immunity. But seeing none should follow any man, but as that man follows the Lord, the blind guide and the blind follower shall both perish, if they hold on in their wrong way, for, *both shall fall into the ditch*.

*15. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.*

*16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?*

*17. Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

*18. But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man.*

19. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*

20. *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*

Peter does not understand the parable of not being polluted by meat and so moves this question. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is good to be asking of Christ whatsoever we understand not, whatsoever reproof may follow for our dullness; therefore, says Peter, *Declare unto us this parable*. From Christ's answer, learn: [1.] That when disciples do not take up the plain speeches of Christ, they are reproof-worthy; therefore says Christ, *Are ye also without understanding?* [2.] Although Christ reprove our faults and be angry at them,

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yet he will go about to relieve us of them, for he is about to teach after reproof, saying, *Do not ye yet understand?* [3.] Every action or word testifies what is in the heart, and adds a degree of further pollution and guiltiness to that which the man had before he break out externally, for *evil words coming forth from the heart pollute the man* yet more. [4.] When a needless ceremony and a superstitious invention of man is neglected or forborne, it is not a sin, notwithstanding whatsoever human authority or tradition of the elders command it, for Christ here pronounces that the disciples' eating with unwashen hands, though contrary to the tradition of the Jewish doctors, *did not defile the man*.

21. *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

22. *And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

Christ having ended this dispute goes to seek a wandering sheep, from this, his journey-taking for the woman of Canaan's cause, learn: [1.] That where Christ has a lost sheep or a work of mercy to work he spares no pains to compass his purpose; for here *he departed to the coasts of Sidon*. [2.] The persons to whom Christ has a mind, providence will draw them after him; *Behold, a woman of Canaan came*. [3.] Faith finds the smell of

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Christ wherever he be, and draws in unto him; for, *She comes and calls on him.* [4.] Faith pressed with need is earnest in prayer for *she cried unto him.* [5.] Faith fixes on Christ as the true promised Messiah, for she calls him *Son of David.* Faith looks on Christ as compassionate and merciful, it pleads for mercy and pretends no merit, for thus says she, *Have mercy on me.* [6.] Love owns them whom it loves whatsoever their condition; for here the trouble that her child is troubled with she counts as her own, saying, *Have mercy on me, for my daughter is troubled.* [7.] Faith gives Christ the glory of ability to do all that it desires, so she ascribes to him power to cast out the devil, saying, *My daughter is vexed of a devil.*

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*23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.*

There are four means used for the trial of her faith. The first is, Christ's keeping silence when she prays. Hence learn: [1.] That God, although he loves the supplicant and accepts his petition, yet possibly will keep silence and not seem to take notice for a time, for *he answered her not a word.* The next means of her trial is the small assistance she has of the disciples' prayers: wherein learn, That faith loves the help of the prayers of the faithful militant, as a means prescribed of God for mutual comfort, for *she cried after the disciples.* [2.] When God thinks fit to try our faith by delaying to hear us, he will for our trial make other means which we use to fail us also; as here the disciples would be rid of her importunity and have her dispatched that she should not trouble them. Therefore say they, *Send her away; she crieth after us.*

*24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

The third means of the trial of her faith is by our Lord's telling her that his commission reached only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, which was indeed true in regard of his particular and personal ministry in the days of his humiliation, wherein he was to make offer of his grace first and chiefly to the Jews. And this is true again if we take Israel for the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles. He came for these elect ones only. But unto this woman, who understood not so high a matter, it could not seem but that his commission was to the Jews only, and not to the Gentiles, of which sort was she. Hence learn: [1.] That among

other trials of the faith of the Lord's people, this is one, to suffer them to be questioned, whether they be of the number of the elect, for thus much imports *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel*. [2.] Christ has an errand to such as find themselves in peril to perish, for *he is sent to the lost sheep*.

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26. *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

She cannot answer this doubt and therefore passes it over and insists in prayer that what Christ's commission is she will not dispute, but sure she is that she must be helped. Hence learn that when any doubt tends towards excluding us from the number of such to whom the gospel is sent, we shall do well to pass by such doubts without disputation, and to insist in prayer, grounded upon God's goodness and power to help, for so did this woman, *Then came she and worshipped him*. [2.] The more the Lord seem to refuse us we should so much the more humble ourselves before him and continue in prayer, for it is marked *that then she worshipped him and said, Lord help me*.

26. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

The fourth means of her trial is by seeming to exclude her (as a heathen, or unclean dog outside the covenant) from all the benefits of the Messiah, belonging to Israel (who are the children of God by covenant) as their proper food; and here the former doubt is augmented and put more nearly home to her. Hence learn: [1.] That the Lord, when he will try, tries to the quick, and humbles to the dust the soul under trial, and for this end makes the last difficulty more than any of the former, for now he says, *It is not meet to give to dogs, &c.* [2.] Such as are within the external covenant of grace are in some respect holy, as consecrated to God, and appropriated to him by covenant, and such as have the privileges of God's people belonging to them as unto children, while others who are outside the covenant are counted dogs. Thus he imports, saying, *It is not meet to cast the children's bread to dogs*. [3.] The representation of our unworthiness before our eyes is a main point of trial of our faith. Therefore, for her last trial, he compares her *to a dog*.

27. *And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*



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The Lord's Spirit looses the doubt to her. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ's commission, although it was chiefly to the Jews to set much on their table, yet it was not so limited but that crumbs of their food, especially being neglected by them, might be bestowed upon the Gentiles: this is it she sees, *crumbs fall from the table*. [2.] The Lord in trial of faith makes the believer of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, to mark all advantages whereby it may strengthen itself. Therefore says she, *Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat the crumbs*. [3.] The believer is content to be humbled as deeply as the Lord pleases, and to acknowledge his own unworthiness to the uttermost: only he cannot be content to be excluded from God and the benefits of his grace; for this woman can be called *a dog* but cannot lack some crumbs of Christ's kindness. [4.] It is special wisdom to turn motives unto discouragement into motives unto believing, and to draw so much the more near to Christ as the motives unto discouragement drive us away from him, for so this woman does. The more her natural uncleanness and unworthiness, and her alienation from the commonwealth of Israel, is represented to her, she bears herself the more in upon Christ: when she seems to be boasted<sup>3</sup> away from him as a dog, she creeps in under the children's table to catch crumbs falling from it.

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

From Christ's answer learn: [1.] That faith pleases Christ exceedingly; therefore says he, *O woman*. [2.] This a true and kindly faith, not to take a refuse of Christ's answer as he pleases,<sup>4</sup> but to pursue constantly our petition for his grace, and by no means to part with him. For this cause Christ says to her, *Great is thy faith*. [3.] Whatsoever hard expressions be due to a sinner in regard of his natural condition, yet the believer is greatly loved and esteemed

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of by Christ, as here. It is now no more *a dog*, but, *O woman*. [4.] Howsoever Christ seems to wrestle with a believer, yet he is purposed to give faith the victory and to yield himself in this conflict to the believer, as here. *Be it unto thee*, says he, *as thou wilt*. The believer shall have at last all that he wishes; and Satan shall be trodden under foot. [5.] The

prayer of faith is available for others; for this woman's *daughter* was made whole *from that very hour*.

29. *And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.*

30. *And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them.*

Another proof of Christ's Godhead and of his grace toward the miserable! He heals all the miserable who come to him. DOCTRINE: [1.] When Christ has done his work in one place he follows his work in another place. He comes now to the sea of Galilee. [2.] Many may come to Christ at once without impeding one another: it is not so among men, where one must wait till another be dispatched. Here *multitudes come unto him*. [3.] Christ stands<sup>s</sup> not how many and how desperate the cures there be that are presented to him, for here, *He healed them all, blind, dumb, lame, &c.* [4.] It is sufficient to lay our miseries before Christ; our miseries will speak for us, and he will answer us with helping of us; for here, They did but *cast down* the miserable at *his feet* and *he healed them*.

31. *Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

Here is the effect of these miracles; They wondered and glorified God. DOCTRINE: [1.] The miraculous works of Christ were such as forced the beholders to acknowledge

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divine power in him; for here the beholders wondered and glorified God. [2.] Very nature will be moved and forced to glorify God, when it sees God's power in a supernatural way manifested. Therefore it is said, *The multitude wondered, &c.*

32. *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

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To all the former bounty bestowed on the people is added this miracle of feeding such a multitude by so mean provision. Hence learn: [1.] That the care of men's welfare lies more near to Christ's heart than to the heart of any of his disciples; for it is Christ here who first takes notice of the people's necessity. [2.] Love and compassion is the fountain of Christ's bounty to his people; for *I have compassion*, says he. [3.] He feeds his compassion upon the sight of our necessities and miseries incumbent and imminent, and he not only relieves present necessities, but provides also for time to come; as here he says, *I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

33. *And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness as to fill so great a multitude?*

The disciples think it impossible because they did not see means how it shall be. DOCTRINE: [1.] Seen difficulties and apparent impossibilities do serve as lighted torches to make the Lord's way toward us, and his work about us, to be better seen, as disciples' objections here do contribute to illustrate the miracle; for, *Whence should we have so much bread?* say they. [2.] Christ's ministers being to be employed in a piece of service do readily look more what furniture they have than what power Christ has, who is about to employ them. *Whence should we have, say they, so much bread in the wilderness to fill so many?* Such is our natural misbelief that if we see no means, we cannot believe that which God says shall be; no, not although we have had experience before in the like case; *Whence shall we have, say they, so*

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*much bread?* They forgot the former miracles. [4.] Misbelief is ready to strengthen itself by all appearances of reason, as here the disciples do, saying, *Whence shall we have bread in the wilderness?*

34. *And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? and they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.*

35. *And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.*

36. *And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.*

37. *And they did all eat, and were filled, and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.*

38. *And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.*

39. *And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came unto the coasts of Magdala.*

Follows the miracle and the orderly disposing of it, as the Lord's power may be best seen. Hence learn: [1.] Ere the Lord work, he will have it seen how little ground he has to work upon; therefore, by asking his disciples, he draws forth how few loaves and fishes for such a work were to be had. [2.] He will not despise his own appointed ordinary means, for so far as they can reach: nor will he do anything extraordinary further than is necessary, for he could have fed them without these seven loaves, but he will take them and make use of them, seeing that they may be had. [3.] Christ uses to shame the misbelief of his servants by making them actors in the work which they could not believe to see, for *he gave to the disciples* and *they to the multitude*. [4.] There is no scant when the Lord gives the banquet, for all are filled when he invites his guests, as here. [5.] His manifold wisdom will glorify himself as he pleases but ever in a way sufficient to manifest his divine power; for there are here more loaves and fewer people and fewer fragments than when by five loaves five thousand were fed, but one basket proves the miracle as well as a hundred, and the fewer the ordinary means be, he will show his power the more.

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## CHAPTER 16

The Pharisees with the Sadducees do tempt Christ (vv 1–5); Our Lord warns his disciples to beware of their doctrine (vv 6–12), and having settled them in the belief of his Godhead and office (vv 13–20), he guards them against his own suffering, and theirs also, lest they should afterward stumble at the cross (vv 21–28).

1. *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees, came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*

In these wicked men's tempting of Christ, learn: [1.] That our Lord did suffer much contradiction and temptation by wicked sectaries; here divers, and more at one time, come against him. [2.] Satan's children, howsoever opposite one to another, can agree to oppose Christ, for the *Pharisees and Sadducees* here do join against Christ, though they were otherwise adversaries one to another. The Pharisees maintaining the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul, the Sadducees denying both. [3.] Such as make show that they would believe if such and such signs or not promised conditions were granted unto them, are both lying hypocrites and tempters of God also, in prescribing new means of believing when God has given sufficient already; therefore it is said, *they came tempting him in desiring a sign.*

2. *He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*

3. *And in the morning, it will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

4. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a*

*sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.*

Because Christ's doctrine and miracles did prove that the Messiah was come, and the time of the kingdom of grace, therefore he reproves them for not discerning the times. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord has made the

offer of the means of grace a sign of the time of grace, as well as he has made signs in the sky of foul or fair weather approaching; therefore are they worthy to be blamed who do not observe the time, for *Can ye not discern the signs of the times?* says Christ. [2.] Hypocrites and men in nature are able to discern of natural things but not of spiritual. Thus Christ taxes the Pharisees, saying, *Ye can discern the signs of the sky*, but not the time of grace. [3.] Such as set not their heart on God revealed in Christ are not of the true Church nor spouse of Christ, but are adulterers. Therefore Christ calls these Pharisees and Sadducees, *an adulterous generation*. [4.] Christ's enemies shall get no satisfaction in signs such as they prescribe to help them to discern Christ by in his doctrine and operations. They shall be suffered to go on in opposition till they have vented their malice to the full. And then shall they know by Christ's victory over them and over death itself, and over all his enemies, that Christ is indeed the true Messiah, for, says Christ, *No sign shall be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas* who after three days arose, as it were, out of the grave. [5.] Hypocrites, and such as tempt God, shall be left to themselves; as here, *Christ left them and departed*.

5. *And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.*

This forgetting to take bread is told us, partly that we may know how our Lord's train<sup>1</sup> was maintained; to wit, as soldiers they carried their bread with them and to show Us that our Lord had a care that his followers should not be burdensome to any. But in special it is spoken of to

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clear the occasion of the disciples mistaking of the speech of Christ, hereafter set down in his warning of his disciples to beware of corrupt doctrine, under comparison of leaven.

6. *Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

Under the similitude of leaven Christ bids his disciples beware to be infected by the corrupt doctrine of these sectaries. DOCTRINE: [1.] False doctrine is like leaven, for it infects the lump secretly and totally. Therefore, *Beware of leaven*, says he. [2.] The doctrine of justification by works professed by the Pharisees and the doctrine of the Sadducees denying the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul,

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are both poisonable leaven; therefore, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees*, says he, putting both these sects in a like condition of infection.

7. *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, it is because we have taken no bread.*

The disciples imagine that Christ was speaking of bodily leaven. DOCTRINE: Readily are our Lord's words mistaken, even by disciples, and upon a mistake wrong conclusions are drawn, and so the intent of Christ's words is lost, for *because we have no bread* is this admonition given, say the disciples.

8. *Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, o ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?*

9. *Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?*

10. *Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?*

11. *How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?*

12. *Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

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Christ is offended that they should be so careful of bread and imagine that himself was anxious about bread also, seeing they had experience lately of his power to provide bread at his pleasure. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord will not change his speech for our mistaking, but rather reprove our dullness, and then help to a right understanding, as here he does, saying, *Why do ye reason thus?* [2.] Christ will make it a matter of reproof if he see his disciples anxious about anything in this world, as here for this, *because they had brought no bread.* [3.] Not to profit in faith is the

matter of greatest controversy between Christ and his followers; as here, *O ye of little faith*. [4.] The right use of Christ's works, especially of his miraculous feeding many with a little food, is to assure us of Christ's power to provide bread for his servants and that they need not be anxious about that matter. Therefore says he, *Remember the miracle of the loaves*. [5.] The Lord's reproof is a means of rectifying our understanding, for after the reproof, then they understood that he meant by leaven *the corrupt doctrine of the Pharisees*.

13. *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*

14. *And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

15. *He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?*

Christ is about to clear and confirm his disciples in the knowledge of himself and makes way for this by questions. Hence learn: [1.] That it is expedient for pastors to examine the knowledge of their flock, as Christ here asked his disciples. [2.] It is no new thing to see diversity of judgment concerning Christ, and the matters of his kingdom; for there were in Christ's days divers opinions of men about him, even among them who were not his opposite enemies, for *some said he was John Baptist, &c* [3.] Of such as have most means of the knowledge of Christ, most is to be expected, and if Christ's disciples have a right estimation of him, the less matter what others have, but chiefly it is

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necessary that such as are to preach Christ know him rightly; therefore says Christ, *But whom say ye that I am?*

16. *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

From Peter's answer learn: [1.] That the apostles knew Christ to be very God and very man in one Person: for Peter says, *Thou art that Christ*, i.e. the promised Christ. [2.] The veil of his human nature and infirmities did not keep the eye of their faith from seeing him to be one in substance



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with the living God; for *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*, say they.

17. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

18. *And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Christ commends this confession of Peter as a saving truth revealed from heaven, whereupon in despite of Satan, he would settle his Church and rule the same by the ministry of his servants and would ratify in heaven their service done upon earth. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is very acceptable and pleasant to Christ that his disciples profit in knowledge and grace. Therefore says he, *Blessed art thou*. [2.] None get saving knowledge of Christ's Person and offices but by special revelation from God, for *flesh and blood hath not revealed it*, says he. [3.] Such as know Christ rightly are truly blessed: for this cause he says, *Blessed art thou*. [4.] Such as bear testimony to Christ he will bear testimony for them and will give them a new name, as here he pronounces Peter a lively stone, builded on a sure rock and that by way of confirmation of the name which he had given to him at his first calling, saying, *Thou art Peter*, or a stone. [5.] The truth that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, very God and very Man in one Person, the anointed Saviour of the world, is the main grounds tone whereupon the faith of all believers is founded, as upon a rock; for *Upon this rock I will build*, says he. [6.] All the

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power and policy of the devil and his instruments shall not be able to overturn this truth, nor the Lord's building of his Church upon it, nor the work of God's grace in any member of the Church which is builded on this truth: for so he promises in a speech borrowed from the manner of those times when the judges sat at the port<sup>2</sup> and gave judgment. And so what wisdom or power was in the town was in the gates thereof. *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, says he. [7.] The Church properly belongs to Christ as his own peculiar; neither Pope, nor King, nor Parliament, nor anyone or more in heaven or earth may subject the Church to themselves, as it is the Church; for Christ has reserved the

Church for himself, and has appropriated this incorporation as such to himself alone, and called the church his own proper,<sup>3</sup> saying, *I will build my Church*. [8.] However there be many particular churches distinguished one from another, yet must they all endeavour for a unity among themselves, that they may be one Church with and to Christ and among themselves, keeping the unity of faith in Christ and unity of subjection to all his ordinances in the bond of peace among themselves; for Christ has called them one and appointed them to be one, saying, *I will build my Church*, in the singular number. [9.] Whatever external defence, comfort, cherishing and assistance to the Church be required of the magistrate, for the service of Christ, yet all the means of edification of the Church and all the administration of the means of the internal building of the Church, Christ reserves to himself to be done by his own means, and his own chosen instruments, for this work he takes to himself, saying, *I will build my Church*.

*19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:  
and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*

In this promise made to Peter in the name of the apostles and their successors in the pastoral charge in whose name

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he did speak, learn: [1.] Christ's Church visible is his kingdom even on this earth, not an earthly kingdom but a spiritual and heavenly kingdom, wherein he as King of heaven in heavenly things reigns; therefore he calls the Church visible *the kingdom of heaven*. [2.] This kingdom or Church has keys to let in and keep in subjects; to cast out and hold out rebels by doctrine and discipline, and is not left without ordinances and order for the preservation and enlargement of itself, for *I will give keys*, says he. [3.] The ministerial power of their keys is promised to the ministers of this kingdom, that is, the apostles and their successors in the pastoral charge in whose name Peter did speak to Christ, and in whose name he is spoken to by Christ; for he says, *I will give to thee*. [4.] Such as have the office of administration of the keys have their authority in that office only from Christ, in whose name the keys are to be used, for he only is the giver of the keys; for it is said, *I will give thee the keys*. [5.] What the Lord's ministers do, by virtue of their office, in admitting to the fellowship of God and his saints, or excluding from the same, in binding to judgment and loosing from judgment in Christ's name,

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according to their commission, it is ratified by God in heaven as done by his warrant; for it is promised, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, or loose, shall be so in heaven.*

20. *Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.*

This mystery he commands them to keep to themselves, till he should give further order. Hence learn, Christ has his own fit times when he will reveal his own mysteries. Therefore he *charged them that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ*; for, if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. He will not have his death hindered by the untimely proclamation of his truth.

21. *From that time forth began Jesus to shew to his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

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The disciples being now instructed about the person and office of Christ, he foretells his suffering, death and resurrection, to acquaint them with the cross, and so to prevent their stumbling at his sufferings. Hence learn: [1.] Our Lord was not ignorant what he was to suffer ere it came, nor ignorant of the outgate<sup>4</sup> appointed for him, how he should be killed and raised again. [2.] Whoso would look rightly on Christ's sufferings must also look to his outgate, and victory over the same; he must look on his raising as well as his killing; for he tells them, *He must be killed and raised the third day.*

22. *Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.*

Peter out of his carnal wisdom rashly forbids Christ to suffer himself to be so used. Hence learn: [1.] That if the cross be looked unto, without looking to the Appointer of it, the use, end, and outgate of it, men will never consent that either they or such as they love should bear it; therefore, says Peter, *Far be it from thee, Lord.* [2.] Natural wit is very confident and presumptuous to judge of God's matters; for Peter, leaning unto it, dare take upon him to rebuke Christ. [3.] Yea, if a man lean unto and follow his own natural wit and affection, he may be led to oppose God, and

the work of his own salvation; for, *This shall not be unto thee, Lord*, says Peter.

23. *But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

In Christ's reproof given to Peter, learn: [1.] Our Lord so loved to work out our redemption, that he could not endure to be any way hindered; therefore, says he, *Get thee behind me*. [2.] What Satan cannot do immediately he will assay to do it by instruments; Christ finds him out here, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan*. [3.] Naturally a man

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savoureth not things spiritual, neither knows them nor loves them if they be told him. Therefore says he, *Thou savourest not the things of God*. [4.] We should in temptations beware of Satan, as our party, whosoever be the instrument, and the more impudently we be tempted to sin we should the more stoutly and peremptorily resist it, as Christ did, saying, *Get thee behind me, Satan*. [5.] After a man has been much lifted up in consolation he may readily miscarry, and fall in some offence, as Peter's case is here, compared with verse 16. [6.] A man may be a stumbling block to others, although he does not intend it; for to Peter it is said, *Thou art an offence*. [7.] Apparent good counsel from a carnal friend may readily carry some temptation in the bosom of it, as Peter's counsel here does; and sin will serve Satan's turn wherever he find it, whether in the godly or wicked; for Peter's corruption here is Satan's instrument fit enough for the time.

24. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Hereupon our Lord takes occasion to teach all his followers the necessity of bearing the cross. Hence learn: [1.] Christ knew that he was to be crucified and he resolved to suffer the shameful death of the cross before it came. Therefore calls he his servants' suffering for him by the name of the *cross*, that he might teach them not to be ashamed of his manner of death when it should come. [2.] Christ's followers must resolve to be disclaimed of him as one of his followers except they will resolve to bear his cross. Therefore says he, *If any man will follow me, let him take up his cross*. [3.] Love to a man's own life, estimation of his wit and worth, in

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a word, a man's own self, is a bundle of all sort of idols which we must either renounce and be content to have them mortified, or else we cannot follow Christ. Therefore says he, *Let him deny himself*. This self-denial the Lord has appointed to be helped forward by a cross which God will not leave to our choice, but will fit it for every man and lay it before him or upon him, and will have every man humbly to stoop and submit and take it on and bear it out constantly, so long as the Lord

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thinks fit to let it lie; for *Let him*, says he, *deny himself and take up his cross*. [5.] This cross must not make a man forsake to follow Christ, but rather the man under the cross must draw the more near to Christ and follow him, that he may be helped to bear his cross and so attain to self-denial more and more. Therefore he says, *Take up and follow me*. [6.] As the cross forces a man to deny himself, for it fails not to take from him and to lay upon him what he would not, so self-denial bows the back to take up and bear the cross kindly. Therefore said he, *Let him deny himself and take up his cross*.

25. *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

The reasons to move us so to do are seven. The first reason is: the eschewing of the cross to save your life is the very way to lose your life, therefore resolve to bear the cross; for *Whosoever will save his life*, says he, *shall lose it*. A second reason: to resolve to lose the life for my sake is the way to keep it: therefore resolve to bear the cross. Hence learn: [1.] That the love of this temporal life makes men deny Christ: therefore it is that Christ will have a man resolving about his life. [2.] Whosoever will save his life by denying Christ is a great fool, for he loses that eternally which he seeks by eschewing of Christ's cross, to save for a time; for *Whosoever will save his life*, says he, *shall lose it*. [3.] To lay our reckoning to lose life and all, rather than deny Christ or any point of his truth, is our greatest wisdom. He who makes least account of his life and of all things belonging thereto in comparison of serving and confessing Christ is a wise man, for he gains for ever in effect that which he hazards temporarily for Christ, for *Whosoever*, says he, *will lose his life for my sake shall find it*.

26. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

A third reason: He that refuses to bear my cross in hope to gain thereby shall be disappointed, for he shall lose

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his own soul, and so can gain nothing, though he seem to gain a world; therefore resolve to bear my cross. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the cause of Christ cannot be maintained without the cross be borne, and hope is offered of worldly gain also if a man shall fall off from Christ's cause, it is a sore temptation, as Christ's question in answering of it does import, *What is a man profited* in this case? says he. [2.] He that in fear to lose, or in hope to gain some earthly thing, refuses to maintain Christ's cause, shall lose more than he can gain, were it a kingdom, *for he loseth his soul and what profit hath he, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* A fourth reason: Nothing in the earth can redeem a man's soul, when he has shed<sup>s</sup> from me, for fear of the cross, or hope of gain; therefore resolve to bear my cross rather than deny me. DOCTRINE: [1.] There is no ransom of a man's soul beside Christ if any man deny him, for *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* [2.] It is a special means to strengthen us against the fear of the cross for Christ's cause, to foresee our irreparable loss if we deny him, and to say with ourselves, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

27. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

A fifth reason: Though I may seem mean and abased, in that my followers are put to bear my cross, yet I will be found the glorious Son of God, worthy to be suffered for. Therefore let no man think shame of my cross. *The Son of man*, says he, *shall come in the glory of his Father.* The sixth reason: The fruit of bearing my cross or refusing of it shall be seen at the day of judgment, when I shall be Judge and shall reward the backslider with deserved judgment and shall crown the grace of suffering for me, with the reward of life. *He shall reward every man*, says he, *according to his works.* Hence learn: [1.] That Christ's incarnation neither should, nor shall derogate anything from the glory of his Godhead; for *The Son of*

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*man shall come in the glory of his Father.* [2.] The Son of man and the Son of God is

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only one Person; for it is said, *The Son of man shall come in his Father's glory.* [3.] The fruit of every man's works, whether good or ill, shall be found at the second coming of our Lord; for, *Then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

*28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*

The seventh and last motive: I do promise a glance of the glory of my kingdom unto some of you my hearers before I die, as much as may encourage you, and all others my followers, to endure any cross for me. Therefore resolve to bear the cross. Now some little glance of his glory he gave shortly after this, in the transfiguration, but this was not the main matter. His coming in the power of his kingdom was then made more evident when, after his resurrection, he declared himself Lord and King in erecting his Church with all her officers where he pleased, in subduing Jews and Gentiles to himself by the power of his Word and Spirit, in separating his Church and his people from the world, outside the Church. This kingly power was seen most evidently by such of the apostles as lived longest; and this his coming in the power of the gospel is a pawn<sup>o</sup> and evidence of his future coming to judgment, in the glory of his Father. Hence learn: [1.] Whosoever gets a right sight of the glory of Christ's power in converting souls, in erecting his Church with all his ordinances therein, and governing of it, will not refuse to bear his cross; for to encourage the disciples to bear the cross this promise here is made. [2.] Christ's power and grace manifested by conversion of souls and erecting of the Church in the apostles' days is a demonstration of Christ's kingly power, and an evidence of his coming to judgment, for, *Some (says he) here standing, shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*

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## CHAPTER 17

Christ's transfiguration (vv 1–13). He heals a lunatic (vv 14–21). He foretells his own passion, and pays tribute (vv 22–27).

*1. And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.*

Howsoever the last verse of the former chapter is not altogether fulfilled in this transfiguration of Christ, yet it is some arles<sup>1</sup> of performance of the promise there made, for by this glance of Christ's glory they had evidence how glorious he should be in the more full manifestation of his kingly power and majesty. He chooses witnesses, not all, but some, and these in a sufficient number, *three*; the same whom he was to make witness of his agony in the Garden thereafter, *Peter, James and John*: and these he takes apart into an high mountain, that being separate and set above distractions, they might attend the vision without interruption. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord will not use all his servants alike familiarly; but some, such as he pleases, he will make in some cases more intimate, for here he chooses only three to see his glorious transfiguration. [2.] Such as he minds to acquaint most with his sufferings, he will readily acquaint most with his glory, for their encouragement and preparation, for these three are they who are made witnesses hereafter of his agony in the Garden: *Peter, James and John*.

*2. And was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light.*

In the transfiguration the Lord's glory appears in three things. The first is the alteration of the natural obscurity

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of his flesh into a glorious shining brightness, flowing from the indwelling of the Godhead in him; in so far that the darkness of his raiment is swallowed up in this light, springing through the same so as it made his raiment appear white as light. Hence learn: [1.] Where the Lord pleases to let forth his glory, it is able to beautify our earthly and obscure bodies, as this transfiguration, far transcending the shining of Moses' face, gives evidence. [2.] Glorification takes not away the substance nor natural



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properties of the body, for here is a glorious transfiguration, but no abolition of the substance of Christ's body.

*3. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.*

The second point of Christ's glory is the apparition of Moses and Elias, whether in their own proper bodies resumed for a time, or in bodies formed for the present purpose, to be laid down again as garments, it is not material to enquire; for either this or that was alike easy to the Lord: and presuppose their bodies had been raised and laid down again in dust, yet whereinsoever Moses and Elias could be serviceable to their Redeemer's glory, it was not their trouble nor loss, but their advantage. The main matters which we have to learn are: [1.] That Moses and Elias, and so all the prophets, are Christ's servants and witnesses to him, all of them agreeing in one with him. [2.] That the dead in the Lord are not perished, but live with God in heaven; for, Moses and Elias are seen here kept therefor.

*4. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias.*

The effect of this glorious vision so ravishes the hearts of the three apostles that they could have taken this estate for heaven. Hence learn: [1.] How joyful the sight of glorified persons shall be! [2.] The sight of the least part of the glory in heaven so ravishes the soul that it forgets all that is on the earth, and is so satisfactory that a soul

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could rest on the least degree thereof as in a heaven; for, *It is good to be here*, says Peter. [3.] It is our nature, if it be well with ourselves, not to care for others; little mind had the Apostles what need others had of their service when they could have stayed still on the mount.

*5. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*

The third point of Christ's glorification is the testimony of the Father concerning his Son Jesus which Peter could never forget again (2 Peter 1:17). First, they see a bright cloud, then they hear a voice out of the

cloud (for we are not able to behold the Father as he is, and must not pry into his glory, which is unsearchable, but must take heed to what he revealed by the ear; a voice, or his Word, must reveal God to us) and that which is here revealed concerning Christ, is: [1.] That the man Christ is true God, the Son of God, one in substance with the Father; for, *This is my Son*, says the Father. [2.] That as he is incarnate, going about the work of redemption and presenting himself Mediator for us, to satisfy God in all things about us, he is *beloved*, accepted, approved as satisfactory, and rested upon for our behalf:<sup>2</sup> *In whom I am well pleased*, says the Father. [3.] That we are to take him for our teacher and commander, to believe and obey *him*; for the Father has said to us all, *Hear him*.

6. *And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.*

This voice was so full of majesty, proceeding from the excellent glory, that the disciples fell down. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the Godhead of the Father or of Christ is manifested, who can stand before his majesty? No wonder *they fell on their face*. The presence of the Lord in this life, even in mercy revealed, is very fearful; for it is said, *They were sore afraid*. Such is his glory and our weakness.

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7. *And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.*

Thus lay the apostles as dead men till Christ came and put strength and comfort into them. DOCTRINE: It is Christ by whom we are lifted up when we fall, and confirmed against our fears, for the disciples did not stir till he touched them, and said *Be not afraid*.

8. *And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

That we may know that the voice spoke of Jesus and concerned him alone, he alone is left with the disciples, and now the vision is removed when the intent of it is obtained. DOCTRINE: The Lord measures the means of manifesting himself as he sees fit for our good, for *When they lifted up their eyes, they saw none but Jesus only*.

9. *And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.*

The discharging of the disciples to show the vision until the resurrection teaches us that the Lord has his own set time when he will make use of what he reveals to his servants, and will bring forth every truth in his own time, when it may be most useful. Therefore says he, *Tell no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.*

10. *And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?*

Upon the departure of Elias and the discharge of revealing the vision, the three disciples move a question about the prophecy of the coming of Elias, which the disciples think to be now accomplished; and that by his staying still, it might have appeared to the world to be accomplished. But Christ shows that that prophecy was accomplished another way, in John Baptist. DOCTRINE: [1.] What doubts arise to us about Scripture, among other means let us by prayer crave solution of them through Christ, as the

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disciples here *asked him about Elias*. [2.] The adversaries of Christ are ready to blindfold themselves and others also by mistaking Scriptures, like these scribes, who will not acknowledge Christ to be come, *till Elias come*, to wit, in their way.

11. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things:*

12. *But I say unto you, that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.*

Our Lord did answer that indeed the Scripture must be accomplished, and not a letter fail; for *Elias*, says he, *truly shall first come*, and that when John Baptist came, this Scripture concerning the coming of Elias was fulfilled, because when John Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias, Elias in a manner was revived; for, as Elias set himself to the reformation of religion when all was wrong in his time, so John Baptist,

when the whole frame of religion was marred by the corruption of the Jewish doctors, did renew the doctrine and worship again. DOCTRINE: [1.] The fulfilling of the Scriptures may readily be mistaken of men; for, when that which was foretold is done before their eyes, they will not see it; for, *Now Elias is come, and they knew him not.* [2.] The world instead of receiving God's messengers, as becomes,<sup>3</sup> are ready to abuse them as they please. Therefore, says he, *They have done to him what they listed.* [3.] As men deal with Christ's servants, so would they deal with Christ's self, if they were able, and could get occasion; for, *Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them,* says Christ.

*13. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*

By this speech the Apostles take satisfaction and stumble no more at this doubt. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although our Lord does not answer men's doubts and questions in so many letters and syllables, yet he will make his own disciples

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understand the solution of their questions, and what is his meaning. His inquisitive scholars shall be taught what is needful for them to know, as here Christ's speech satisfies his disciples; for it is said, *Then they understood, &c.*

*14. And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him and saying,*

*15. Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.*

*16. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.*

Concerning the healing of the lunatic: learn: [1.] It is a fit time for the Lord to show his power most when he may have most witnesses, and most glory in his working; as here, he trusts the healing of the lunatic, with his coming to the multitude. [2.] The soul which believes in Christ, as it finds its need pressing so will it go speedily to Christ, so will it humbly and earnestly seek help of him, as the lunatic's father does. [3.] The misery of a soul left to Satan is great, who, out of malice, if he can

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will vex the man who is in his power; as *this poor child was vexed in fire and water*. [4.] Christ reserves some benefits to be conferred immediately by himself, and in this case second means and instruments (although they be employed) do fail; as here it falls out. *I brought him to thy disciples, but they could not heal him*, says the child's father.

17. *Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.*

This sharp rebuking both of the misbelieving Jews and also of the apostles, for depriving themselves of the use of the gift of miracles by their unbelief, teaches: [1.] That nothing grieves our Lord more than people's misbelief, for this obstructs all the blessings which are appointed to come by faith. Therefore he upbraids the multitude, and his disciples among the rest, with this sharp rebuke, *o faithless generation*. [2.] That the longer Christ has offered

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himself to a people or person, and the more patience he has shown towards them, the more he is provoked by their misbelief to reject them and depart from them: therefore says he, *How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* [3.] That he is not so angry as any passion can move him to forget to be merciful to the miserable; for incontinent<sup>t</sup> he says of the poor boy, *Bring him hither to me*.

18. *And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.*

At a word our Lord delivers this distressed soul. DOCTRINE: [1.] However strong and however long Satan's possession be in a soul, Christ can cast him out quickly; as here, *Jesus rebuked the devil*. [2.] Christ is a perfect physician, he can so cast out Satan and remove a plague that the party afflicted shall be no more molested, as here, *The devil departed out of him and the child was cured from that very hour*.

19. *Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?*

The disciples are ashamed, and privately ask the cause of their ill success. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is reasonable that we be ashamed of our misbelief as the disciples were when they came to Christ in the house privately and

apart. [2.] Chastisements are then best made use of when they send men to search the sins which have drawn them on; as here, *Why could not we cast him out?* say they.

20. *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.*

From Christ's answer learn: [1.] Unbelief may be lurking till it be brought forth in trial, and not being observed timeously by ourselves, nor repented of in secret, may

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be brought forth before others to our shame openly, and so we are chastised for it, as the disciples were, to whom Christ answers, *Because of your unbelief* [2.] Unbelief, and other unrepented sins, may mar the exercise of most excellent gifts, for the apostles could not cure this child because of their unbelief. [3.] The least measure of the faith of miracles being put to work upon the warrant of God's Word, if it be purged from unbelief and from secure and carnal confidence, and be put forth in its own vigour (as the least grain of mustard seed puts forth the sharpness, taste and smell of its own kind), it is able to effectuate the greatest works and to overcome the greatest difficulties; put the case<sup>s</sup> they seemed as impossible as the removing of mountains. Therefore says he, *If ye have faith* etc. [4.] The same may be said of saving faith also, it being put to work upon the warrant of God's Word, to mortify some lust, or to grow in some virtue, it shall be able to overcome all difficulties. The reason is that nothing is impossible to God, who when he passes his word to the believer, will not fail to perform what he has promised, whether it be in an extraordinary or an ordinary way; for it is said, *Nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

21. *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.*

Christ gives another reason of their not being able to cure the child. DOCTRINE: [1.] There is a difference of the power of devils and there are differences of the exercises of poor souls by them: for here is a kind most violent. [2.] When we find Satan strong and violent, and not yielding ground to us, when he is opposed or set upon by us, then must we set an edge upon our faith by prayer; and an edge upon our prayer by fasting

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and separation of ourselves to the exercise of prayer; for, *This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting*, says he.

22. *And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men.*

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23. *And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.*

There is another warning of the disciples concerning the cross and sufferings of our Lord and of his resurrection. Hence learn: [1.] That there is need to guard well against the scandal of the cross of Christ before the cross come, lest we stumble when unexpected troubles shall follow Christ's cause; therefore said he, *The Son of man must be betrayed*. [2.] The best guard against troubles is to look to God's appointment and foretelling of the cross and to look to the resurrection and outgate<sup>6</sup> promised; therefore Christ says, *The third day he shall rise again*. [3.] We are inclined to be more moved with the grief of the cross than to be comforted and encouraged by the glorious outgate<sup>1</sup> of it, for now *they were exceeding sorry*.

24. *And when they were come to Cape:-naum, they that received tribute money came to Peter and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?*

25. *He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented<sup>7</sup> him saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?*

26. *Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.*

27. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and three.*

In this history of Christ's paying tribute, learn: [1.] That tribute is due to magistrates for their public service; this is imported in *Doth not your master pay tribute?* [2.] Christ is no unfriend to magistrates and rulers, nor any way a hinderer of paying anything due unto them: for Peter affirms that Christ paid ordinarily. [3.] He will not exempt his ministers or followers from the common civil duties

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whereunto other subjects are liable. Therefore he says to Peter, *What thinkest thou?* &c [4.] Christ by no ordinary course of law was subject to any power under heaven: for as king's sons are naturally free from tribute, so is the Son of God naturally free also, for he is the heir and owner of all things; for as every king and his native children are naturally free from the burdens proper to the subject, so is God the Father and his native Son Christ, co-eternal with the Father, naturally also free from all things which the creatures can impose upon him. What king is he who will subject God's Son to him? Therefore Christ said *that king's children are free*, of all whom he was the chief. [5.] Howsoever Christ was the rich heir of heaven and earth, as of his own workmanship, yet for our cause he voluntarily subjected himself and became poor that he might make us rich, for he had no money to pay his tribute. [6.] As in matters of civil loss Christ did dispense with his own right civil, and subjected himself to pay tribute which he was not bound to do, so must his servants do: and not only must they pay tribute, which is their due by civil obligation, but rather than they mar the gospel and breed scandal they must bear burdens which civilly they are not bound to bear. [7.] Christ was never so far abased at any time but the glory of his Godhead might have been seen breaking forth in the mean time or shortly after, lest his humiliation should at any time prejudice his glory at our hands; as here at the time when he subjects himself to pay tribute, at the same time he shows himself Lord of all the creatures, who can make the most wild of them to come to his angle and bring money with them in their mouth to him; as here he gives evidence in *this fish which Peter catches*.

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## CHAPTER 18

Our Lord discharges' prelacy among his disciples (vv 1–6). Commands to eschew offences (vv 7–14). And to remove them (when they should fall out<sup>s</sup>) by discipline and mutual forgiveness (vv 15–35).

1. *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*

The disciples dreaming of a worldly kingdom of Christ strive for state among themselves. Hence learn: [1.] The seed of ambition and prelacy is old in ministers, and ground was found to foster it in the unmortified corruptions of the apostles; for here they are disputing, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom?* [2.] Neither Peter nor any other of the apostles had supremacy or majority of power over the rest; for here they ask Christ, *Who is the greatest?* They did not acknowledge anyone greater than another, but referred the determination of this to Christ, who simply disallowed the question as sinful.

2. *And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

3. *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

This pestilent and pernicious evil Christ discharges and dissuades them from it by six reasons. The first reason (which comprehends a doctrine in it): Except you study to be as far as this little child is from seeking of preëminence one over another, in the church or kingdom of heaven here beneath, you shall not enter into the kingdom

of heaven which is above. [2.] Learn, that the mortifying of ambition and renunciation of prelacy and following of humility is so hard a lesson to be learned that there is need of teaching of it in an odd way by the eye as well as by the ear; therefore *is a young child set*, as a copy of the lesson, *before the disciples' eyes*. [3.] Howsoever Christ has ordained sundry

degrees of office-bearers in his house, yet he will have no majority of power of anyone over the rest of that office, but will have men so far from affecting of it as a young child is who knows not what striving for state means. Therefore says he, *Except ye become as children.* [4.] If this wicked root set up the self in a man, he must repent him of any motion toward it, and be converted, and if, being convinced of the sin, he shall not be converted and repent of it, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven which is above, for so much says our Lord here to the apostles: *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into heaven.*

4. *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

A second reason: The man furthest from affectation of pre-eminence is the man worthy of most estimation before men; therefore beware of looking toward prelatial preeminence of one over another. DOCTRINE: True greatness of ministers stands not in being one over another in majority of power, but in humility and farness from seeking a prelacy or pre-eminence over their brethren, for *Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child,* says he, *is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

5. *And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.*

6. *But whoso 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.*

The third reason: I give authority to every messenger of the gospel, even to the meanest and most averse from

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this sort of pre-eminence, that, *Whosoever receiveth him, receiveth me,* &c. Therefore be content with this common honour and seek not greatness of one over another. The fourth reason: The ministerial authority is not augmented by prelatial power erected among you, nor diminished for want of it; therefore beware of prelacy; for I give the authority of ambassadors to the meanest whom I send, even to the most humble, so as *Whoso receiveth such a one in my name, receiveth me.* This may content a moderate man. A fifth reason: Affectation of majority over the brethren

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is a stumbling block to little ones who believe in me. Therefore beware of it, for *Whoso shall offend any of those little ones*, &c. The sixth reason: It were better for a man to die a violent and ignominious death, than by affectation of prelacy, and despising the simplicity of a sent minister, to hinder the work of the gospel in his hand, or the salvation of any believer, however mean he be. *Better*, says he, *that a millstone were hanged about his neck &c.*

7. *Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*

Here in general he discharges<sup>3</sup> laying of any stumbling block before others, whether by word or deed, or any other way, which may induce any man to sin or may hinder him in the course of obedience of God. The reasons of the discharge are seven, which are so many doctrines. The first reason: Much woe, much sin and misery, is to come upon the world by stumbling blocks cast before others. Therefore, beware of offences, for *Woe unto the world because of offences!* The second reason: Greatest woe abides the man by whom offence is given; *But woe to that man by whom the offence comes!* Therefore beware of offences. DOCTRINE: [1.] There is a necessity of offences coming, or that stumbling blocks or inducements to sin, and means to turn men away from the right paths of the Lord, shall be laid in men's way. A necessity is, in regard of the inclination that men's corrupt natures have to be drawn, and to draw others to sin; a necessity is, in regard of God's decree,

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to permit such stumbling-blocks for the trial of some, and punishment of others, for *Offences must come.* [2.] Whatsoever mischief shall come, or may come by a stumbling-block, shall be imputed to him who gives offence, or lays a stumbling-block in others' way; for, *Woe to the man by whom the offence cometh.* [3.] Neither the necessity of the coming of offences in God's providence, nor the imputation of the mischief done to the man who gives offence, shall excuse the party that takes offence, or save him from wrath; for still this stands, *Woe to the world because of offences.*

8. *Wherefore if thine 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.*

9. *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.*

A third reason: Whatsoever thing it be which is the cause of a sinful fall to yourself, or to your neighbour, were it as profitable or necessary as your eye or your foot in your estimation, it is better to be deprived of it than to sin and so be cast in hell with it: therefore beware of giving offence. Hence learn: [1.] That the cause of stumbling ourselves and moving others to stumble, is in ourselves; to wit, some beloved lust, precious and profitable perhaps in our estimation, as our eye or our hand or our foot; therefore says he, *If thy hand, eye or foot offend thee*. [2.] Such beloved lusts must either be mortified and cut off, or else we cannot but perish: and therefore better these lusts be abandoned and cut off, than they and we should both perish; *cut them off*, says he, *better for thee*, &c.

10. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.*

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A fourth reason: Despising any of these little ones must be eschewed: therefore the laying of stumbling blocks must be eschewed; for not caring<sup>4</sup> to offend them is to despise them. Therefore, says Christ, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones*. The fifth reason: God esteems the meanest of these little ones so much that the good angels who daily enjoy God's glorious presence are ministering spirits appointed to attend them. Therefore do not despise them by not caring<sup>1</sup> to stumble or offend them. DOCTRINE: [1.] If we consider what price God and his holy angels set upon the meanest Christian we would be loath to despise or offend them, for *Their angels behold God's face*.

11. *For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

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The sixth reason: I came to redeem the meanest of believers, even such as count themselves lost. Therefore ye should not despise them by not caring to offend them. DOCTRINE: the estimation and love that Christ has of and toward the meanest Christians should move us to beware to offend or despise them; for *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*

12. *How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?*

13. *And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.*

14. *Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

The seventh reason: It is not the will of the Father that any the least Christian should perish, and therefore you should not despise them or misregard their offence or stumbling, wherethrough they may perish. This is set down in the parable of a good shepherd, the scope whereof is

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to show that as a good shepherd regards everyone of his sheep and, if they wander, will carefully seek to reclaim them and save them, so does God regard the meanest of his elect, the meanest of Christians, so as he will reclaim them from their sins and danger of perishing, as the text shows: *How think ye? if a man have so many sheep &c.* DOCTRINE: [1.] He that scandalises his neighbour does what he can to make him perish, as the opposing of the will of the Father to preserve him to the power of a stumbling block imports. [2.] The devil or his instruments do what they can to hinder the salvation of believers, but God will preserve them; for *It is not the Father's will that one of these little ones should perish.* [3.] Although he that lays a stumbling block before his brother shall not be able to destroy him, yet he may put him out of the way a little and hinder him in his course to heaven, as the parable of the shepherds' reducing of the wandering sheep shows.

15. *Moreover if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

After dissuading us from stumbling of others, Christ teaches us how to remedy scandals given to us by others, that the offender may be reclaimed and the Church receive least damage thereby. First, he gives direction about private scandals, saying, *Moreover*, &c DOCTRINE: [1.] When scandal is given, we must not only beware lest we ourselves stumble (though we cannot eschew<sup>s</sup> but be grieved), but also must study to reclaim the offender, for this direction is given to us to remedy scandals given. [2.] The scandalous sin of a brother or professed believer especially, must be cared for and cured by believers: *If thy brother offend thee*. [3.] Private admonition, especially in case the offence be private, is a means of reclaiming our brethren from their sinful courses: Go *tell him his fault alone*. [4.] It is not necessary to divulge every fault which we alone know, or to let others know of it, for it is said, *Tell him between thee and him alone*. [5.] The most discreet, easy and gentle ways are first to be assayed in the case of private offences. Therefore

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says Christ, *Tell thou him alone*. [6.] It is the gaining or saving of a brother, to reclaim him from his sin: and an obligation put upon the reclaimed sinner toward the brother who admonished him; for, says he, *Thou hast gained thy brother*. [7.] We are bound to hear and obey private admonition, even as we would be saved, for *If he hear thee*, says he, *thou hast gained thy brother*.

17. *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

Now he teaches how to proceed if private admonition prevail not. DOCTRINE: [1.] If private admonition profit not, and the party admonished will not amend, we must not give over the cure of his scandalous course, but must use further means and take the assistance of some others to help to reclaim him. Therefore says he, *Take with thee one or two more*. [2.] The admonition of two or three serves to convince the offender of his fault the more clearly, or to bear witness against him in case of his disobedience, for *In the mouth of two or three witnesses every truth shall be established*.

18. *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

The former failing, he teaches what further must be done. DOCTRINE: [1.] When more private means avail not to remedy a scandal, Christ has appointed more and more public censure and discipline in his Church; for he says, *Go tell the Church*. [2.] Christ has appointed a Church of governors or rulers over congregations and over all particular persons within the same, which must attend the complaints of the offended, and remove scandals, and who have power to call before them and to examine and censure the offender for that end; for so imports Christ's saying, *Tell it unto the Church*. [3.] The Church has means and power to remove public scandal, which being employed by the Church and

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obeyed by the offender, excommunication is not to be used; for *neglecting to hear the church* presupposes the Church direction and order to be given forth for amendment of the offender and removing of the scandal. [4.] When the Church has given sentence upon the offender and has appointed the way to remove the scandal, then the offender should obey in the Lord, for Christ declares it a censurable fault to *neglect to hear the Church*. [5.] If the offender disobey the Church's direction for removing of the scandal then the Church may and should excommunicate the obstinate; that is, declare him to be deprived of the honour of a Christian, till he repent, and to be holden in such disrespect as the heathen and publicans were by the Jewish Church in those days; for, *Let him be to thee such*, presupposes he is found and declared by the Church to be holden for such. [6.] When the Church declares an offender contumacious, or excommunicates him as unworthy of the fellowship of the saints for his present abominable condition, then every believer must carry himself toward the excommunicate as toward a man disgraced and cast out of Church honour; for Christ has said, *Let him be unto thee as a heathen man*, that is, as one outside the Church, *and a publican*, that is, a despised sinner, for so were publicans esteemed of among the Jews, to the intent the offender may be ashamed of his sin and repent.

18. *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Here our Lord confirms the authority given to the Church or assembly of church governors. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Church, or assembly of church governors, has authority from Christ in Christ's name to pronounce guilty and liable to judgment, and to pronounce absolution and remission of sin as they find cause: for says he, *whatsoever ye bind or ye loose*. [2.] Christ will ratify in heaven what the Church assembled do in his name in the exercise of the keys of doctrine and discipline, whether to the condemning of the guilty or absolving of the penitent: for he says, *It shall be bound in heaven ... loosed in heaven*.

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*19. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.*

*20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

To give assurance that the execution of his ordinances by the Church shall be ratified in heaven, Christ shows them that the consent of never so few of his saints, agreeing together upon a petition to God, shall have a blessed effect in heaven; how much more shall the consent of the Church rulers in execution of public ordinances be ratified, and have effect; and this he further confirms by certifying us of his gracious presence where never so few, two or three, suppose there be no more rulers in some small congregations, are met in his name: much more when a greater number do assemble and meet for his public service. Hence learn: [1.] For mutual edification one Christian may take the help of another for prosecuting jointly some particular petition before God, for it is said, *If two of you shall agree on a petition, &c.* [2.] God does so love the communion of saints that the consent of more of his children in one supplication has the encouragement of this particular promise; for, *What they ask shall be done*. [3.] If the consent of some shall be blessed when they jointly prosecute one petition, much more may the Church be confident that their public consenting to the execution of Christ's ordinances shall be blessed, for this the scope of the speech imports. [4.] No meeting or gathering together of the saints can have expectation of a blessing except it be in Christ's name, that is, in so holy a manner and upon such warrantable grounds, as his glory and the welfare of his church



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be promoted thereby and not hindered; for he promises his presence only to such *as are gathered in his name*.

21. *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times?*

22. *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.*

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For clearing of the matter of private admonition and public censure a question is moved by Peter, how often we should forgive offences to our brethren professing repentance, which Christ answers. Hence learn, that it seems to our corrupt nature that we should not forgive faults to the same person many times falling therein; for, *How oft?* and *till seven times*, which seems abundance, imports so much. From Christ's answer learn: [1.] We should set no number to the times of forgiving the penitent, were it until *seventy times seven times*, that is, how oft so ever. [2.] The Lord delights in large mercy and stands not how oft so ever to give mercy, providing the party be truly penitent, for otherwise we must deceive ourselves, God will not be mocked: for he that commands man to show mercy so often will not refuse to give mercy himself.

23. *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants.*

24. *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents.*

25. *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.*

26. *The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

27. *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

28. *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.*

29. *And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.*

30. *And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.*

31. *So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry and came and told unto their lord all that was done.*

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32. *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:*

33. *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?*

34. *And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.*

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

This doctrine is cleared and confirmed by a parable, the scope whereof is to show that except we be willing to forgive and do forgive particular injuries done to us, however often our brother shall desire pardon, we cut ourselves off from being pardoned of God, against whom we do sin oftener than any man can do against us. According then to the scope of the parable we are taught: [1.] that our sins against God are more, and more heavy, than any which our brethren commit against us, for men's injuries against us are but pennies in comparison, but our faults against God are thousands of talents. [2.] God is readier to forgive us our greater sins than we are ready to forgive our brethren their petty offences against

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us. [3.] The consequences of God's mercy toward us should move us to be merciful one toward another. [4.] He who will not forgive his brother his trespasses and that from the heart sincerely, the Lord will not forgive that man his sins, but will cast him into hell till he pay for all his sins, and that shall never be. To dispute here of the recalling of remission of sins is without ground, and not to the purpose, for the scope is fulfilled in this, that as the wicked servant who did not forgive his fellow servant got not forgiveness but was cast into gaol, and into the tormentors' hands, so neither should any get forgiveness from God who did not forgive men their trespasses.

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## CHAPTER 19

Christ comes from Galilee to Judea and heals the sick (vv 1–2). Clears the cases of divorcement and of single life (vv 3–12). Blesses young children (vv 13–15). Shows the impossibility of justification by works (vv 16–26). And the disciples' blessedness (vv 27–30).

*1. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan;*

*2. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there.*

Christ returns to Judea in his own time to help such as he had a mind to. DOCTRINE: The sick and diseased, and such as find need of Christ, will seek after him. Such are his train who follow him and who will find relief in him, for *he healed them all who came.*

*3. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?*

*4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?*

*5. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.*

*6. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

Christ's enemies move the question about divorcement to make him odious either to men or women, howsoever he should answer. Hence learn: [1.] Whithersoever Christ Went, as he had disciples, so he had adversaries who did ever seek to make him odious to the people, that his doctrine

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should be the less fruitful. Here are cavillers asking, *Is it lawful?* &c. [2.] Ignorance of Scripture is the cause of error and of idle questions; for *Have ye not read?*, says Christ. [3.] To come to the institution of any ordinance of God is the way to correct the abuses of it, as here in the matter of marriage Christ goes to the first institution of marriage, saying, *He which made them*. [4.] Marriage of one man with one woman and no more at once is God's ordinance, founded upon the creation of the first couple, for he made them only *one* male and *one* female, to the end that this matrimonial love might be incommunicable to any other and indissoluble one from another, for *they two shall be one flesh*. [5.] The band of man and wife for mutual society is more inteer<sup>1</sup> than of parents and children. Yea, it is a sort of unity so that man and wife become *as one flesh*; for in regard of mutual affection and agreement, for the mutual welfare one of another, *they are no more two, but one flesh*. [6.] Where God does not give warrant to loose marriage, neither consent of parties nor any human authority can lawfully loose; for *what God hath conjoined let not man put asunder*.

7. *They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away?*

8. *He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.*

9. *And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.*

The Pharisees do object<sup>2</sup> the bill of divorcement and Christ shows that this does not free any man from sin who (except in the case of adultery) shall put away his wife. Hence learn: [1.] That patrons of error will wrest Scripture and set it in opposition to truth: for *Why did Moses*, &c, say the Pharisees. [2.] Moses' ordinance about the bill of divorcement was no allowance of the divorcement, but a

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judicial or civil law providing for the credit and safety of the honest woman: for the sum of it was, *I find no fault with this woman, only I cannot love her*, so she was clear, and this civil permission did deliver the man from civil punishment only, but not from sin: therefore says he, *Moses suffered you*. [3.] The civil punishment was spared and the bill of divorcement permitted for the hardness of the man's heart, who if he should not have been suffered to put away his wife would have some way taken away her life; for *Moses suffered you, for the hardness of your heart*. [4.] This permission was but temporary and for a time, but the first and ancient institution of marriage behoved<sup>3</sup> to be the rule whereby to correct abuses crept in; therefore says Christ, *From the beginning it was not so*. [5.] Marriage is loosed by adultery and the innocent party is free: for he makes exception of fornication as a cause making the party injured to be free to put away the adulteress. [6.] And in case the unlawfully divorced party be married to another, it is adultery, for so does Christ pronounce.

*10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.*

The disciples think this doctrine hard, for in case divorcement were not lawful, they say it were better not to marry than to be so straitly bound in marriage. In them we see: [1.] How impatient our nature is of all restraint, and how much we love to be at liberty even from the bands of God, for *If so it be, it is not good to marry*, say they. [2.] Sudden resolutions and sentences are readily full of folly: for here the disciples neither do look to their own strength or rather inability to live in a single life, nor do they consider the incommodities of an unmarried life, nor the commodities of marriage, where God gives a blessing.

*11. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*

*12. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there*

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*be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*

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Our Lord's answer has this meaning: every man is not able to receive this saying of yours, that is, to live without marriage lawfully, except either he be an eunuch by nature, born impotent, unfit for marriage; or an eunuch by art of man, gelded; or an eunuch by grace, to whom God has given power over all his natural affections, and the gift of continency to live unmarried, and for this end, that he may be so helped more constantly and without diversion to go on toward the kingdom of heaven. Hence learn: [1.] That no man ought to despise or rashly reject marriage, it being God's ordinance, and a means to keep men from fornication, for all men cannot receive this saying of *better not marry* &c. [2.] If any man be freed of the necessity of marriage, he ought to employ himself so much the more for the kingdom of God; else the gift is to small use, for he that is able to live unmarried and to receive the disciples' saying, he to whom this gift is given, *must be as an eunuch unto the kingdom of God.*

*13. Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.*

Some desired Christ to bless their young children, and to this end present them to him. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although little children understand not the mysteries of Christ, yet it is lawful and commendable to believing parents to consecrate their children to Christ and to seek his blessing, with the external signs and seals of the blessing on them; for here, *They brought unto him little children, that he should lay his hands on them, and pray.* [2.] Carnal wisdom is not fit to judge of the extent of Christ's grace, nor what persons are privileged to come to him: for here in the disciples it is carnal wisdom to *thrust away children offered unto Christ.*

*14. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

*15. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.*

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Christ admits the children and reproves the disciples for debarring them. Hence learn: [1.] That Christ will not exclude the young children of believers being offered to him, for Christ said, *Suffer little children to come unto me.* [2.] Although little children know not what to ask or what is

done to them, yet can Christ give both his blessing and the signs thereof to them; the ignorance of little children did not exclude them from the sacrament of circumcision, nor these children from imposition of Christ's hands, in sign of a special blessing. Neither must this exception of children's ignorance exclude our children from baptism, for this holds still, *Suffer them to come unto me*. [3.] Seeing little children of believers are neither excluded from the kingdom of heaven in this earth, that is, from being members of the visible church; nor are they secluded from the kingdom of heaven which is above; therefore are they not excluded from receiving the signs and seals of the right and entry to such grace, namely the seal of the covenant, *baptism*; for it is said, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. [4.] If Christ did esteem it a sufficient reason why not only these little children, but also, why in general, *little children* should be admitted to the signs of his blessing, because *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*, then, who is he who, after he has heard the disciples reprov'd for debarring of such, dare debar any such from the first sign of entry into Christ's kingdom; for Christ has said, by way of reason-giving for their admission, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*, and *He laid his hand on these*, for example.

16. *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

Here comes a young man, very holy in his own estimation, and hopes to be approved of Christ. In the example of this youth, observe: [1.] That a natural man may perceive that true happiness is not in riches, but in eternal life; for this rich youth, having riches for this life, seeks *life eternal*. [2.] A natural man may have a desire of heaven, for so has this youth, that he may *have life*. [3.] The natural man is utterly ignorant of justification by faith in Christ and inclined to seek justification by works, for he says,

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*What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?* [4.] The natural man presumes on his own strength as able to do whatever good work can be prescribed to him, for *What shall I do?* says he. [5.] A natural man may seem to have a good estimation of Christ and call him *Good Master*, and make fair offers to serve God and follow the commands of Christ, and yet be found void of all real truth herein, which to himself and others he seems to have, as in this man is found.



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17. *And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

18. *He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness.*

19. *Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

In Christ's answer learn: [1.] Christ loves no compliments of fair words which proceed not from sound faith and love to him. Therefore says he, *Why callest thou me good?* [2.] Christ will be known to be God by them who come to him, or else they cannot worship him aright; for the reproof being fitted to allay the young man's high estimation of himself (who could not speak a right word), imports this much: *Give me not divine attributes, seeing thou takest me not to be God,* or give me not fairer words than thy judgment and affection do allow. [3.] In proper speech, only *God is good*, by whom alone a man must be *made good*, made to *do good*, and made to receive good, for there is *One good, even God*. [4.] Such as seek justification and eternal life by works must be taught that to keep the whole law in all points without the least sin is the only way to heaven by works (which way to every man now polluted with sin is the impossible). There is no better way to humble a proud Pharisee than to teach him soundly the mind of the law. Therefore says Christ, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* [5.] The precepts of the second table wherein Pharisees conceive themselves most perfect are a sufficient touchstone whereby to try their unfruitfulness

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and imperfection: therefore Christ names only the commands of the second table.

20. *The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?*

From this imprudently false answer learn: [1.] That the natural man knows not the law's meaning rightly, but conceives of it as if it did command some external duties only, and did forbid only some of the

grossest of sins, and did not reach to the utmost branch of every duty and sin in the inner man, no less than in the outward acts. Therefore says this ignorant, *All these have I kept.* [2.] A short exposition of the law makes a large opinion of righteousness and keeping of the law; therefore says he, *All these have I kept from my youth up.* [3.] All the righteousness that a natural man can conceive himself to have attained to will not give true quietness to his conscience, for this youth, for all this, is asking *What lack I yet?*

*21. Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

In Christ's answer, observe: [1.] That Christ will put the men who have a high estimation of themselves to special trials that their inabilities may be openly known; as here, *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all.* [2.] Every man is bound to bestow, as God directs, all which God has given to him, goods, lands and life, when he is called by God to it. And therefore Christ gives not here a simple counsel to this man, but a special command to renounce the love of riches, which was his idol, and to bestow his goods as he was commanded, and that upon promise of more durable riches in heaven, that so he may make the man who would appear perfect to be seen a gross worshipper of mammon, for *Sell and give to the poor* is a particular and express command given to this man. [3.] Presuppose that a man upon a special command sold all and distributed all to the poor, as was commanded to this man, yet to the perfecting of him there will be required more; to wit, that he should

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be a follower of Christ, enter himself Christ's disciple, deny himself, take up his cross and follow Christ, that so he might have righteousness and life eternal by him alone; for it is here written, *If thou wilt be perfect, not only sell all &c, but also, and come and follow me.*

*22. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

The young man had no will for this blessed bargain, but goes away sorrowful. In the example learn: [1.] Trials do bring men forth to the light and make them manifest what they are, as here this youth, *He went away.* [2.] A man wedded to the love of this world will renounce Christ

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and his commands rather than the world, when it comes to a proof, especially if he be a great man in the world; therefore it is marked, *that he had great possessions*. [3.] A natural man may be sorrowful when he cannot win heaven in his own way, when he cannot get heaven and his own will in this world also; for it is said, *He went away sorrowful*.

23. *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

24. *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

25. *When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?*

26. *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*

Upon this man's departure Christ teaches his disciples wholesome lessons; wherein learn: [1.] That Christ edifies his Church upon all occasions, whether men join themselves to him or separate from him, as here. [2.] It is as impossible to have riches and not to trust in them, not to be ensnared and hindered from heaven by them as for a camel (or cables too) to go through a needle's eye, by reason of the natural corruption which is in man, ready to entangle and drown the man's mind and his time and

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affections in the world, and in the cares and pleasures of it. Therefore says Christ, *A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*. [3.] Whatever difficulties be told us of in the way to heaven, they serve only to make us despair of our own strength and abilities and to flee in unto God to whom nothing is impossible, for he can so loose the heart of a man from the world as riches shall be no impediment to hinder him from heaven, and whatever else is impossible to us he can make it possible and bring it to pass, for *with God all things are possible*.

27. *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore?*

28. *And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

29. *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 hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

Here upon occasion Christ shows the felicity of his faithful disciples. In Peter's question, learn: [1.] Although it be little that we suffer for Christ, yet we think much of it, for Peter's worldly case in following Christ was little worse than when he traded only in the fishing, notwithstanding he thus speaks, saying, *We have forsaken all*, as if it had been some great matter. [2.] Howsoever it be not worthy to speak of what we do or suffer for Christ, yet the least thing done in sincerity is not despised by Christ, but highly esteemed and richly rewarded; for Christ promises *a reward*. [3.] Christ does not narrowly mark the infirmities of his own, but cherishes the smallest beginnings and foment the smoking flax, as here may be seen in his answer to Peter. Although Peter's speech smells of pride, yet he passes it over, saying, *Verily I say unto you &c.* [4.] Although Christ does not always answer his people's expectation, by giving them the very thing which they look for, yet he will not fail to give them a better thing, as here the

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apostles dreamed of an earthly kingdom and of earthly honours to be given to Christ and themselves. This he will not give them, but he leads them higher, showing them that what they loved to have in this life should be given them in substance and in a more eminent way in the life to come, to wit, a kingdom to each of them, which should be satisfactory to them, and that instead of the kingdom which they did affect over the twelve tribes of Israel, in their earthly conceit of his kingdom, saying, *Ye shall sit upon thrones*. [5.] The day of judgment shall be a sort of regeneration wherein our bodies and souls shall be renewed perfectly, for glory and immortality. Therefore Christ calls that time, *In the regeneration*. [6.] At that day Christ, even in his human nature, shall be seen to reign in glory suitable to his divine majesty, for *He shall sit on the throne of his glory*. [7.] Such as follow Christ must resolve for Christ's

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sake to be deprived of what is dear to them in this life, if he shall be pleased to put them to trial; that is imported in, *Every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren, &c.* [8.] What men lose for Christ shall breed them gain, a hundredfold even in this life: because the comforts and privileges of Christ's kingdom are a hundredfold better than anything they can be deprived of, for the gospel's cause, for says he, *They shall receive a hundredfold.* [9.] Besides what spiritual gain is gotten in this life to such as suffer for the gospel, life eternal is also given for an inheritance in the world to come, which is able to make up all losses sustained for Christ; for it is said, *And they shall inherit eternal life.*

*30. But many that are first, shall be last; and the last shall be first.*

Howsoever Christ esteems much of what his servants suffer for him, yet he gives advertisement to Peter and the rest, and in them to all men, that they should not conceit of any merit in their sufferings or worth in any other specious excellency, but to study rather to be humble and sincere, because at the time of God's reckoning many who in their own eyes and before men were first, should be found to be last, that is, of no esteem with God: and such as in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world seemed nothing,

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should be with God in prime estimation. Many who in the conceit of their own merit were first, in the reward should be last and of no account, and many who in the opinion of the merit were last and worthy of nothing should be first in the reward; this is imported in the saying, *But many that are first shall be last, &c.*

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## CHAPTER 20

Christ shows in a parable how many that are last shall be first (vv 1–16). Forewarns his disciples of his sufferings (vv. 17–19). Dischargeth<sup>1</sup> prelacy among them (vv 20–28). Heals two blind men (vv 29–34).

1. *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.*

2. *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.*

3. *And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market place,*

4. *And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.*

5. *Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.*

6. *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?*

7. *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.*

8. *So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the' labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.*

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9. *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.*

10. *But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny.*

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11. *And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house,*

12. *Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.*

13. *But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?*

14. *Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee,*

15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?*

16. *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

The scope of the parable is to show that such as conceit of the merit of their works are of no estimation with God who gives eternal life of free grace and not of merit. The parable is propounded (to verse 16) and applied to the purpose or scope (verse 16). To this intent: as in the vineyard all these labourers who esteemed much of their own labour, notwithstanding they had wrought longer than others, yet were last taken notice of, least esteemed of, and disappointed of their expectation, and rebuked as adversaries to free grace, but such as had no confidence in their own working were first rewarded and liberally dealt with, so it is in the visible church, (which is the vineyard of the Lord). Such as esteem most of their own works, merits and sufferings shall be least esteemed of by God: but such as have no confidence in their own works, shall be

first taken notice of and, most liberally dealt with. *Thus the last shall be first and the first shall be last.* A reason whereof is given from the paucity of the elect in comparison of the greater number of those who are externally called but not elect, herein giving us to understand that it is grace to be employed in any service or suffering for Christ with any sincerity, and it is grace to have a low estimation of ourselves and of whatever we do or suffer for the gospel; as also to have our persons and works acceptable to God and graciously rewarded with eternal life. It flows altogether from God's grace and free love, electing such a

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one to holiness and blessedness, and not from any good thing in the person. And here let us remember that neither similitude nor parable are to be followed further than the scope, and intention of the speaker. True it is that many witty similitudes may be made here to represent God's care of his Church; men's duty in serving God in their callings; God's encouraging men to work by setting before them a reward; God's calling of some men in their youth, some in their old days; the distributing to every man the reward of his work after this life is ended; and such like. But their doctrines are not soundly grounded on this place, wherein the scope only is to be the rule of the exposition, wherefrom, if a man once depart, he may easily fall, not only into impertinent questions, but also into perilous conceptions and such as are contrary to the scope. For if the *penny* be the reward, and the reward be eternal life; if the penny be made *hire* or due by debt and all the workers do get the *penny*, then by this parable all shall be saved, and all shall be saved by merit of their work. Then all shall be equal in the gift of eternal life which they make the *penny of reward*, and so none shall be first or last, and none shall be workers in the vineyard or visible Church but the elect only: and so the parable shall be close everted<sup>2</sup> and turned to be contrary to the scope expressly declared in the text. Thus much may suffice for advertisement to be sober in the exposition not only of this but of all other parables, that nothing be a ground to build upon, save what the Lord the speaker intends as the scope.

*17. And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,*



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*18. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,*

*19. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again.*

In Christ's forewarning the disciples of his sufferings, and that in the way while he went the last time to Jerusalem,

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learn: [1.] How necessary it is that the doctrine of the cross be often inculcated, that being provided for before, it may trouble us less when it shall come: for this is it which, in sundry times before, Christ had told them. [2.] The often foretelling of our Lord's passion serves to confirm us of the resolute willingness of the Redeemer to suffer for us, for he knew all that he was to suffer and was never dashed.<sup>3</sup> [3.] It is necessary that we never separate the consideration of the cross from the issue, nor Christ's death from his resurrection which followed, lest we be overcome and stumble at the cross, for Christ always joins the mentioning of both together.

*20. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.*

*21. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.*

Concerning the request made to Christ for preferment of the two apostles, James and John, learn: [1.] How hard a thing it is to be rid of the love of this world, and of pleasant dreams about it, for still the apostles and their friends did dream of an earthly kingdom of Christ, and of worldly honour to his servants, notwithstanding Christ did so often tell them the contrary, and did study to prepare them for the cross rather, in this world. [2.] How necessary it is for all men to watch over their *hearts*, that the love of the honour of this world creep not in upon them, when occasion of a bait offers; for in hope of prevailing by their mothers moyen,<sup>4</sup> these two chief apostles are thus tickled and entangled with a vain and corrupt lust! [3.] What means and moyen men will employ to

gain any earthly thing which they love! The mother for her natural bands with Christ must be set on to make suit; a preface must be made in general in her speech, to oblige Christ, for fear of refuse, if the particular should first have been propounded:

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*I desire a certain thing of thee, says she, Grant that these my sons, &c.*

*22. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.*

From Christ's answer learn: [1.] That when the ministers of the gospel hunt for high places in the world they know not what they are doing; nor how foolish they are in so doing, as Christ says here: *Ye know not what ye ask.* [2.] The preferment and kingdom which we should affect, is in another world and we must prepare us for the cross with Christ ere we come to the kingdom with him. *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?* [3.] From the two disciples' undertaking learn that men least acquainted with the cross are most confident undertakers; for they say, *We are able.*

*23. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

Christ puts them in mind of suffering rather than reigning, and of suffering in this world ere they could reign in the world to come. Hence learn: [1.] Such as suffer for Christ suffer no other thing but such as Christ suffered also, for *Ye shall drink*, says he, *of my cup.* [2.] A certain measure of affliction was fitted and measured out for Christ and his followers, which Christ esteemed to be but light, and of most short endurance; to wit, *a cup* soon drunk, a douk,<sup>s</sup> a dipping, or a sprinkling with affliction, *a baptism*, as the original imports. [3.] To appoint what degrees every believer shall have in glory, in comparison one of another, or who shall have less, who more, is no part of the commission given to Christ when he was sent into the world; it appertains not to Christ. Again, it is not his, without the Father, as the petitioner conceived; *it is not mine to give.*

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As likewise speaking as a man, more sib<sup>6</sup> to one than to another, as here he was looked on, or as if at his own pleasure for gratifying of friends he might distribute degrees of glory in heaven; in this sense also he says, *It is not mine to give, to those &c.* [4.] There shall be degrees of glory in heaven comparable to sitting on the right hand to some, and on the left hand to others; for our Lord denies not this, but insinuates it in the manner of his answer. [5.] These degrees of glory shall not be distributed with respect to men's works or deservings, or to any thing in the persons to be glorified, but merely according to the good pleasure of God, and his decree, preparing and predetermining what shall be every man's measure; for *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared*, says he: and in this sort of distribution Christ denies not but that it belonged to him as one in substance and government with the Father to give degrees of glory; for the original is *It is not mine to give, save to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

24. *And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.*

The rest of the apostles were no less ambitious than these were in this particular, yet are they angry at these two. DOCTRINE: Men will be angry at others for a fault whereof they themselves are guilty, and nothing grieved for it in their own person: as the ten were moved *with indignation when they heard this*, and yet were neither free of the same fault themselves, nor grieved for it, so diversely is sin shaped in our own person and in others.

25. *But Jesus called them unto him, and said Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

26. *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister:*

27. *And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*

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Our Lord takes occasion from this to beat down and root out this wicked weed of prelacy. This strife for state or majority of power was reprov'd before and yet it is not amended. DOCTRINE: [1.] Hard is it to root out the seed of a beloved sin, especially the root of prelatical ambition. It cannot be drawn out till it be repented, for it is hard to put it out of the apostles' hearts. [2.] To cut off strife, our Lord did esteem it a fit means to take away all domination in the Church and all majority of power among the men of one office in his house; for where there is no higher place, where there is no greater power to one than to another, there all strife for the place of more power ceases. *It shall not be so among you*, says Christ. [3.] The Lord allows domination and principality and greatness and exercising of authority in the civil state, but will not allow it among the ministers of the gospel; for having granted domination to civil governors, he excludes Churchmen from it, saying, *But it shall not be so among you*. [4.] It is not the abuse of majority of power which our Lord forbids his ministers, but simply and absolutely he discharges<sup>7</sup> *all majority of power, all greatness of Jurisdiction of one over the rest*, and curbs the very wishes and will of being great among their fellow ministers, speaking to every one of his ministers, saying, *Whosoever will be great among you*. [5.] So far must the apostles and ministers of the gospel be from affecting state and majority of power over the rest that, as they would please our Lord, they must set themselves to serve the rest of their brethren. Each must promote the work of Christ in others' hands, by each maintaining the credit of others' ministry; for he says, *Let him be your minister, or servant*. [6.] Not only does our Lord discharge all majority of power among the apostles, and, in their persons, among the preachers of the gospel, but also all stately primacy or dignitary priority, and all chiefness, even though without jurisdiction, such as constant and unchangeable precedency in assemblies. And therefore he prescribes the curbing of this inclination by enjoining the study of mutual submission, each man serving the rest for the furtherance of the common work; for *Let him be your servant* imports this. [3.] If this command does not prevail with the ambitious

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party, but he must needs bring forth his ambitious desires, then the rest of the ministers are warranted to diminish of that man's estimation and to account the less of him by so much as he is ambitiously inclined to a

principality and majority over the rest, for so do the words bear, *Let him be your servant*, that is, Let him be so esteemed of, and no more.

29. *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

Our Lord clears his doctrine by his own example, showing them how he humbled himself for the public good. DOCTRINE: [1.] The example of our Lord's humiliation of himself serves to curb all ambition in his ministers, and if it prevail not, shall bear witness against them, for *Even the Son of Man*, says he, *came not to be ministered unto*. [2.] Christ in his first coming came not to take up an earthly dominion or a stately pre-eminence as his disciples imagined, but came in the shape and state of a servant, and behaved himself so, as he was ready for the good of his disciples to wash their feet; for he came not to reign in a worldly manner, but to serve in the external ministry of the gospel. *He came*, says he, *to minister*. [3.] Ministers should not only quit prelacy for the good of the Church, but their life also, if need be; for Christ, out of the love to men's salvation, not only emptied himself of stately dominion but also emptied himself of liberty and life, *and gave himself a ransom for many*.

30. *And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.*

31. *And, behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

Among these that countenance Christ and follow him from Jericho, two are marked. DOCTRINE: [1.] Of all the multitude of Christ's followers those are the most remarkable persons who give to Christ most employment and draw most virtue

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by faith out of him: therefore above all, *these two blind men* are specially here noted. [2.] Whatever else we need, it is wisdom to seek of God the greatest things, for these men are not so curious for alms of money, although they were beggars, as to have the benefit of the Mediator's mercy. *Have mercy on us*, say they. [3.] Whosoever craves any benefit by Christ must be clear in this point, that Christ is the promised Messiah; for, *Son of David* is their great argument. [4.] We must believe his power

and love as God incarnate, able and willing to save us, for so do they, saying, *O Lord, thou Son of David.*

*31. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

From the discouragement offered to them, learn: [1.] It is no new thing that such as in appearance are following Christ do hinder those who are following him in earnest; for, *the multitude rebuked these poor men, and will have them to hold their peace.* [2.] But it is wisdom for such as believe in Christ, the more they are opposed, the more to seek him, and to take no answer from any, but from himself: for so do these blind men who do not forsake their petition till it be granted. 32. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

*33. They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.*

*34. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

Christ hears them and falls in conference with them. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ takes notice of such supplicants as the multitude despises. He *stands still* to hear these blind men's suit. [2.] Where there is faith and sincerity the Lord will draw it forth to open view for his own glory, and the good of the believer; therefore, *He asks what they would have*, that it might be known that they did not seek money

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but the fruit of his divine power. [3.] When misery is laid forth in faith before Christ he meets it with compassion, as here in these blind men, for he is a compassionate high priest. [4.] It is easy for Christ to do every greatest work, as here to open the eyes of the blind, and to give sight to them; for *he touched their eyes, and they immediately received sight.* [5.] It is reason that what gift we get of Christ we employ it for his honour, for *their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

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## CHAPTER 21

Christ rides into Jerusalem (vv 1–11). Casts out the buyers and sellers out of the temple (vv 12–17). Curses the fig tree (vv 18–22). Defends his own authority against the Pharisees' challenge (vv 23–27). And in two parables sets down their sin and God's judgment in rejecting of them (vv 28–46).

1. *And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,*
2. *Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.*
3. *And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.*

In this, Christ's last voyage to Jerusalem, observe: [1.] That Christ being resolved to lay down his life, the more near he draws to his suffering the more he reveals himself to be the promised Messiah, in whom the promises were accomplished. Therefore he will now go *riding into Jerusalem*. [2.] Again, lest the nature of his kingdom should be mistaken, he will give evidence in his poverty that his kingdom is not of this world. Therefore he will *borrow an ass to ride on*. [3.] He has right to whatsoever he likes to make use of, as he shows in commanding the disciples *to loose the ass and her colt and to bring them to him*. [4.] His knowledge reaches to the observation of the meanest things and takes notice of *asses* and their *colts* and their *bindings and loosings*. [5.] Whatever impediment can occur to any of his servants in their course of obedience to him, he foresees it and provides for the removing thereof; as here, *If any say ought unto you &c.* [6.] He knows the master of the ass will be within, and what he will say, and foretells how he shall dispose of his will and move him without any more to

let them go; for the hearts of kings and countrymen are in his hand: and thus he lets his disciples see a glimpse of his Godhead, saying, *Straightway he will send them*. [7.] Although he be Lord of all yet will he make use of what his friends have with their own consent, so that they may be reasonable servants, with good will bestowing what he calls for. Therefore

says he, *Straightway he will send them.* [8.] He is not ashamed to profess himself Lord and Master and yet to be so far emptied as to have need of the service of an ass: *Say, says he, the Lord hath need of them.*

4. *All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,*

5. *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass.*

6. *And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them.*

The evangelist makes his observation on this passage. Whence learn: [1.] Our Lord will see to the performance of all things written of him. He is the promise-maker and the performer also. Therefore it is said, *This was done that it might be fulfilled &c.* [2.] It is not our deserving but God's purpose and promise which is the cause of our Lord's gracious carriage toward the world, for now he is to be killed in Jerusalem, yet will he ride in as King, to accomplish promises made to the Church *by the prophet Zechariah.* It is sufficient to observe the sense of a Scripture quoted, for the Scripture stands not in letters or in syllables, but in sense of words. Compare this with Zechariah 9:9. [4.] It is the matter of the Church's joy and gladness to know of Christ and of his coming to his people; whatsoever be their grief this is sufficient to be their comfort. Therefore said the Spirit for comfort, *Tell the daughter of Zion.* [5.] It matters not how the world fare, it is *the daughter of Zion,* the company of the elect and believers in Jesus, whose comfort God respects. Therefore it is said, *Tell the daughter of Zion.* [6.] Not only the dull multitude but even the *daughter of Zion* is asleep to the gracious tidings of the gospel, and has need to be stirred up, by a *behold,* to observe the Messiah come. Therefore says he, *Behold thy King.* [7.] Our

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Lord is a King, however lowly he look, yea, Lord of lords and King of kings; for he says, *Thy King cometh.* [8.] The Church has a special interest in Christ *as King,* and he has interest in his Church as his own peculiar subjects for whose good he governs all the matters of the world; for it is said, *Thy King cometh unto thee.* [9.] This is the glory of his crown that he is so *gentle* and merciful to us that he will not forsake the work of our redemption, neither for our misdeservings and provocations, nor



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for the injuries done to him by his adversaries for our cause; for, *He is meek*. [10.] The manner of his kingdom is spiritual, not after the pomp of the world, *sitting* upon no stately horse, but *on an ass colt*, so as the poorest of his subjects should not be deterred or debarred from access to him.

7. *And they brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.*

The disciples' obedience and success is observed. Hence learn; [1.] When we have a clear call, ready obedience is our part without troubling ourselves what may be the success; for, *The disciples went and did as he commanded them*. [2.] It is our part to honour Christ, so far as we can, and to lay aside our ornaments to glorify him; for *they put their clothes on the ass and the colt*. [3.] Christ contents himself for any state which is to keep in his kingdom here on earth, with what his disciples can furnish him, as here; for, *they set him thereon*, and so he rode.

8. *And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.*

The people are moved and do honour to Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] Howsoever base our Lord's kingdom may seem to spectators, yet he can bring to himself subjects how many he pleases, and so purchase himself glory, not only before a spiritual eye, but also in the sight of the world; for here, *great multitudes spread their garments in the way*. [2.] It is every man's part to honour our Lord, and set forward his kingdom as they are enabled, some one way, some another;

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for here *Some spread their garments, others cut down branches of trees, and strawed them in the way.*

9. *And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*

They take in their mouth words of Psalm 118 where it is prophesied of the coming of Christ to show himself king. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord can open the eyes of whomsoever he will, to see his glory and to give him honour as the true king of Israel, and to perceive the predictions

of prophecies to be accomplished in him; for here, *the people cried Hosanna*. [2.] The meaner sort of people are usually they whom the Lord chooses to set forth his glory and to be trumpeters of his praise; as here, *the multitudes go before and follow after*. [3.] When such as should know Christ and honour him do it not, God can raise up others to glorify him. The Churchmen here misregarded Christ and God stirs up *the multitudes* to confess him. [4.] When it pleases Christ to show his kingly power he can make the meanest of his subjects to avow him, and set forth his glory, even in the face of his raging enemies; for here (without fear of the corrupt Churchmen's excommunication) the people make joyful exclamation to his honour; they pray for the prospering of his kingdom and profess that salvation is the fruit thereof; for *Hosanna* in the Hebrew signifies *Give now salvation, we pray*. They do acknowledge Christ to be the promised Messiah, *the Son of David*, to be sent of God and in his name into the world, to be the Blessed and the fountain of blessing to his subjects, saying, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*.

10. *And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?*

Thus he enters openly in state into Jerusalem. Hence learn: [1.] When it pleases Christ to take to him his kingdom he will avow himself king in the midst of his enemies; as now he rides in this glory into Jerusalem. [2.] Where greatest show of religion is, it is no new thing to see Christ

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to be least known; for, *Who is this?* say they. [3.] Where he has a mind to honour himself in suffering, he will show himself so evidently as he may be taken notice of by his enemies; as here, *All the city was moved, saying, Who is this?*

11. *And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.*

The multitude describes Christ rudely, as he was commonly talked of. DOCTRINE: As men do know Christ so do they speak of him, and according to the measure of their knowledge should they bear witness of him; for this was the clearest description of him which the multitude could give; *This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth*, say they.

*12. And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.*

Christ shows himself King in purging of the temple. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is the work of King Jesus to take notice of religion and to purge it where he minds to reign. Therefore, *he went into the temple of God*, to purge it. [2.] Horrible abuses may creep in to the place of God's service, while men under pretence of furthering religion do follow courses for their own gain; as here, mercat<sup>t</sup> and money-changing are set up in the place where religion only was to be exercised. [3.] In this extraordinary way of reformation of his temple, he shows himself to be God, able to compass the most difficult works by what means he pleases, and to terrify his adversaries. [4.] Outward abuses, although not so great as inward, yet may they be begun at in reformation as here Christ does.

*13. And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

He gives a reason of his doing from Scripture. DOCTRINE: [1.] Reformation of religion is to be done according to

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Scripture by reducing abused ordinances to their first institution; for *It is written*, says he. [2.] All the ceremonial service appointed at the temple was subservient to the moral and spiritual duties; for it is said, *My house shall be called a house of prayer*. [3.] All the worship of God may be comprised in *prayer*, as it comprehends praises and thanksgiving, because the end of the ordinances is to make men know how to carry themselves towards God in praise and prayer. Therefore says he, *My house shalt be called the house of prayer*. [4.] Vilest sins seek shelter under the pretext of religion and there think *to lurk*. Therefore this is the challenge, *Ye have made my house a den of thieves*.

*14. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.*

When wicked men are scourged forth, blind and lame come and are healed. DOCTRINE: However harshly our Lord carry himself towards hypocrites and abusers of religion, yet will he deal graciously with the poor and needy who call for his help; for here, *The blind and lame come*

and are healed, in the temple, when buyers and sellers are scourged out of that place.

15. *And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.*

16. *And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?*

This glory of Christ grieves his enemies. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's enemies are never more incensed and malicious against him than when he is most honoured and shows his divine power most; therefore now *the scribes are displeased*. [2.] Wicked hypocrites are so blind that they see nothing of the beauty of God but only seek and find out matter to carp at. Therefore *they are displeased*, and say, *Hearest thou* &c. [3.] It is good for the children to hear their parents and the elder sort sing *Hosanna* to Christ, that they may

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learn to do the same; for here, as the elder so also *the children cried*. [4.] Christ is not ashamed of children's way of praising of him, as they are able and fitted for it. Therefore *Christ answered them, Yea*. [5.] If God can glorify himself in the mouths of babes and sucklings which cannot speak, making them from the womb to crave and receive by their mouth their nourishment without teaching, shall he not be glorified in training them up to speak, and to speak words of his own praise, in the measure of understanding suitable to their age? for, *Out of the mouths of babes he perfects praise*. [6.] Divers doctrines may pertinently be drawn from the same text upon divers occasions, and the same text may be well applied to divers purposes, without wresting of it, as will appear by comparing this place with Psalm 8, verse 2.

17. *And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there.*

He had his own intended work in Bethany; yet by his leaving of his adversaries he teaches us to cease from contention before it grow hot, and to cut short with our enemies, using as few speeches as may be; therefore it is said, *He left them*. [2.] In that by his going off the town,

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occasion of tumults and uproars were eschewed, we learn to eschew needless dangers, and to reserve ourselves to the time wherein God calls us to glorify him by suffering; for, *he went out of the city to Bethany.*

18. *Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungred.*

19. *And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.*

20. *And when the disciples saw it they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!*

21. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.*

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22. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Christ returns to the city and curses a fig-tree by the way. DOCTRINE: [1.] Where Christ has his own chosen to teach and his glory to advance, there will he be coming and going, though the place be wicked and his resort thither be dangerous; therefore, *in the morning he returned to the city.* [2.] How diligent was our Lord in his calling, when to do his Father's work he came from the country into the city, even in the morning ere he tasted meat, for it is said, *He hungred!* [3.] How oft did our Lord give evidence of the truth and kindness of his manhood! for *he is here hungry* and desirous to eat, yet more desirous to teach his disciples somewhat for their edification upon occasion of his being hungry, than to eat the sweetest figs, and therefore he makes the barren fig-tree to become the table whereupon he should feed and whereupon he should set, shortly after, ready food for his disciples. To move questions here, whether Christ was ignorant that there were no figs on this tree and why he cursed it, seeing it was not yet the time of figs, is idle. No doubt he knew what fruit to draw from it and he missed not what he expected;

but did obtain all that which he intended, to wit, that the disciples by this miracle might be taught to make use of the gift of miracles given to them; and certainly a tree was well bestowed (however birthy<sup>2</sup> it might have been) upon so noble a lesson to the Church. It is also without warrant to ground allegories here, as if Christ had intended to show that he desired fruits of the Church of the Jews, and of all professors of religion, and that, if they do not render fruits when he calls for them, then that he would curse them, and make them unable to bear fruit afterwards. Such like flowers<sup>3</sup> may seem pleasant but have no solidity, as from the intention of this miracle. I grant that allusions may be made to this tree, and similitudes may be drawn from it no less than from any other thing: but the scope which our Lord declares afterward is that only whereupon we must with warrant build; namely, he will show his almighty

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power in the blasting of so strong a tree with a word of his mouth so that the disciples *do wonder* to see the miracle (verse 20), Whereupon our Lord teaches them that whenever they should have his word for their warrant—whether extraordinarily inspired for the doing of any miraculous work in his name, or ordinarily propounded in the common doctrine of the Church—for a warrant to pray for and expect anything, if they should act their faith, and not give way to doubting, then they should be able to do greater miracles than the blasting of the fig-tree was, even the greatest which they could imagine. So that if the Spirit of the Lord gave a word for removing of a mountain (for example's cause), how impossible soever it might seem, yet should it come to pass if they did put forth their faith to act about it. And so also, whatsoever the word of the Lord did warrant them to pray for and to expect of him, they should obtain it if they did pray in faith for it. And was not this lesson worth all the figs which either this fig tree or any other tree could bear? DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord was never so hungry for meat and drink but he could forbear it till a fit time, and make it his meat and drink to be doing good and fulfilling the Father's will: for he loves to edify and feed his disciples here more than to feed his natural hunger. [2.] Although our Lord did never harm to any man by any of his miracles, yet had he power to curse and miraculously to destroy as well as to save, if he had pleased to put forth his power in justice, for the fig tree was not able to stand when he did curse it. [3.] He trained his disciples by his own example to all duties which he put them to, and here he trains them to the exercise of the gift of miracles. [4.] The gift of miracles was never

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to be exercised in particular but upon a ground of faith, that is, upon a warrant given from Christ's Spirit for doing of that work in particular, and it was necessary for him who had the gift and the warrant for doing of a miracle to strengthen his faith on the warrant, or else to miss of his intent, as in Peter's sinking did appear. Therefore says he, *If ye have faith and doubt not.* [5.] The Lord requires faith in prayer for obtaining promised mercies, or else if we come short, to blame our misbelief. Therefore says he, *Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it.*

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*23. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?*

Here is another conflict, teaching us: [1.] That when Christ's adversaries can say nothing against his doctrine, and are convinced by his miracles of his commission from God, yea, of his Godhead, yet do they quarrel with him about his calling, saying, *By what authority doest thou?* It is no strange thing if his adversaries deal so with his servants. [2.] This holds sure in the general that no man should take this honour to him to be a preacher of God's truth without warrant and authority: for so imports the question, *By what authority doest thou these things?*

*24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.*

*25. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?*

*26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet.*

Christ propounds another question to his adversaries. DOCTRINE: [1.] When cavillers come to tempt us and to take advantage of our speeches, we ought to be circumspect, that neither the truth be damnified<sup>4</sup> by us nor our adversaries get advantage against us. Therefore here Christ asks a question instead of giving an answer. [2.] The Lord can catch the crafty

in their craftiness, and can decipher the folly of them who seek to cloak wickedness under colours, for this question both answered the former and convinced the adversaries of wilful wickedness. For they knew John's calling and doctrine to be divine, and that John bare witness to Christ, and so they behoved to know Christ to be the Messiah. Therefore pertinently does he ask, *John's baptism: whence was it?* [3.] Callings to the

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holy ministry must either be from God, and so they are lawful, or from men only, and so they are unlawful. *They must either be from heaven or of men.* [4.] The sacraments and all religious service and worship must have the same authority with the doctrine, to wit, *divine*, for the question is moved about John's *baptism* instead of John's doctrine or John's *commission* or *calling*. [5.] Men of corrupt minds do seek, not the verity, but the victory in dispute; they do not look what is true or false, right or wrong, but what is most for their own corrupt ends and purpose, as the reasoning of these men shows: for the verity which they knew of John they will not confess for shame, nor dare they flatly deny it for fear the people should fall on the'!l. [6.] Whosoever confess a doctrine to be from heaven and yet do not believe it are inexcusable and condemned by their own conscience; for say they, *If we say from heaven, he will say, Why did ye not believe him?*

27. *And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

Christ has the victory here. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's enemies at last are confounded and put to silence; for *We cannot tell*, say they. [2.] One sin ensnares and draws a man into another sin, for they refuse to tell the truth and in refusing they fall into a lie, saying, *We cannot tell*. [3.] Such as captivate the knowledge they have, and make no use of it, are justly deprived of what further knowledge they pretend to seek; for, *Neither will I tell you* is Christ's last answer to such.

28. *But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.*

29. *He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went.*



30. *And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not.*

31. *Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them,*

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*Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*

Thus they have done with Christ; their plot is disappointed; but Christ pursues them, convincing them of disobedience and denouncing deserved judgment upon them, in two parables. The scope of the first is to show that sundry publicans and open sinners of whom they esteemed least were more righteous and blessed than *they* were, because the publicans, like the penitent son, repented their backwardness to God's commandments and were fled in by faith to the Messiah, and were made subjects of the kingdom of grace, and so heirs of the kingdom of glory. But *they*, notwithstanding of a fair profession of obedience to God, were like the other disobedient and counterfeit son, abiding still in their impenitency and unbelief, and in the way to be debarred from the kingdom of grace and glory. Hence learn: [1.] Men will more readily acknowledge their fault in another man's person than in their own; therefore Christ draws forth these men's judgment by a parable. [2.] He will have the conscience of the wicked subscribing to the righteousness of God's judgment against themselves, as will appear by, *What think ye?* compared with their answer. [3.] The most odious and despised sinners, repenting and believing in Jesus, do find grace and place both in the Church and in heaven above, but such as confide in their own righteousness are debarred; for, *harlots*, says Christ, *go into the kingdom of heaven before you.*

32. *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.*

Christ gives reason of the condemning these wicked men. DOCTRINE: [1.] The more blameless and holy that the preacher of repentance and righteousness by Christ be found, the greater is the sin of those who do

not receive the message; for so Christ aggravates these men's sin, saying, *John came in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not.* [2.] Although self-conceited, righteous people do not believe the doctrine of righteousness by Christ, yet God

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will manifest the power of his truth in the conversion of despised sinners; for *the harlots believed John*, although the Pharisees did not. The sight and example of other folks believing and repenting in Christ, if it does not move us to acknowledging of our sins also and flying to Christ, it shall stand as a witness against us, to aggravate our sin and condemnation. Therefore says he, *And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not.* [4.] Remorse for not believing God's word in his servants' mouth in time bygone is a special spur and preparative to believe it the more solidly for time to come. Therefore says he, *Ye repented not, that ye might believe him;* that is, when you saw that the publicans had outstripped you in the way of righteousness by believing John's testimony of me, ye did not lament your unbelief, that you might give him so much the more credit for time to come, and so recover your loss by faith in me.

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.*

34. *And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.*

35. *And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.*

36. *Again he sent other servants more than the first, and they did unto them likewise.*

37. *But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.*

38. *But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.*

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39. *And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.*

40. *When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?*

41. *They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.*

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Another parable, convincing them of their wickedness against God and his Son Christ, and denouncing judgment against them, and that whole ungrate<sup>s</sup> nation, under the similitude of a householder and his tenants, the substance whereof is this: as the tenants of the householder dealt with their master and his servants and his son, the heir of the vineyard, so the scribes and elders of the Jews, with the rest of that unthankful nation, dealt with God and his servants the prophets and with his Son Jesus Christ. And as the householder punished those wicked tenants of the vineyard, so should God punish that wicked nation by taking the gospel and face of a visible Church from them and giving their room to the Gentiles who should bring forth better fruits than they had done. From this parable learn: [1.] That the Lord's care of his visible Church is comparable to the care which the most painful husbandman has of his vineyard. He leaves nothing undone which may make it fruitful: he gives wholesome ordinances of doctrine, worship, discipline; erects governors, civil and ecclesiastic, appoints them (as his tenants) to press the fruits of a holy conversation from his people; and when they are remiss, he stirs up some special instruments, faithful prophets and preachers, to stir up all and to exact of all the fruit of his labour upon his people, as may be seen in his dealing with the Jewish Church. [2.] Ordinarily the Lord gets a bad meeting of his people, and specially of the rulers of the church who look more each man to his own ease, honour and gain than to the holy conversation of the people and glory of God; as the example of the Jewish doctors here and rulers of the Lord's people shows. [3.] When the body of church rulers is corrupt, if any of their fellows shall plead the Lord's cause against them, these faithful servants shall readily be persecuted, evil intreated, and killed for their pains, as is to be seen in

the example of the Jewish Church. [4.] As men deal with God's servants, so would they do with God himself, if he should come as a man to them, and put himself in their power, to try their affection to him, as is evident in the Jewish rulers, who slew Christ the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. [5.] When a people not only bring forth no fruits

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of the gospel, but also persecute such as stir them up to their duties, it is righteousness with God to pour out his plagues upon them, and go away from them to some other people, as he dealt with the Jews after many provocations.

*42. Jesus saith to 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?*

From the 118th Psalm our Lord shows that it was foretold how the rulers of the Church should deal with himself, the Messiah, and with what success. DOCTRINE: [1.] The not considering and believing of the Scriptures is the cause why many fulfil things foretold in the Scripture to their own ruin and condemnation; therefore says he, *Did ye never read?* [2.] The gathering of the Church is compared to the building of a temple wherein the ministers and rulers *are builders*. [3.] It was prophesied that Christ should be esteemed by the Churchmen in his time as a Stone, not worthy to have any room in the building, and therefore should be rejected and excommunicated by them; for it is written of Christ, *The stone which the builders refused*. [4.] Howsoever basely he was esteemed of by them, yet as he was indeed the ground-stone, the strength and glory of the Church, so should he be seen and acknowledged to be contrary to all opposition; for *This Stone is become the Head of the Corner*. [5.] The divine power of God appears most evidently in the exaltation of Christ in his Church beyond the expectation and contrary to the hearts of all his enemies; therefore says he, *This is the Lord's doing*. [6.] The works of God about his Church in setting up the throne of Christ is a most wonderful matter in the eyes of all who have understanding; for *It is marvellous in our eyes*, says the prophet.

*43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

Here Christ applies the last parable and the Psalm last cited to the scribes and rulers and to the rest of the rotten

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members of that Church. DOCTRINE: [1.] The gospel or the means of grace in a visible face of a Church is God's kingdom on earth and the greatest benefit that can be bestowed on a land; for so it is called here. [2.] The nation which does not bring forth the fruits of the gospel may justly be deprived of that privilege, as here is threatened, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you*. [3.] The church may be flitted from one nation to another but shall not cease to be among some people; for *It shall be given to another*, says Christ. Thus he foretells them of the rejection of the Jews and the in-bringing of the Gentiles.

*44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*

Having threatened the whole nation of the Jews, now he threatens all his enemies of every sort more specially, teaching us: [1.] That some will stumble at Christ as at a stone of offence, and will oppose him out of *ignorance*, and inadvertence, as men do fall on a stone in their way: and some will oppose him out of *malice* and will set themselves as adversaries to him, as the distinction of *falling on and being fallen upon* imports. [2.] The first sort shall not only not prevail against him but, as here is said, shall be broken also, either to their repentance, as *Paul* was, or to their perdition, as ignorant and misbelieving adversaries are. [3.] Such as are adversaries out of malice he will set himself against these, as here he says, *He will fall upon them* with his weight, and by his mighty power *grind them to powder*, that is, destroy them utterly by the highest degrees of punishment; and thus he tells the chief priests and Pharisees their own particular doom.

*45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.*

*46. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.*

These men take up Christ's meaning, but make no good use of the warning. DOCTRINE: [1.] Threatenings profit not

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but rather irritate desperately wicked men, as here they desired *to lay hands on him*. [2.] Christ's most malicious adversaries (though they be set for blood) yet can do no more than God will suffer them to do, as here is to be seen. [3.] As long as the body of the people do favour Christ's cause, persecutors will not vent all their designs against Christ and his followers; as here, *They sought to lay hands on Christ, but they feared the multitude*. [4.] The least good opinion of Christ will serve for some use; although not to the parties' salvation, yet to the advantage of Christ's cause, as here it served for some use, *for they took him for a prophet*.

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## CHAPTER 22

The parable of the marriage of the King's son (vv 1–14). The Pharisees tempt Christ about tribute to Caesar (vv 15–22). The Sadducees tempt him about marriage in the resurrection (vv 23–33). The Pharisees again tempt him about the greatest commandment in the law, and our Lord tries their skill in Scripture, by a question about the Messiah (vv 34–46).

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

The scope of this parable is to set forth the manner of acceptance of the gospel preached. Some reject the offer altogether; some not only reject the offer but abuse and persecute the Church and preachers of the gospel; some join themselves in truth into the fellowship of the grace of God in Christ; and some join themselves to the Church in hypocrisy, being called only externally, but not elected. All this is represented in a similitude

of the marriage of the King's son, in which parable or presupposed history we are given to understand: [1.] Communion and fellowship

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with Christ in all graces, in his Church visible, daily preached to the world, is like a feast, a marriage feast of the King's son, abounding in all means of life, and joy and honour; ready prepared and offered to men liberally and freely to be bestowed on such as will receive the offer, as is described (vv 1–4). [2.] The acceptance which the offer of the grace of Christ in the gospel receives at the hands of many men is like that which was given to the invitation to the King's feast; for many make light account of the offered favour, every man preferring his own naughty matters to the King's grace tendered to them (verse 5), and some not only reject the offer but also persecute and kill the preachers (verse 6). [3.] The rejecters of the gospel of God's grace in Christ, offered to them in the gospel, and much more the persecutors of the Lord's servants who make the offer, shall be served as these wicked and rebellious murderers were, that is, they shall be destroyed and perish in the just indignation of God (verse 7).

*8. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.*

*9. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.*

*10. 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.*

From this part of the parable learn: [1.] Refuse the gospel who will, and oppose it who will, God shall not lack a Church; but shall have as many as he pleases for the countenancing of his rich and free grace and glorifying of Jesus Christ, some coming into the gospel in truth, *good guests*; some coming into the church in hypocrisy, *bad guests*, and all, by the ministry of Christ's servants, represented by the furnishing of guests to the King's marriage feast.

*11. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:*



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12. *And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.*

13. *Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

From this part, learn. [1.] That such as join themselves to the Church in hypocrisy and have no care to honour God by a holy life, flowing from faith and love toward Jesus Christ, shall be remarked and observed so particularly, that if there were but one, he shall not escape, but shall be condemned, and cast into hell, there to be tormented for ever; represented by the punishment of the man who came into the feast as a friend, *but without a wedding garment*; that is, without purpose or care to honour the marriage or the bridegroom, by a holy life proceeding from faith and love toward Christ.

14. *For many are called, but few are chosen.*

The reason of this different manner of receiving the offer of the gospel is marked. DOCTRINE: The cause why some receive the grace of Christ offered in the gospel in a better manner than the multitude of others do, and adorn the gospel by a holy conversation flowing from faith and love to Jesus Christ, as the multitude of others do not, is not in the men themselves but in the free grace and love of God, electing some to grace and glory and leaving others to answer for their meeting<sup>2</sup> given to this call; for *Many are called*, says he, *but few are chosen*.

15. *Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.*

16. *And they sent out unto him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teach est the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.*

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This is Christ's rancounter<sup>3</sup> with the disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians: they go about either to make him odious to the people, if

he should allow tribute, or make him seem an enemy to Caesar, if he should disallow it. Hence learn: [1.] The enemies of Christ will not rest till they perish, but will assay<sup>4</sup> one means after another to draw inconveniences upon him and his followers: for here again, *They take counsel how to entangle him in his talk* that they may have advantage<sup>5</sup> of his words. [2.] However close Christ's enemies shall carry their plot he will bring it forth to light; these men will not appear themselves, but send out and suborn others less suspected; for, *They sent out their disciples with the Herodians*, men of the court religion, following Herod's way, who was half an Idumean, and half a Jew, men subtle and politic, and fit to take advantage of words, if any thing should have escaped Christ to the seeming prejudice of Caesar or his deputies. [3.] It is admirable how fair a show bloody adversaries of Christ may make of their great respect to religion, of their estimation of upright teachers, of their desire to grow in knowledge, of the love of truth and such like, and yet intend nothing but to entangle, ensnare, betray and destroy Christ and his servants; for who can speak or pretend fairer than these men, saying, *Master, we know that thou art true, &c?* [4.] How benumbed and seared with a hot iron is the conscience of hypocrites who, being convinced of the truth of a man's doctrine, and of his honesty and fidelity, yet will not only not believe him, but also seek to destroy him, as these men give evidence. [5.] The properties of a faithful preacher are [1.] He is a true and upright man whose heart and words and ways do agree; he teaches not men's precepts and devices or his own dreams, *but the ways of God*. He teaches truth, in truth truly, for the right end, in sincerity aiming to inform and persuade men to embrace truth. His affections do not make him wrest his commission for fear or favour. He cares not for the fear or favour of any man, so as to wrest the truth for any man's cause,

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but without partiality or personal respects he delivers the same truth equally to all, *not regarding the person of men*.

*17. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?*

After their flattering insinuation they present the snare; wherein we learn that it is an old craft of the devil to labour to draw the preachers of the gospel into dislike either with the people or with the magistrate; the one snare failing, then the other; for thus they say, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?* thinking if he said *yes* the people should have

him as an adversary to the liberties of his native kingdom; if he said *not*, he might be held guilty of treason and sedition.

*18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites:*

From Christ's answer learn: [1.] It is impossible to deceive the Lord. He knows the hypocrite whatsoever vision<sup>6</sup> he puts on, for Jesus perceived their wickedness. [2.] He will let the hypocrite know sometime that he will not be mocked; therefore says he *Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*

*19. Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.*

*20. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?*

*21. They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's: and unto God the things which are God's.*

By calling for the stamp of the tribute money, and finding by the image and superscription of the money that they had by agreement subjected themselves to Caesar, and taken him for their king and struck coin for his use, he concludes the question is solved and bids them *give unto*

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*Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's.* Hence learn: [1.] Where a kingdom has subjected themselves to a king and become his subjects and tributaries it is lawful to pay tribute to him: *Give unto Caesar that which is his.* [2.] Christ is no enemy to magistracy nor to civil rulers, but teaches men to give them their due, for *Give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's*, says he: and therefore it is reason that magistrates be as careful that God have what is due to him in religion and obedience of his commands, as he is careful that their due be given to them. [3.] Men should so regard kings and rulers as they do not mistaken<sup>7</sup> God, but respect, honour and obey him above all. Therefore says he, *Give unto God that which is God's.*

*22. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him and went their way.*

They find themselves disappointed and with a fruitless admiration of Christ's wisdom depart. DOCTRINE: Christ's adversaries in the end will find themselves mistaken in their vain hope which they have had to ensnare him or his, and all that open the mouth against him shall be ashamed, as, *These men marvelled and went away.*

23. *The same day came unto him the Sadducees which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,*

24. *Saying, Master, Moses said, if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother.*

In Christ's encounter with the Sadducees learn: [1.] Christ will yoke<sup>s</sup> with all his adversaries and will dispute with all sectaries and confound them. New exercises, new disputes, new contradictions, new temptations, abide our Lord and his Church, for after the Pharisees and Herodians are gone, the *Sadducees* come. [2.] It is a special policy of Satan to multiply his temptations one after another as near in time as he can, for *The Sadducees came that same day.* [3.] Multitudes of sects and schisms is not new nor strange,

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but the just punishment of a corrupt Church; not only *Pharisees* and *Herodians*, but *Sadducees* also, set on by turn upon our Lord. [4.] No error so monstrous but it will find patrons and followers among them who do not follow Christ: for the beastly error of the mortality of the soul and denying the resurrection of the body finds here *Sadducees* to profess it.

25. *Now there were with us seven brethren, and the first when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother.*

26. *Likewise the second also and the third, unto the seventh.*

27. *And last of all the woman died also.*

28. *Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her.*

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Because that in the resurrection the Sadducees conceived that every man is to return to his worldly estate and condition, as wife, children and goods, and thus see many absurdities follow (as they apprehend) upon their own suspicion, therefore they reject this article of faith and propound their conceit as an unanswerable doubt to Christ. Hence learn: [1.] The conceiving of spiritual things in a fleshly manner is the ground of mistaking of the truth and setting up of errors and heresies, as appears in these Sadducees: they apprehend the doctrine of eternal life to be this, that the course of this temporary life shall be renewed and made perpetual. [2.] No man seems wiser in his own eyes than the blindest heretics do; they conceive that Christ himself cannot answer their objections against the truth, and this emboldens *these Sadducees to dispute*.

29. *Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

30. *For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven.*

Christ confutes them by Scripture. DOCTRINE: [1.] If the Scriptures be not understood and believed, it cannot miss but errors will arise: for nothing else but this light can

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prevent or remove errors, for *they erred, not knowing the Scriptures*. [2.] It is necessary for quieting of our minds in the truth of God's Word, that we look only to the promise of God and to his ability to perform all that he has promised. Therefore says he, *Ye err, not knowing the Scripture, nor the power of God*. [3.] After the resurrection we shall be set free from the infirmities whereunto now we are subject, and shall neither need meat nor drink nor marriage, but shall be upheld immediately of God, without mean,) as angels are, and shall be employed only in the immediate service of God *as the angels of heaven are*.

31. *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,*

32. *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead but of the living.*

Having reproved their error, he confirms the true doctrine by Scripture. Hence learn: [1.] No sufficient silencing of error can be, till the contrary truth be made clear by Scripture. Therefore says he, *Have ye not read?* [2.] Whatsoever is said in the Scripture should be taken as spoken to us, and that by God; for *Have ye not read that which is spoken* unto you by God? says he. [3.] Whatsoever the Scripture imports, by good consequence is to be accounted for God's speech, and that which in reading should be so understood, as if it were expressed; as here Christ reckons, *Concerning the resurrection, have ye not read?* says he, for the Scripture does not stand in letters or syllables, but in the sense of words, and in the truly inferred consequences from thence. [4.] Whosoever are within the covenant of grace, whose God the Lord is by covenant, they are sure to live in heaven with God after this life and to have their bodies raised at last to immortal life: because God is the Saviour and Redeemer, not of *the soul* of his elect only, but also of *the body*; therefore there must be a resurrection of the body; for *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*: that is, his covenant to be a man's God will not suffer the man to perish in soul or body, but though temporal death overtake

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the body, yet the soul must live, and not die, but be for ever in a blessed condition with God, and the body must not always remain under the power of death, but must be raised at last to an immortal condition, that it may also live for ever by his power who has proclaimed himself *the God* of his own people, and has taken this style and will keep it for ever.

33. *And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.*

This is the issue of the controversy. DOCTRINE: the end of disputation against the truth is a further clearing of it, and glorifying of Christ, as here, *The multitude were astonished at his doctrine.*

34. *But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.*

35. *Then one of them which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,*

36. *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*

This is a new rancounter<sup>9</sup> with the Pharisees, who though they were refuted sundry times before, and had heard that the Sadducees were put to silence, yet they do resolve a new assay;<sup>10</sup> and after consultation find out one of their learned rabbis, thinking to give Christ some affront upon a disputable question, concerning *What is the greatest commandment in the law?* DOCTRINE: [1.] In these perverse men, the blindness, the boldness, the obstinacy, the malice of Christ's enemies is to be seen; they renew their onsets frequently. *They gathered together and sent out one to tempt him.* [2.] The adversaries of Christ's grace will seem to be much for the law, even when they are against the true end of the law, that is, against the forgiveness of sin through Christ, which is the greatest matter of the Word of God.

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37. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

38. *This is the first and great commandment.*

Our Lord having to do with a proud hypocrite, puffed up with a conceit of his own righteousness, does so answer him as he lays out the spiritual meaning of the law that the man might see how short he came in the obedience thereof, and so teaches us: [1.] That the commandments are not obeyed except the obedience proceed from love; this is imported in *Thou shalt love the Lord.* [2.] The commands are not satisfied except the whole man wholly in all things obey with his whole mind, affections and the strength of all the powers of soul and body; therefore says he, *With all thy heart, soul and mind.* [3.] To love God is the greatest command, because it is the fountain of the obedience of all the commands, and also because all the commands of the first table are but branches and evidences in part of our love to God. [4.] The great commandment is not fulfilled except a man, in the sense of his shortcoming in love to God, seek for reconciliation with him, enter into a covenant of grace with him, and make use of his friendship, as of a reconciled God; therefore says he, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* [5.] The commandment of loving God with all our might, and adhering to him as reconciled to us and made ours by covenant, is first to be looked unto, as being of greatest consequence; for, *This is the first and great command, to love the Lord thy God.*

39. *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

The Pharisee asked of one commandment and our Lord in his answer gives two, comprehending all: this commandment is called the second, because it is in the next room after immediate worship of God to be looked unto, and because it is the sum of the second table. *It is called like unto the first*, because it has the same authority, it requires like spiritual and constant obedience as the first, and must be joined with the first by such as would be found obedient to the first; and herein the envy and malice of these Pharisees

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is taxed<sup>11</sup> who pretended to love God and yet did hate the Saviour, his Son, and all people's salvation, who must be saved only by him. DOCTRINE: [1.] So many as profess love to God must set themselves to love their neighbour also at his command; for he cannot love God who will not love his neighbour. Therefore says he, *The second is, love thy neighbour.* [2.] It is lawful to love ourselves, yea, it is a commanded duty after our love to God and with our love to God and from our love to God; that is to say, so as our love to ourselves be not in the first room, which belongs to God; so as our love of ourselves be subordinate to the love of God and may make us forthcoming to the honour of God, and does not prejudice<sup>12</sup> our love to God, but further the same: for the command which says *Love thy neighbour as thyself*, says, *Love thyself*, by a second and like command, depending on and flowing from the first. [3.] A right ordered and measured love to ourselves is the rule and measure of our love to our neighbour; the love of God must be preferred both to ourselves and neighbour, so as we must not please ourselves or our neighbour by displeasing God, but our love to God being fixed in the own<sup>13</sup> place: then in reason, as we would have others to do to us, do we also to them: for *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, that is, sincerely and constantly.

40. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

The Pharisee moved the question concerning the greatest commandment in the law, meaning the moral law. Christ, having answered, tells him that he had not only satisfied the question concerning the greatest commandment of the moral law, but also had given him the sum of the whole law; yea, not only so, but also had given him the sum and scope of the whole books of Scripture, whereupon hangs the whole doctrine



of *Moses* and the prophets. *On these two commandments*, says he, *hang all the law and the prophets*. And so shall we find it to be if we consider the matter:

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for the sum and scope of the Scriptures may be comprehended in these three: the first is, to show us what duties the perfect law of God requires of us. The second is to show how being found short of our duties and guilty of fearful transgressions of the law we may be reconciled with God. The third is to show how and by what rule we shall walk before God in new obedience. Now all these three will be found in Christ's answer and in these two great commandments, for: [1.] In these great commands the duty of perfect love is first enjoined; for it is said, *Love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*. [2.] Upon our presupposed shortcoming in our duty, the seeking unto the covenant of reconciliation is insinuated and enjoined in these words, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. [3.] After the covenanting there is enjoined an endeavour of sincere setting unto the obedience of the whole law with our heart, mind and soul, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God &c*, and if the words be expounded thus, then indeed upon these two commands all the doctrine of the law and prophets hangs, as explications of them and inducements and directions to the obedience of them.

41. *While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,*

42. *Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he?*

*They say unto him, the Son of David.*

43. *He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,*

44. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?*

45. *If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?*

Our Lord thinks it not sufficient wisely to answer the tempting questions of his adversaries, but he will also ask questions of them to put them to shame, and so to humble them, and withal will show forth his own

Godhead spoken of in Scripture, if possibly some of them might believe and be saved; and howsoever, that his own might be edified. DOCTRINE: [1.] As it is good to be zealous of the law, so it is necessary to know the Messiah who redeems men from the curse of the law: for our Lord, having answered the Pharisees' question about the law, asks them, *What*

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*think ye of Christ?* [2.] Christ is a very man lineally descended of *David*; for he is *David's son*; so say even the Pharisees. [3.] Christ is also very God; for he is *David's Lord*, equal with the Father, *The Lord said to my Lord*, says David. [4.] The Son of *David*, and *David's Lord*, distinguished from the Father, as one of the Persons of the Godhead, is but one Person; for *David's God*, and *David's son* is here spoken of as one Person. [5.] Christ is fellow-partner of divine glory with the Father; for, *Sit thou at my right hand*, says the Father. [6.] Christ shall not want enemies who shall oppose his kingdom; this is imported in, *Thine enemies*. [7.] Christ's enemies shall be put under his power; for it is said by the Father, *Till I make thine enemies thy footstool*. [8.] There is but one divine power of the Son and Father, for as the Son reigns in majesty over his enemies, so the Father puts them down also; for, *Sit thou, till I put them down*, is *Reign thou*, till this be done. [9.] None can conciliate<sup>14</sup> the speeches in Scripture concerning Christ except he who believes and acknowledges him to be God and man in one Person, for, If *David* call him Lord, how is he his son? No answer, but that he is both God and man.

*46. And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.*

The issue of this disputation is set down to teach us: [1.] All Christ's enemies will be beaten in disputation and put to silence. The force of divine truth prudently put forth is irresistible; therefore it is said, *No man was able to answer him*. [2.] The conviction of God's enemies may be expected but the conversion of all the convicted can hardly be expected; for *They could not answer, and they durst not ask him any more questions*. There is all; we hear of no good use they make of this.

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## CHAPTER 23

Our Lord paints forth the scribes and Pharisees in their own colours, before the people, and denounces woe and wrath on them (vv 1–36) and destruction on Jerusalem (vv 37–39)

1. *Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,*
2. *Saying, the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:*
3. *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*

Our Lord having put his adversaries to silence takes course to save his people from their ways. DOCTRINE: [1.] The people must be warned to beware of the contagion of corrupt teachers when they will not amend their doings: for this is the course which Christ takes about the Pharisees and scribes. [2.] Although the faults of teachers must not be spared, yet their authority and office must be guarded, lest the message of God by their mouth be marred; their office must be defended although their persons be corrupt. Therefore says he, *They sit in Moses' chair*, that is, they succeed to Moses in the ordinary office of teaching the Word of God. [3.] What *Moses' successors* teach, as *Moses' successors*, must be obeyed; that is, the truth which from the warrant of God's word is recommended to us from corrupt teachers clad with lawful authority to teach, we ought to obey it, because the message is the doctrine of God although the messenger be corrupt; for it is said, *Whatsoever they bid you do*, as *Moses' successors*, with *Moses' warrant*, from the Lord's mouth, *that observe and do*. [4.] People are in danger to follow the example of the evil life of corrupt teachers, rather than the command of God delivered in their doctrine, and therefore had need to be warned; for, says he, *Do not after their works*. [5.] Whatsoever commanded

works a man does, and not for the commanded ends, before God, it is as good as no doing. Therefore, although the Pharisees did many works commanded in the law, yet because they did them to be seen of men

and as works meritorious to oblige God, and were more careful of the outward ceremonies of the law than to observe the moral duties of justice and mercy, therefore what they did was counted as *if they did not*; and Christ says of them, *They say, and do not*.

4. *For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

The Lord gives a reason of this caveat given concerning the Pharisees. DOCTRINE: [1.] The doctrine of the law moral and ceremonial, separate from the true intent of it which is to lead to the gospel where grace and strength is to be had for righteousness and new obedience, is a yoke unsupportable. It is here called *a heavy burden, and grievous to be borne*. And therefore to press moral duties on a people without teaching them how to draw strength from Christ for obedience is *to bind heavy burdens on their shoulders*. [2.] Hypocrites teach people most imperiously and with least compassion, contributing least of any men to the enabling of the people to obedience, whether by wisdom of doctrine or example or prayer; therefore says Christ, *They will not move them with one of their fingers*.

5. *But all their works they do, for to be seen of men; they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments.*

Phylacteries were some ribband or fringes whereupon were drawn the words of the law to put them in mind to keep the ten commands, as is prescribed among other ceremonies (Exodus 13:9,16; Numbers 15:38; Deuteronomy 6:8), and here our Lord reckons out their faults especially. The first is their vain ostentation of holiness and ambitious seeking of vain applause of men, to which end they did write the words of the law on the borders of their garments, as if it had

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been all made up of love of the law. DOCTRINE: [1.] The nature of hypocrites is to study more to seem religious than to be religious; to please men with appearances rather than to please God in truth; for, *They do all*, says he, *to be seen of men*. [2.] Hypocrites are most in affecting of ceremonial observations and outward parts of commanded duties, neglecting the substance, for, *They make broad*, says he, their phylacteries.

6. *And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,*

7. *And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.*

Their second fault is vain affectation of pre-eminence, and respect in all things above other people in all sort of conventions within doors and without, at feasts, in churches, in markets, and to have stately styles of *Rabbi, Rabbi*. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although the Lord does not condemn respects and reverence due to men according to their callings and places, yet he condemns love and ambitious affectation of these respects, saying, *They love the uppermost rooms*. [2.] Hypocrites and vain men, least worthy of respect or honour, are most ambitious and desirous to have respect; for, *They love the first<sup>t</sup> seats, the first salutation, and the style of Rabbi, Rabbi*.

8. *But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.*

Christ discharges<sup>2</sup> such vain titles and gives reason for it. DOCTRINE: [1.] Stately styles whereby men are not simply distinguished for order and for the sake of their office from other men, but also are exalted over their brethren in stately dignity (after the manner of civil or stately styles of honour given to men in the kingdoms of this world), do not become the ministers of Christ; therefore says he, *Be not ye called Rabbi, Rabbi, for all ye are brethren*. [2.] Such as take such stately styles unto them, whereby they will

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seem eminent above their brethren in that same office, are injurious to Christ, who in the Church has appointed only a ministry and has reserved to himself alone all stately pre-eminence; and they are injurious also to their fellow ministers, whom Christ has made equal in office as brethren (howsoever natural and civil differences for age and other respects be kept), *For one is your Master*, says he, to wit, in stately excellency, *even Christ, for all ye are brethren*.

9. *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*

Our Lord does not discharge<sup>3</sup> the simple name of *Father*, but the stately exaltation of any man under this name, to the prejudice of God's glory, and teaches us that we should not put too high an estimation upon any man, for whatsoever gifts is in him or good received by him: because this derogates from the glory of God when we attribute too much unto men; for all the glory of fatherhood and derivation of any good thing toward us, ought to be given to God alone, for *One is your Father that is in heaven*, says he.

*10. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.*

From this learn: [1.] That we are very ready to ascribe something to ourselves if by any gifts given to us any should profit or be informed; therefore, as before, he said, *Be not called Rabbi*; so here again he says the second time, *Be not called Master*. The meaning is, do not arrogate to yourselves more than is the creature's due, when you teach others by God's gift bestowed upon you, and if any do ascribe to you any more than is due, see that you admit not this sacrilegious commendation, *Neither be ye called masters*. [2.] All the authority of teaching, and all the light in the teacher, and all the success of teaching flow from the powerful teacher Christ, for *One is your Master, even Christ*: and from him, whatsoever is given to the creature above the place of his instrument, is taken sacrilegiously.

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*11. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.*

Here Christ teaches the right striving for greatness and discharges<sup>4</sup> prelacy. DOCTRINE: the majority<sup>5</sup> of the ministers in the church stands not in the exalting of any man with higher power over the rest, but in true humility and subjection of a man to his brethren, and being ready to serve them, for promoting<sup>6</sup> the work of God in their hands; therefore says he, *He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant*.

*12. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

This doctrine Christ confirms by a promise on the one hand and a threatening on the other. DOCTRINE: [1.] The more ambitious a man shows himself, the less shall he be esteemed of by good men and the

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more shall God put contempt upon him; for, *Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.* [2.] The more a man in conscience of his own inlakes<sup>7</sup> of love to his brethren, and obedience to God, shall humble himself before God and men, the more respect and estimation shall be put upon him, for *he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

*13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.*

Upon the scribes and Pharisees Christ denounces woe eight times for their several vices. The first woe, for hindering the gospel. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's indignation is great against corrupt teachers, and Churchmen he will have more sharply handled than any other vicious persons, saying, *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees.* [2.] To belie our

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profession is an odious sin. Therefore says he, *Woe to you hypocrites!* [3.] Men by nature are exiles from heaven and from the grace of God offered in the gospel, but by the right or wrong ministerial dispensation of the Word and ordinances of God the door of heaven is opened or shut. *You,* says he, *shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.* [4.] It is a fearful challenge against corrupt teachers that they do not come to Christ themselves and also divert others into their power by their ill example or doctrine. This is it he says: *You neither go in yourselves, nor suffer others to go in.*

*14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

A second woe is for their avarice. DOCTRINE: [1.] As ambition and hypocrisy go together, so also ambition and avarice go together. Therefore says he, *You hypocrites devour widows' houses.* [2.] The simple and ignorant helpless souls are the prey of corrupt Churchmen, such as are *widows' houses.* [3.] It is no new thing that corrupt Churchmen find out shifts to catch people's goods, as by satisfactions, merits, indulgences, absolution, soul masses, &c, for, *You devour widows' houses.* [4.] The most cursed shift that can be devised may be cloaked with the pretence of religion. Therefore says he, *For a pretence they make long prayers.* [5.] The fairer the pretence put upon a wicked course, or a wicked work, the sin is the

greater, and the punishment shall be the greater also. This is it he says: *Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

15. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*

The third woe is for their blind zeal to poison others with their errors, to make them proselytes or to draw them to their sect. DOCTRINE: [1.] Seducers will be more busy to draw others to their error than teachers of the truth are

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diligent in drawing others to the truth. *Ye compass*, says he, *sea and land to make a proselyte.* [2.] The more pains in false zeal and the more speed a man shows in perverting others, the more measure of vengeance abides on him. Therefore says he, *Woe unto you for this.* [3.] The more a man profits in the school of error and superstition, the more he is the child of hell and Satan, for the original of errors is from hell, and Satan is the father of error, superstition and heresy. *Ye make him the child of hell*, says he. [4.] Young proselytes who drink in superstition at the persuasion of learned seducers are far more taken with the false opinions and more addicted to these false superstitions than their teachers are, conceiving them to be truth; when these old deceivers do but laugh to see the credulity of the deluded. This is it he says: *You make them twofold more the children of hell than yourselves*, to wit, in respect to believing these errors which you teach them; for in other respects the deceivers were the elder sons of Satan.

16. *Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.*

The fourth woe is for their erroneous doctrine, and being blind guides, evidenced in their dispensing with oaths, and taking of the name of God in vain, esteeming nothing of an oath made by the temple, and making the oath sworn by the gold of the temple obligatory (v 16), for the teaching of which error he condemns them as blind fools (v 17). The like fault he finds with them in their preferring an oath made by the gift on the altar above an oath made by the altar (v 18), for which he reproves them as blind fools (v 19), and corrects their error (vv 20–22). Hence



learn: [1.] That corrupt Churchmen do corrupt religion also and mislead the people fearfully; they become blind guides whose office requires that they should be wise and seeing guides; in which case, Woe to the people, but chiefly, Woe to the blind guides. [2.] Swearing by the creature is no new sin, for these corrupt hypocrites did foster swearing by the creatures, as by the *temple, altar, gold and gifts*. [3.] Corrupt Churchmen make things to be sin or

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no sin as it serves their purpose, as here they made an oath by the *temple* to be nothing, and an oath by the *gold* of the temple to oblige.<sup>8</sup> [4.] To make light of any oath by the creature as not obligatory opens a door to superstition and perjury: for to swear by the temple, they said, it was nothing, and Christ asks, *Whether is greater, the gold, or the temple which sanctifieth the gold?*

*17. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?*

The Lord rebukes them sharply for this their corrupt doctrine. DOCTRINE: [1.] When men depart from the rule of God's Word in determining of sin, they prove themselves foolish and blind; therefore Christ calls them *Ye fools and blind*. [2.] As any thing draws more near to God in relation of service, so is it in a higher degree more holy, to wit, by way of consecration and use: for the temple that signified Christ and his Church is more holy than the gold which signified the gifts of Christ. [3.] Superstition and error blinds the mind, and stupifies the heart; for he says, *Ye fools and blind*.

*18. And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing: but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.*

*19. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?*

*20. Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.*

*21. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it and by him that dwelleth therein.*

22. *And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.*

Our Lord goes on to tell of their corrupt doctrine: Hence learn, that he that swears by the creature, whether he intend to swear by God or not, swears indirectly by God the Creator also, because the creature has nothing but from God as it is his creature, for says Christ, *He that sweareth*

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*by the temple or heaven, sweareth by him that dwelleth therein &c.* Such oaths are not allowed any way here, but a double fault is taxed on the Pharisees, first, that they taught men to swear by the creatures; next, that they made some of such oaths not obligatory, and some of them obligatory, as they thought fit.

23. *Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

The fifth woe is for their ostentation of precise keeping of the law in the least things while in the mean time they despised the law in the greatest duties. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is no new thing for hypocrites to make a business about small matters and in the mean time to reject the most weighty duties; for the Pharisees *tithed anise, and omitted mercy*. The discharge of greater duties does not liberate a man from his obligation to do the smallest duties, but one authority obliges unto both; for *These ought ye to have done, and not left the other undone*, says Christ.

24. *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.*

For this their practice he upbraids them as before. DOCTRINE: [1.] The preciseness of hypocrites is no less ridiculous than if a man should make nice<sup>9</sup> to swallow a midge or a smaller matter, and not stand<sup>10</sup> to swallow over a greater matter, as it were an horse or camel. *Ye strain at a gnat*, says he. [2.] Such as take upon them to teach others the way to heaven had need to know it well themselves; for it is a fearful charge to be found *blind guides*.

25. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of*

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*the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.*

*26. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.*

The sixth woe is for pretending great holiness in eating of their meat and not standing with how great iniquity they did conquer<sup>11</sup> and purchase their meat; neither how they did abuse their meat in superfluity. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as get their meat by extortion and use it intemperately to excess, can never sanctify their table, whatsoever ceremonies they use: for the saying grace at meat by such men is no better than if a man should wash the outside of the cup and platter and eat of the filthiness of the inside. *They make clean the outside*, says Christ. [2.] The way to eat our bread with God's blessing is to sanctify our hands in our conquering, and our hearts in a wise and moderate using the creatures, for the right end; and so our feeding shall be sanctified. Therefore says he, *Cleanse first that which is within the cup.*

*27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.*

*28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous to men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

A seventh woe for their deceiving of the people with the appearance of holiness when there was nothing such in them. DOCTRINE: [1.] Hypocrites may carry their wickedness so fair that men may be deceived: for they may seem very beautiful outwardly, when inwardly they are filthy, *like tombs plaistred<sup>12</sup> without, and full of rottenness within.* [2.] God will not be deceived by hypocrites, but will find them out; and in his time will decipher<sup>13</sup> them to the world and will pour out wrath on them, for *Woe to you*, says Christ.

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*29. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,*

30. *And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.*

The eighth woe is for their pretending to honour the saints departed and in the mean time they were injurious to the living; yea, they were about to murder Christ himself. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's respect is great to his servants, for even after their death he will clear their innocence and holy conversation, and make the posterity acknowledge them. *Ye build the tombs of the prophets, &c.* [2.] The world loves dead prophets better than the living: for the living reprove their sin more particularly than the dead. This is it he says: *Ye build their sepulchres.* [3.] Such men are gross hypocrites who pretend to love good men and yet do not love goodness, who make protestation of their mind toward righteousness, upon condition that they had such means as the forefathers had, and yet do make no use of the means which they have themselves: who can condemn their fathers' faults and yet practise the same themselves. They are like to the men who said: If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would *not have been partakers of the blood of the prophets.*

31. *Wherefore ye be witness unto your selves that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.*

32. *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.*

From the confession of the Pharisees that they were descended from those who slew the prophets and from their malignant opposing of his gospel, with intention to kill him so soon as they could, Christ proves them to be every way the children of those who slew the prophets; whereupon he gives up with them, and gives them over unto the fulfilling of their malice. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's enemies shall not lack a witness of their malicious opposing of him; yea, from their own words and purposes he shall bring matter of conviction against them; their never-dying worm shall breed in their own bosom, as Christ says here,

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*Ye are witnesses against yourselves.* [2.] Christ will give over desperate enemies to their own malicious disposition, and will defy them, as here he says, *Fill ye up the measure of your fathers.* [3.] There is a measure set to be filled up with the transgressions of the Lord's enemies, and till this cup be full to the lip, they shall be suffered to go on: but when this cup

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is full, then the cup of God's wrath shall be full also and run over upon them to their destruction. Therefore says he, *Fill ye up the measure*, that is, Go on till you kill me, as your fathers did the prophets. [4.] Sin has its own height in kingdoms and families, whereby successors do add to their predecessors' sins, before the kingdom or family be punished. Therefore says he, *Fill up the measure of your fathers*.

33. *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

Now he condemns them and threatens them with hell. DOCTRINE: [1.] When the Lord will reckon, he will make the wicked know their sin to their face, as here he calls these men *serpents, a generation of vipers*. [2.] It is good that the difficulty of being saved be intimated to the obstinate, if by any means they can be driven to seek salvation. Therefore says he, *How can ye escape?* [3.] The end of Christ's enemies shall be condemnation to hell; for, *How can ye escape the condemnation of hell?*, says he.

34. *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:*

35. *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.*

He foretells them how he, as disposer of all things, is to proceed with them and to make up the process of their condemnation. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord in the face of his

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enemies avowed himself to be God, having authority to send out prophets, and to bestow gifts on men. *Behold*, says he, *I send to you prophets*. [2.] Our Lord knows how his servants will be served in every place they come unto, and what measure of sufferings each of them will meet with from the wicked, saying, *Some of them ye shall crucify*. [3.] The Lord's servants (although they know that sufferings abide them) must notwithstanding go on in their message: for this is the forewarning given to his servants also, *I send you prophets, and some of them ye shall kill &c.*

[4.] They who go on in the course of any sin, do subscribe to the sins of such as before them did follow that sort of sin and justly may be condemned and punished as guilty of the sin of others which they do approve, for so Christ reckons, saying, *That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth &c.* [5.] The sufferers for righteousness, from the beginning of the world, are all in the rank of *martyrs*, and their sufferings are kept in fresh remembrance, *from righteous Abel, unto Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada*, otherwise called Barachias, whose slaughter is spoken of, 2 Chronicles 24:21, as here appears. [6.] Raging persecutors look neither to place nor person, nor consequence of their cruelty, but as blind beasts do follow forth their own fury; for *Betwixt the porch and the altar was Zacharias slain.*

36. *Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*

Now Christ foretells the ruin of Jerusalem and gives them over till the day of judgment, at what time they should know who was the Christ, for whom they pretended to be preparing the song which is foretold in the Psalm 118:26. As if he had said, I foretell you, that Jerusalem and this nation shall be destroyed, and after you have killed me you shall not see me till the day of judgment when you shall be forced to acknowledge me to be the blessed Messiah, come in the name of the Lord, which for the present you will not do. DOCTRINE: [1.] The destruction of Jerusalem and the rejection of the Jews was foretold by Christ sundry times ere it came; for here he says, *O Jerusalem, your house is left desolate unto you.* [2.] It is a special motive to repentance to tell men of the propinquity of

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judgment; therefore says he, *All these things shall come on this generation.*

37. *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?*

In this lamentation our Lord is not to show what power is in men's wicked nature to convert themselves, or to make use of the means of conversion, nor what power there is in corrupt nature to oppose that power which God puts forth in conversion of souls; neither is he lamenting

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their case as one unable to obtain his own desired end in the salvation of such as he intended to save: for no reason can extract these conclusions necessarily from these speeches. The true sense of them is obtained without any such inferences; for our Lord, as man, and a kindly minister of the circumcision moved with humane compassion for the miseries of his native countrymen, lets forth his love in this lamentation and weeping, while he beholds the desperate obstinacy of the multitude running to perdition, thereby intending to make the reprobate who should hear of his tender bowels inexcusable, and to move the elect to repentance by this means. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord, as man, in the bowels of compassion was moved in the days of his flesh with the misery of the most wicked, as this lamentation shows. [2.] When Christ was most moved with the provocations of the wicked, there was no sinful perturbation in him, to make him forget to fulfil the law of love to his most desperate enemies; therefore he laments thus, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* [3.] So oft as the Lord sends forth his ministers with offers of mercy to sinful people, as oft is he lovingly calling them to come unto him; so says he, *As a hen gathereth her chickens, how oft would I have gathered thee?* [4.] When the Lord is about to save his own elect children in the visible Church, the body or the greatest part of the people may oppose his work and nill<sup>14</sup> the work which he wills, and although they be not able to impede

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his effectual gathering of so many as he intends to save, yet may they make themselves guilty of impeding and resisting the will of God, which they cannot overcome; therefore says he in this sense, *O Jerusalem, how oft was I about to convert thy children, so many as I had elected, by the offers of mercy which my servants made unto you, the visible Church their mother? And you would not, but opposed my work so far as you could, in slaying the prophets, and stoning them who were sent unto thee for the elect's cause who were in the midst of you.* [5.] The Lord will pursue his purpose, and renew messages till he both gain his own and also make the reprobate inexcusable to the full; for *how often*, says he, *would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not.*

38. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Having told the sin of the visible Church there, he tells them now of their judgment. DOCTRINE: When mercy has been often offered to a visible Church and has been rejected or opposed, it is righteousness with God to remove his dwelling from that place, and to take away the face

of a Church from it; therefore says he, *Thy house shall be left desolate unto thee*; even the most glorious place shall not be spared, but when mercy finds no place, judgment shall have place.

*39. 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.*

Here our Lord smites these desperate enemies with irrevocable blindness, that from that time forward they should never get grace to acknowledge him to be the Messiah, till at the day of judgment they should be forced to confess him to be the true Christ, prophesied of in the 118th Psalm. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is righteousness with Christ to smite them with judicial blindness, who refuse obstinately to acknowledge him when he offers himself to them; as here he says, *Ye shall not see me henceforth*, that is, You shall not perceive me to be the Messiah; for otherwise bodily they did see him and did crucify him, but they saw not who he was;

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for had they known, they would not have crucified the God of glory. [2.] At last, Christ's most cruel enemies shall see and know and acknowledge him to be that blessed Messiah; for all knees shall bow to him and all tongues shall confess to him, and these his adversaries among the rest shall say, Now we see that Jesus is the blessed Son of God and the true Lamb of God; hills and mountains, fall on us and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb; yonder is the blessed Saviour *who came in the name of the Lord*.

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## CHAPTER 24

Our Lord having told that the temple shall be destroyed, the disciples ask of the time thereof, and of the signs of his coming (vv 1–3). For answer, he forewarns them of trial and persecution, wherein all his disciples had need to beware, lest they should be deceived: and shows the signs of the utter destruction of Jerusalem (vv 42): and again teaches them that the chief care of his disciples should be that they be not deceived with false religion, and false Christs wherein the danger was to be great, even until his second coming, when he should gather all his elect unto him (vv 23–31). As for the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, he tells that the forerunners and coming of it should be in their own days (vv 32–35). But the time of the day of universal judgment and of his second coming was a secret, and should come as the flood came, unexpectedly (vv 36–41), and therefore that it was the disciples' part to watch, that they might be found in peace, following their calling, lest wrath should fall on them (vv 42–51).

*1. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and his disciples came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple.*

The disciples, moved at Christ's words, do regrade<sup>1</sup> in a manner the destruction of such building. DOCTRINE: It is a hard thing to yield our minds to the Lord when he threatens to overthrow such things as we esteem much of in the world, as to destroy potent people, to plague a visible Church and such like, as here the disciples show to him the buildings of the temple, as it were pitying that it should be destroyed.

*2. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

Because our Lord was purposed by casting down the temple of Jerusalem to punish the people's carnal confidence in it and their contempt of the

gospel, and withal to remove the theatre of the Jewish ceremonies and the shadows of the Levitical law, therefore he renews the threatening. DOCTRINE: [1.] The outward glory of buildings shall not save them from destruction when they are abused, as here is threatened, *There shall not be left one stone upon another.* [2.] The outward glory of worldly things, which bear much bulk in men's eyes, is little esteemed of by Christ, for the disciples show the glory of the temple to him, and here he shows it to them again, saying, *See ye not all these things?* and he tells them, *That not a stone shall be left upon another.*

3. *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*

The disciples, understanding that the temple should be destroyed, ask some questions. DOCTRINE: Men are more curious to know things hid in God's secret counsel than to make use of what is revealed: as the disciples here, who asked, *When shall these things be?*, when a more useful question had been more expedient.

4. *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

Our Lord answers so as the disciples might be best edified. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's words serve not to satisfy his people's curiosity, but for their instruction and utility, as here we see. [2.] It is better for us to guard against the hazard wherein we may be before the world's end than to be curious about the time when it shall end; therefore says Christ, *Take heed that no man deceive you.* [3.] The special danger of the Church is from errors and false doctrine whereby their faith may be hurt; against this should we mainly watch, as Christ here warns, *Take heed that no man deceive you.*

5. *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.*

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To the end that his disciples, not only then living but in all ages following, should guard themselves against all sorts of temptations to the end of the world, he warns them of five or six sorts of temptations or exercises

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abiding them. DOCTRINE: [1.] The first sort of exercise of the Church is by sects and heresies. The Lord will suffer blasphemies and heresies to arise in the visible Church for the punishing of some and trial of others; for *many shall come in my name*, says he; that is, taking on the name proper to me and pretending themselves to be Christ. [2.] When the only one true Christ is not received, it is justice that many false pretended Christs should come and deceive them who will not receive the truth in love; therefore he forewarns *that they shall deceive many*. [3.] The impudency of the devil and the delusion of heretics is admirable,<sup>2</sup> that he dare suggest, and they dare avow themselves to be Christ, yet such shall be, and shall dare to say, *I am Christ*. [4.] The prevailing of deceivers with the multitude, which is more ready to believe lies than truth, should make the Lord's people the more circumspect; therefore says he, *Take heed, for many shall come, &c.*

6. *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*

7. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.*

8. *All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

Another sort of the temptations of the church is the terror of wars. DOCTRINE: If wars fall out about religion and the gospel, it is no small trial; therefore he tell us, *Ye shall hear of wars*. [2.] We must in such times keep fast the faith and thereby study to keep our hearts in peace. *See*, says he, *that ye be not troubled*. [3.] One of the reasons of quieting our minds when wars and rumours of wars (wherein we are to be involved) are heard of is the Lord's decree so to plague the world and exercise us; therefore says he, *These things must be*. [4.] When we have digested one trouble,

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we must not think to pass so, but must make us<sup>3</sup> for greater troubles and for constant patience; for, *The end is not yet*, says he. [5.] It is decreed in heaven to punish the wickedness of the world and specially the contempt of the gospel by yoking of kingdoms and nations one against

another, and to plague all by famine and pestilence and earthquakes in divers places; for it is foretold *That nations shall rise against nations &c.* [6.] When such evils befall nations in God's displeasure for their sins, and specially for abusing the gospel, it is but a beginning of the sorrows which God will bring at length upon this wicked world; for *all these are the beginning of sorrows.*

9. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*

The third sort of the exercise of Christ's disciples is persecution, imprisonment and slaughter. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christians must resolve, for the gospel to lose their life; for, says he, *They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you.* [2.] Christ's disciples need not to look for love from this world but rather must expect to be hated wherever they shall come, even if there were no other cause but the profession of Christ's name and his truth, for *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake,* says he.

10. *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.*

The fourth temptation or fourth sort of exercise of Christ's disciples is the apostasy of professors when persecution arises for the gospel. DOCTRINE: [1.] This is a narrow<sup>4</sup> trial when many who ran fast in profession with prosperity do turn their back on Christ when trouble comes; yet it must come to pass; for, *Then,* says he, *shall many be offended;* that is, stumble at Christ's cross and forsake the true religion. [2.] Such professors as make apostasy from true religion shall be the chief adversaries of the true members of the

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Church, traitors and enemies; for of professors it is said, *They shall betray and hate one another.*

11. *And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.*

The fifth temptation or sort of exercise is the arising of many false teachers within the Church who shall brangle<sup>5</sup> the faith of the godly and deceive many. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christians may be tempted to defection by their own teachers who, ere people be aware, may make defection themselves, and then fall to seduce the people; for it is said, *Many false prophets shall*

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*arise.* [2.] This sort of temptation is ready to prevail with people and to draw such away whom open persecution could not drive from the truth; for it is said, *They shall deceive many.* Because disputation and opposition against the truth (for which we are called to suffer) by our own teachers, when they begin to swerve from the truth, is a harder onset against a man's faith than when fire and sword is threatened, in the case of a cause clear, and not questioned by our teachers.

12. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.*

The sixth temptation or sort of exercise is that the godly shall be coldrife<sup>6</sup> in love one toward another, and not find respect and credit readily one of another, and that because they shall see iniquity and hypocrisy so abound in the visible church as one shall suspect another, and not dare to trust one another, and so shall not let forth their love one toward another, save very coldly, as it comes to pass in the case of mutual suspicion one of another. DOCTRINE: [1.] Honest men do suffer much in their estimation<sup>7</sup> when the hypocrisy of hypocrites is discovered, for iniquity abounding breeds mutual suspicion of one another's sincerity, a man not knowing whom to trust when by outbreaking of much iniquity he finds many to be false. [2.]

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When abounding iniquity breeds mutual jealousy, as estimation and mutual confidence is weakened, so is mutual love diminished. Therefore says he, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* [3.] This is a sore trial when, beside the common adversary, the godly grow suspicious one of another, and dare not trust one another, and so grow cold in their love to one another. It is a sore trial, I say, *when iniquity abounds and love decreases.*

13. *But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.*

After these temptations thus in order set before us, our Lord requires constancy in the faith notwithstanding of them all. DOCTRINE: [1.] All these temptations must be striven against and overcome by them who purpose to go to heaven; for *he that endureth to the end shall be saved.* [2.] Whosoever for any of these temptations, or any other like, shall fall off from the faith and following of Jesus, he cannot be saved; for only *he that endures to the end shall be saved;* no other has the promise.

14. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come.*

Our Lord comforts his disciples and shows that notwithstanding all these impediments, the gospel should be preached. DOCTRINE: [1.] Whatsoever persecution, heresies or offences shall come, the Lord will have his gospel going on to be proclaimed in the midst of wars, famine, pestilence, heresies &c., for this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached and spread abroad in all the world, in the midst of impediments, till it go along all places of the world whither Christ has appointed to send it. [2.] The preaching of the gospel wherever it comes proves a *testimony* to them to whom it comes, one way or other; that is, a testimony either of their decreed blessedness, if they receive it, or of their decreed perdition, if they reject it or do not believe it; for, *It shall be preached for a testimony unto all nations.* [3.] Till the gospel be preached to all nations, so far as God has appointed, and till he have ended

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his work by the preaching thereof, the end of the world shall not be, but so soon as the Lord's work by the gospel is ended in the world, *then shall the end come.*

15. *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).*

Christ gives his disciples some satisfaction to their question about the signs of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple; and to this end he leads them into the prophecy of Daniel, chapter 9, verse 29, to let them know that after the Messiah should be slain, the city and temple should be destroyed. When therefore they should see the armies of the Gentiles (which were abomination to the Jews) to compass about Jerusalem, as is expounded in Luke 21 verso 20, he forbids them to think that the siege should be raised or the city should escape as it had done in former times; for God had destinated the city and the temple at that time to be ruined, as the diligent reader of Daniel might perceive. DOCTRINE: [1.] God has instruments at his pleasure to destroy strongest cities, and can make those whom men abhor most to be the instrument of their destruction, for *The abomination of desolation, the armies of the Gentiles* are at his call. [2.] Lest the faithful should still dote upon the ceremonies of the law and figurative shadows, after the Messiah's coming,

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it was very needful that the city and temple both, whereunto the sacrifices and chief ceremonies were astricted,<sup>8</sup> should be destroyed and abolished as the prophet Daniel had foretold. [3.] For understanding of the Word of God, when it is read, careful attention and all means of knowledge must be used. Therefore says he, *Let him that readeth understand.*

16. *Then let them which be in Judea, flee into the mountains.*

17. *Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house;*

18. *Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.*

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19. *And woe unto them that are with child, and to them which give suck in those days.*

20. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:*

21. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

22. *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.*

That they might know how certain and sudden the overthrow of Jerusalem should be, our Lord gives advertisement that all the speed any man could make, should be little enough; for escaping whereof he gives seven signs. The first is, No place in the country should be safe where the soldier might march and that to fly to the mountains was the fittest (v 16). Sign 2. He who was in the town should make him for death and not think to escape by flying (v 17). Sign 3. It should not be fit for any man in the field and out of town to return to the city to take with him any provision for the flight, but should do well to fly, as he might fly for his life (v 18). Sign 4. Such as were with child in the country and giving suck in that doleful time should be very miserable and full of woe, being unable to fly so hastily as the need required, (v 19). Sign 5. It should be great

mercy if such as got occasion to fly, might so fly as they might rest in a foul day (when the unseasonableness of the weather might make the flight more grievous) and might rest on the Sabbath, when to be forced to go a long journey for fear of their life might augment their grief (v 20). Sign 6. Never was, nor ever should be in any war, such horrible tribulation as God should send at the destruction of Jerusalem (v 21). Sign 7. The extremity of trouble should be such that if God should not shorten the tribulation of those days and restrain the fury of the Romans against the rebellious Jews, the elect seed of that nation should be rooted out, so that no memory of a Jew might remain thereafter: but because God was to reserve an elect seed after the rejection of the multitude, therefore the Lord should shorten the days of wrath against the Jewish nation (v 22). DOCTRINE: [1.]

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When the Lord is to pour out his wrath on a place, if, all circumstances being considered, a man shall find it both lawful and possible to withdraw himself from that place, it is wisdom to be gone; for *Let them who be in Judea flee unto the mountains*, inasmuch as it shall be safer for them at that time to see to their own life by flight than to dream of resisting or escaping God's judgment in that place. [2.] If the judgment overtake a man so suddenly that there is no time nor means to escape, than let men lay by all thought of worldly goods and bestow their minds and time on that which is most needful, that is, for preparation unto death. Therefore says he, *He that is on the housetop let him not come down*. [3.] In such a case if a man with the loss of all he has can have his life for a prey, he fares well; for Christ says in this case, *He that is in the field let him not return*. [4.] In the time of general calamities, God's ordinary benefits make a man more miserable than if he lacked them; as children, riches, honour, when they must now be gone, and can give no more comfort to us, then are they the matter of our woe; for at such a time, says he, *Woe unto them that are with child*, &c. that is, they shall be so much the more miserable; for this *Woe* is pronounced by way of prophecy and not denounced by way of indignation against women with child, more than others. [5.] Troubles may be mitigated by prayer to God who can dispose of means of delivery, and can mix the cup of our grief, so as our misery may be the more comfortable;<sup>9</sup> Therefore says he, *Pray that your flight be not in winter*. [6.] God's judgments upon despisers of the gospel and rejecters of mercy offered in Christ are most severe. Therefore the destruction of Jerusalem was of all calamities that ever came upon a



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people most lamentable, for as the common history reports, a million people perished in the siege in a most fearful manner of destruction, the body of the land<sup>10</sup> being gathered together in it at the solemnity of the Passover, and about four score and seventeen thousand were made slaves; *such tribulation as was not since the beginning of the world.* [7.] In most confused and calamitous times the Lord has a care of his own elect and remembers mercy toward them

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in the midst of wrath; *for the elect's cause*, says he, *these days shall be shortened.*

*23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not.*

Our Lord returns to direct his disciples and the Church to beware of whatever might destroy their souls as the main thing which concerned them to take heed to. DOCTRINE: [1.] As the main danger of the Church is from seducers, who shall strive to divert men from the true Christ, so their main care should be to see that their faith does not miscarry. Therefore says Christ, *Believe it not*, if another Christ be offered to you. [2.] As at all times, so chiefly in times of trouble, Satan studies to delude men with pretences of saviours and salvation, which are not real, because in time of trouble men are most ready to receive anything which promises relief or release, and so to embrace delusions instead of divine help. Therefore it is said, *Then*—that is, when the trouble is great—*will it be said, Lo, here is Christ.* [3.] After our Lord's ascension neither is another Christ to be expected nor the true Christ to be found bodily and locally present in any place on the earth; for, *If any man shall say, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not*; so says Christ himself.

*24. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

Christ gives a reason why we should be wary from the certain danger which the multitude of deceivers should bring. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is possible that false deceivers pretending themselves to be Christ, and false prophets drawing men away from the true Christ, may make show of great signs and wonders, for so does Christ foretell. [2.] Whosoever teaches false doctrine and does not conform to the truth of the Scriptures,

their wonders are lying wonders and not to be believed. Therefore says he, *Believe them not*. [3.] The power of delusion is great and may prevail with any who is secure and watches not, for, *They shall*

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*deceive, if it were possible, the very elect*. [4.] The elect cannot altogether be seduced and drawn away from the true Christ because of the power of him who has called them, but for any power in themselves they might be seduced; for, *False prophets shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect*, but divine power guards them against delusions of Satan and false prophets, that they shall not always be deceived.

25. *Behold, I have told you before*.

The Lord commands to make use of the warning. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's forewarning of the danger from false prophets should stir up all to be the more watchful, and it shall make men inexcusable if they shall be seduced; for, *Behold, I have told you before*, says he. [2.] The doctrine of election does not give warrant to security but should be made use of for diligence and watchfulness; therefore says he, *Behold, I have told you*; for as God has decreed to save the elect so he will save them by his own means. [3.] This forewarning shows that although the elect shall not be altogether and without recovery deceived, yet they may be so far mistaken as it had been good they had watched; much sin and misery may befall a man by not watching, although at length he may be brought forth of it; for, *Behold, I have told you before*, makes the Lord free of what ill unwatchfulness may let in.

26. *Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not*.

As before in verse 23, so here again Christ bids them beware to believe his bodily local presence in the earth after his ascension until the day of judgment. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such a Christ as is not the Son of *Abraham* and the Son of *David*, such a one as is not described to us in the Scriptures, is not to be looked upon, nor believed, nor esteemed of; such a Christ as is said to be locally present in the earth after Christ's ascension a man should not go unto, nor believe any speech of such a Christ as shall be said to be in his body in the desert or in a chamber or in a box or in a wafer cake. Lo here, or lo there, or such like,

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as the Papists have their Christ, *Believe it not*, says Christ himself.

27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

He gives a reason why such imaginations of his being on the earth in his body is not to be believed. DOCTRINE: After Christ's ascension no other bodily presence of Christ or coming into the world is to be believed, save his second coming in glory, which shall be on a sudden, when men are not looking for it, and in such evidence of glory that all the world from the east to the west shall be made witnesses of it; for *As the lightning, so shall the coming of the Son of man be*, says Christ.

28. *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

He meets with an objection: if he come in the east or in the west, how shall those elect persons come to him who shall be so far removed from that place as is the west from the east. He answers, and teaches that as the eagles from all quarters are shortly gathered to the place where the carcase is, so shall all the elect be swiftly gathered together to the place where Christ shall show his bodily presence at his second coming to judgment. DOCTRINE: We need not trouble ourselves about the swift dispatch<sup>11</sup> of the last judgment, how or in what place of the world the convocation of the elect shall be; this is sufficient, we shall meet with Christ where he shall be; for, *Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

29. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*

For further satisfaction of his disciples, our Lord gives six signs of his second coming. DOCTRINE: [1.] All the time

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before the second coming of our Lord (whatsoever comforts may be mixed) shall be days of tribulation, and not so free of the miseries of this life as some do dream: for here he tells us the second coming of our Lord shall be *immediately after the tribulation of those days are ended*, and

brought toward a period.<sup>12</sup> [2.] When all the Church's exercises, all her tribulations and warfare are accomplished, then shall the Comforter Jesus Christ come, to give full refreshment immediately. [3.] Yet shall his coming be in a terrible manner to the world, with such an alteration made upon the creatures (being now all of them to be changed from the estate of vanity whereunto they are subject) the sun, moon and stars, obscured by the glory of Christ, shall no more be able to give comfort to men, nor to show forth their glory as before, but shall cease from their service and lose their power, expressed here by *darkening, not giving light, falling from heaven and shaking of heaven, as a tree that casteth her fruit*; for so must it be ere they be made new. This is the first sign of his coming.

*30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*

The second sign or evidence of Christ's coming is the glorious shining of Christ's person approaching, called the sign of the Son of Man, because as the light of the sun approaching is a sign of the present appearing or rising of the sun, so shall the shining glory of Christ's approaching, which is more bright than the sun (Acts 26:13,14) be a sign of his present appearing. What other sign of the Son of Man beside this may be, we leave it till the time come of his revealing of it. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ shall be seen visible judge of quick and dead at the last day in his human nature; for, *the sign of the Son of Man, bodily descending, shall appear in heaven*. The third sign of Christ's coming is the mourning of all people, it being now manifest that the day of judgment is come. The penitent shall fall on mourning and lamenting their sins with a godly sorrow,

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that they may be fitted for the promised consolation of wiping all tears from their eyes, and the wicked shall fall on weeping for the misery coming on them presently,<sup>13</sup> by the sentence of their judge. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as have mocked at the day of judgment, and scoffed at piety, and rejected or abused the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall then mourn a great mourning: *All the tribes of the earth shall mourn*. The fourth sign of his coming is the manifestation of his bodily down-coming into the clouds, with power and great glory. DOCTRINE: Howsoever Christ's first coming was in much infirmity because he was to suffer for us, yet his

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second coming being to judge and to reward all according to their works, as here is said, *shall be with power and glory.*

*31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

The fifth sign: there shall be a great sound of a trumpet, as it were summoning all to appear before the tribunal of Christ to judgment, which teaches us that the day of judgment shall be no less terrible than the day of the promulgation of the law on Mount Sinai; as for other reasons, so for this, that as there was an audible trumpet which sounded at the giving out of the law, so shall there be an audible *sound of a trumpet* at the day of judging men for transgressing the law. The sixth sign or evidence of Christ's coming is, that the elect being raised from death, or instead of death changed from this mortal life to the estate of immortality, the angels shall be set on work to gather them from all the quarters of the earth whence the winds do blow, or from the utmost parts of the earth where the sight of the heavens has an end. DOCTRINE: Although the elect be now scattered one from another in sundry respects, yet then shall they all meet together; not one shall be inlacking:<sup>14</sup> for the angels shall *gather Christ's elect in unto him from one end of heaven unto another.*

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*32. Now learn a parable of the fig tree: when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*

*33. So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*

*34. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*

*35. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

After he has given the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and of his own second coming, he confirms them in the certainty the coming of both, and draws all this doctrine to good use. And first, he certifies them of the destruction of the tempi under the parable of a fig tree; that when

the fig-tree begins to bud summer is near. So when they should see the Jews doting on false Christs, hearkening to false prophets, persecuting the preachers of the gospel, growing tumultuous and seditious under hopes of a bodily liberation from the yoke of the Romans, rumours of wars arising, armies coming in upon Judea, then let them persuade themselves, says he, that when these signs should appear judgment was at the door upon that nation, and that both these signs and the destruction of Jerusalem with the temple should all come to pass in the days of them that were then living (vv 33,34). And he forbids them to doubt hereof, because his words were more firm than heaven or earth (v 35). So much then, for the destruction of the temple and the signs and time thereof. DOCTRINE: [1.] When we see some part of the truth of God come to pass in our sight, it should help us to believe and expect the fulfilling of the rest: as, *When we see the trees bud, we know that summer is near.* [2.] It is hard to our misbelieving hearts to give that credit to Christ's words whereof they are worthy: but by so much more is our Lord's love to us and care of us to be praised and admired, that he by so many means goes about to confirm and persuade us. Therefore says he, *Verily I say unto you &c.* [3.] Whatsoever Christ says, shall be or shall not be. His word is more firm than the fabric of heaven and earth, for these shall be altered, but the Lord's word is solid and endures for ever: *Heaven and earth shall pass* rather, says he, &c.

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*36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Concerning the precise time of his second coming, he says that neither man nor angel knows, but only the Father, whereby he does not exclude the rest of the Persons of the Godhead, but only the creatures. DOCTRINE: [1.] The peremptory time of the day of judgment God keeps to himself secret, and will not have it particularly known, and therefore it should not be narrowly pried into; for, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man &c.* [2.] All things are not revealed, neither to the angels nor to men, but so much as may edify the Church, and as concerns us to know; for *My Father only knoweth*, says he.

*37. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

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38. *For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,*

39. *And knew not until the flood came and took them all away: so also shall the coming of the Son of man be.*

Our Lord draws this doctrine into use to stir us up to watchfulness, and to this end he sets before us seven motives. The first motive: there is no small hazard in case men be found secure and not watching when Christ comes, therefore watchfulness is necessary. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is safer to make ready for the day of judgment and to watch, lest we be surprised, than to be curious to know the particular time of it, for *As the days of Noah were*, &c. [2.] As the old world did not believe judgment coming, although forewarned by Noah that it was coming, so fares it with the world and will be so with the multitude of the world till the day of judgment, for *As the days of Noah were*. [3.] When men believe not things concerning the day of judgment and another life, no wonder they be given over unto and drowned in the matters of this life, for *They were eating*, &c., that is, This and the like was all their care. [4.] Whatsoever truth men do not believe when it is told them, that they do not rightly know, though they conceive the meaning

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of the Word told them; for it is said, *They knew not*. [5.] Who so believe not judgment when it is threatened, shall feel judgment and be taken away with it when it comes; for *The flood came and took them all away*.

40. *Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left.*

41. *Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

This second motive of watchfulness teaches: [1.] That at the day 'Of judgment they who have lived in near fellowship shall be shed<sup>15</sup> one from another; as, for example, they who had b n joined in one work, *Some in the field, some at the mill*. [2.] The meanest degree of people shall be taken notice of, *even women, labourers in the field, grinding at the mill*. [3.] judgment shall pass exceeding exactly, *to take one and leave another*,

to pull up one to meet Christ in the clouds, and leave another to be punished with the damned. Therefore watchfulness is necessary.

*42. Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

The third motive teaches us that the Lord has of set purpose kept from our knowledge the time when Christ shall come. Therefore all should watch and be ready, come when he will.

*43. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*

The fourth motive, set down in an example, teaches us in sense thus much: if men will watch for the avoiding of temporal inconveniences, much more should Christ's disciples watch to eschew eternal destruction: and if they do not watch, then the world's diligence in worldly things will condemn their negligence in spiritual things.

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*44. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.*

A fifth motive: watchfulness makes a man ready, even though the Lord shall come in an hour when men think not. Therefore watch ye that ye may be ready. DOCTRINE: the solid apprehending of the certainty of the Lord's coming and of the uncertainty of the time is a notable means to set us on our watch, and to make ourselves ready, for *In such an hour as ye think not, he shall come.*

*45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*

*46. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

A sixth motive, especially serving to stir up ministers to be watchful in their calling: as every man in his calling, so namely a minister (who is set over the Lord's people as a steward to give the children the bread of life in due season) shall be blessed, if he be faithful, and found at his work when Christ comes. Therefore should every man watch, and the



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minister in particular, that he may be found diligent in his calling, when his Master comes. DOCTRINE: [1.] The greatest honour which a man can do to his servant in this world is but a shadow to show forth what the Lord will bestow on his faithful servants in the world to come. This is it which he says: *He shall make him ruler over all his goods*, that is, he shall put honour upon him. [2.] The sort of service and trust which is put upon a minister of the gospel is very high and the happiness of a faithful and wise minister is very great; for, *Who then is a faithful and wise servant &c.*, says he.

47. *Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

48. *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming,*

49. *And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;*

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The seventh and last motive, looking especially to ministers: If any man, and especially a minister, do not watch to do the work entrusted to him, he shall be destroyed fearfully at the Lord's coming. Therefore it is necessary to watch for the Lord's coming. And here we have the portrait of an evil servant, namely, of an unfaithful minister: [1.] he has an evil heart of misbelief; he believes not Christ's coming to judgment, nor the truth which he preaches to others. *He saith in his heart, my master delayeth his coming*, that is, he looks not for his coming. [2.] He will not fail to malign, envy, traduce and injure to his power,<sup>16</sup> the more painful and faithful his fellow servants be; for he smites his fellow servants. [3.] One way or other he strengthens iniquity and the hands of the wicked, that they should not repent nor turn from their iniquity; for, *He eateth and drinketh with the drunken*.

50. *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:*

51. *And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

This is the judgment that shall come upon all wicked servants. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as do not make themselves ready for our Lord's coming, but follow their own will and lusts, shall find themselves miserably mistaken, for the good which they enjoyed or loved to have shall be taken from them, and the evil which they feared not shall come upon them to the full when they least expect it; for, *It shall be in an hour that he is not aware of* [2.] Unfaithful ministers who pretend to take charge of souls and are not faithful in that service, are ranked among the worst sort of men, that is hypocrites, and shall be of all men most severely punished; for *he shall cut them asunder, says he, and give them their portion with hypocrites.*

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## CHAPTER 25

In this chapter our Lord propounds two parables, the one of the ten virgins (vv 1–13), the other of the talents (vv 14–30), both tending to prepare us for the day of his second coming. Then is set down the manner of the last judgment (vv 31–46).

*1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.*

*2. And five of them were wise and five were foolish.*

*3. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them.*

*4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

*5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*

*6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.*

*7. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.*

*8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.*

*9. 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.*

*19. 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.*

20. *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

21. *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

22. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

The scope of this parable is set down in verse 13 to advertise<sup>1</sup> us to watch, because we know not the hour wherein

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Christ shall come to judgment. To this end the visible Church is compared to ten virgins, waiting for the bridegroom's coming, whereof some were wise and made preparation that whenever the bridegroom should come they might be ready to go with him. The others contented themselves with an outward profession of waiting for his coming, but did not prepare themselves, till the time was past, and then it was to no purpose to make a busyness. Therefore the one sort who were ready went in, and the other sort were excluded. And so shall it come to pass with professors in the visible Church. Whosoever make themselves ready and watch for the Lord's second coming shall enter into the kingdom of heaven which is above; and they who do not prepare the selves and do not watch for his coming shall be excluded from Christ at his coming. From this parable, insofar as it tends to this scope, learn: [1.] Christ and his Church may well be compared to the *Bridegroom* and the *Bride*, and the spiritual communion between them to *marriage* mutually promised in espousals in this life, and to be solemnized and completed at the coming of our Lord. [2.] As in the parable, so in the visible Church, all do profess themselves devoted to Jesus Christ the Bridegroom and to be desirous of communion with him in heaven, and possibly may attain to a blameless conversation and appear *virgin-like*, all waiting for the coming of our Lord in their own and others' estimation. [3.] As among the virgins in the parable, so in the visible Church all are not wise Christians. Some are wise and really such as they profess themselves to be, others are counterfeit Christians and foolish. [4.] As among the virgins in the parable, so in the visible Church, only those are wise who with the outward lamps of open profession labour to be furnished inwardly with the saving

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graces of the Holy Spirit; namely, faith working by love, and repentance mortifying their sinful lusts, that in newness of life they may glorify God. But whoso are destitute of inward grace in their heart, they are foolish: for the lamps of their outward profession without oil serve to no purposes when matters come to a trial. [5.] As in the parable the bridegroom comes when they are not aware, so will Christ come to judgment in a day and hour that men know not. [6.] As in the parable the wise are admitted and the foolish excluded,

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so they who are inwardly renewed and endued with the saving graces of the Holy Spirit, shall be taken up to heaven; and they who are destitute of the oil of the Holy Spirit, void of true faith and of the renewing virtue of God's grace, shall be excluded. [7.] As in the parable the wise could not help the foolish, nor the foolish hurt the wise, so the society of the hypocrites with the godly in the visible Church shall not be prejudicial to the sound Christians in the day of God's judgment; nor yet the society of the godly be of any avail with the hypocrites among whom they have lived, but every man shall be judged according to that which is within him. [8.] As in the parable the self-conceit of the foolish virgins (vv 11,12) helped not them, so the opinion which unrenewed persons within the visible Church have of their interest in Christ—their vain confidence and foolish hopes, grounded upon their outward profession, and their formal practices of external duties—will not avail them before the Lord at that day. [9.] To be watchful now, and to examine well our own case, and to see that we be sure of the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit whereby we are made indeed holy, is the only way to be certain of our salvation when Christ comes to judgment. This is the use Christ commands us to make of the parable, saying, *Watch therefore.*

*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:*

*15. 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.*

*16. Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same and made them other five talents.*

17. *And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

18. *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

19. *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

20. *And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdest*

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unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21. *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.*

22. *He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.*

23. *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.*

24. *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.*

25. *And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.*

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26. *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 straved:*

27. *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.*

28. *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.*

29. *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.*

30. *And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Another parable tending to put all men on work and in particular the ministers of the gospel, and for setting forth the glory of Christ and of his kingdom among men, according to every man's ability and calling, under the similitude of a master, giving to his servants money to trade withal, for his use. DOCTRINE: [1.] As the man in the parable travelling into a far country disposed of his affairs and ordered all matters till his return, so has our Lord Jesus given

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exact order in his Word to all men, and especially to his ministers, how his house shall be governed and how every man should serve him till his second coming again. [2.] As the master in the parable gives not the same number of talents to each servant, so the Lord gives not a like measure of gifts to everyone, but to some more, to some less, as his heavenly wisdom thinks expedient. [3.] As in the parable some made use of their talents, some not, so in the visible Church some employ the gifts they have, according to their calling, to the edifying of others and promoting of the kingdom of Christ, while others mis-regard the kingdom of Christ and care not how it goes with Christ's matters, if their own particular goes right: and therefore they make no conscience to promote Christ's kingdom in their vocation, as their duty set down in his Word

requires. [4.] As the master in the parable reckoned with his servants and took an account of each man's fidelity, so shall Christ call all men, and especially ministers to account one day, and shall search how faithful every man has been in his service. [5.] As in the parable the faithful servant, whether his talents were fewer or more, was accepted of his master and made partaker of his joy, so every man who in the discharge of his calling seeks faithfully the glory of Christ and increase of his kingdom shall be accepted in the day of judgment, and put in full possession of eternal life. [6.] As before the master in the parable, so also before Christ in the day of judgment, no excuse shall serve to save the slothful and unfaithful servant. Let a man deceive himself now as he list, and please himself with pretences as he will, all excuses shall be retorted<sup>2</sup> and made matter of his condemnation, and the unfaithful servant shall be cast in hell. [7.] As in the parable he who had one talent but had it not for his master's use is counted as if he had none, and is deprived of the possession of what he possessed, but not for his master's use; so whosoever has gifts whereby others are not profited, or Christ's kingdom is not promoted,<sup>3</sup> what he has is counted as if he had it not; or as if he had lost it, or put it away. And

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as others were not profited by his gift, so neither shall he himself be profited by it. But he that uses his gifts well for the glory of Christ shall be amply rewarded. The reason whereof Christ gives, for *Unto every man that hath gifts*, so as he has them for his Master's use (which is in effect to have them) *it shall be given*; that is, he shall have increase of gifts, and graces and rewards. But such as have not what they have, for the Lord's service, shall be deprived of all good, which they themselves might have of such gifts, and shall be utterly deprived of whatsoever good they seem to have; and *They themselves also shall perish*.

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.*

In the rest of the chapter the form of the day of judgment at Christ's second coming is described. [1.] The glorious sitting down of the judge (v 31). Then the presenting of parties to be judged, and the ordering of them in their several ranks (vv 32,33). [2.] The sentence of absolution of the godly (vv 34-40). [3.] The sentence of condemnation of the wicked (vv 41-46). Hence learn: [1.] Christ's human nature assumed is not to



be laid down again, but the union of the divine and human natures is constantly to remain, that so we may take heart and confidence, being sure to have our Redeemer in our nature to be our judge. *The Judge shall be the Son of man.* [2.] His second coming shall be glorious, all infirmities being removed: *He shall come in glory.* [3.] The glory of Christ then to be seen shall be no borrowed glory, such as the creatures have, but his own which he had before the world began, for, *he shall come in his own glory.* [4.] All the angels of heaven shall attend our Lord that day to honour him and give service to him, as he shall employ them; for *The holy angels shall come with him.* [5.] A glorious throne beseeming<sup>t</sup> the Son of God, and the judge of the quick and dead, shall be erected in the clouds, such as none can imagine how glorious it shall be, till they see it; for it is said, *Then he shall sit upon the throne of his glory.*

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*32. 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.*

*33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

Thus the judge is set. Now they who are to be judged are presented. DOCTRINE: [1.] There shall be a resurrection of the dead and a gathering together of these that are risen, together with them who shall be then living toward the place of his appearance, even all that were from the beginning of the world to that day. Without exception, all shall compar<sup>s</sup> from the least to the greatest, for *all nations shall be gathered before him.* [2.] Although now there be a confusion of the elect and reprobate, of the godly and the wicked, yet then there shall be a separation of the one from the other. As the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so shall our Lord make a perfect separation of the godly from the wicked, that not one of the one sort shall be in company with the other: for *he shall separate the sheep.* [3.] The godly and elect (compared to sheep, for their harmlessness, simplicity, obedience and attendance upon the shepherd) shall be placed more honourably, as it were at the right hand, which the apostle *Paul* expounds, by being caught up off the earth unto the clouds to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). But the wicked and reprobate (compared to goats, for their unruliness and uncleanness) shall

have the place of least respect, for we hear nothing of their being lifted off the earth; for, *he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left*, that is, he shall set the elect in a more honourable place than the reprobate.

*34. Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

In the pronouncing of the sentence, learn: [1.] That the judging of the world is a part of the kingly office of Christ, wherein he shall show his sovereign authority to give out

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<sup>346</sup>decrees irrevocable and to see them executed, for, *Then shall the king say*. [2.] Before the fearful sentence of condemnation shall be pronounced upon the wicked, the godly shall be absolved, that without fear they may hear that dreadful doom given on the reprobate, for, *Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, &c.* [3.] The elect's complete and nearest communion with Christ shall not be till they be in soul and body both translated to heaven, there to be with him for ever; for now, and not before this time, *Come*, says the King. [4.] The godly in whatsoever estate they be are no less beloved and blessed by the Father than by the Son who redeemed them, for he says, *Come, ye blessed of my Father*. [5.] The estate which the godly are to enjoy in heaven is *a kingdom*, that is, the highest honour and happiness that can be imagined; for it is said, *Come, inherit the kingdom*. [6.] This kingdom comes not from the elect's merit, but from God's free gift, derived from the Father's love, an inheritance not purchased by themselves in their own time, but *prepared for them from the foundation of the world*, that is, from eternity, wherewith we do presently meet, when we begin to think of the foundation of the world.

*35. 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.*

*36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came to me.*

The manner of judging of those who are of the *visible Church* is here mainly intended, as the sentence of absolution and the sentence of

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condemnation describing the parties do import: for this concerns us most, who are the members of the visible Church, to take heed to and to make use of it. In these words our Lord proves the elect to be blessed and destined to the inheritance of heaven by the evidence of the fruits of their faith toward himself. DOCTRINE: [1.] The judgment of Jesus Christ shall be pronounced upon men to whom the gospel has come, according to the evidence of their affection towards him: and men's works, especially as they stand in relation to Christ, shall be then brought forth to bear witness whether they have been believers

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or not, whether blessed of the Father or not; for he says here, *Ye fed me, clad me.* [2.] The godly having their sins forgiven them in this world there shall be no mention made then of what ill was done by them, and repented of, but only of what good they did: as here, *Ye clad me, fed me, visited me,* does show. [3.] Christ is so nearly conjoined with his faithful servants, the ministers of the gospel, and with every faithful person, that in all their afflictions he accounts himself afflicted, an hungred, thirsty, sick and in prison, when any of his own are in that condition; for, *I was an hungred,* &c. says he. [4.] Love to Christ's people, and real deeds of charity, especially manifesting that love, are true marks of faith in Christ, and of election to eternal life, as here appears. [5.] Even a visit performed to any for Christ's cause shall be taken notice of, and rewarded by Christ; for *ye visited me,* is reckoned up among other effects of love.

37. *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

38. *When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

39. *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

This form of speech is used by Christ to show us that the righteous and such as are justified by faith shall wonder that their works, which they in their life time justly esteemed little of, and had no confidence in, should be so much taken notice of, and rewarded so, as at the last day they shall perceive; as also they shall wonder that Christ finds himself so much concerned in the works of love discharged to his children for

his sake. This wondering is imported and expressed in this interrogation, *When saw we thee an hungred? &c.*

40. *And the King shall answer, and say unto them, 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.*

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In Christ's answer learn: [1.] That whosoever have believed in the Messiah from the beginning of the world are accounted of by him as *brethren and sisters*, and he will not be ashamed to point them forth and avow them *his brethren*, yea, he shall not be ashamed to call the least of them *his brethren*, and to esteem of the least courtesy done or kindness shown to the least of them, as if it had been done to himself. [2.] Howsoever we can hardly believe this, yet he will have us assured of the truth hereof, for to assure us, *Verily it is so*, says he.

41. *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.*

After the absolution of the faithful the wicked shall receive the sentence of condemnation. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as were never brought to the sense of the curse deserved for their sins and made to fly to Christ Jesus to be delivered from the curse, shall find the curse of God cleave fast to them in the last day; then shall they be called, *Ye cursed*. [2.] Such as did not in their life time seek communion with God in Christ shall be separated and chased out of his sight with a fearful *Depart ye*. [3.] There is no part to go to, save hell, for them whom Christ as judge at the day of judgment commands to depart. Therefore says he, *Depart ye into everlasting fire*. [4.] The pain of hell is most horrible, for in respect of extremity of pain it is called *fire*, and for the endurance it is without *ending*; therefore says he, *Depart ye into everlasting fire*. [5.] Satan, the prince of unclean spirits, and all the apostate angels with him, and all the wicked of the world who have served Satan by their ill deeds, shall all be tormented together; for it shall be said to them, *Depart ye into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels*. [6.] No question is to be made of the execution and manner of their torment, for it is ready prepared. *Depart ye into the fire prepared*, says he; that is, into the foredevised most extreme pain that can be imagined for tormenting of spirits or bodies.

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42. *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink:*

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43. *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.*

In the reason of their condemnation, learn: [1.] The unrepented ill deeds of the wicked and, namely, their mis-regarding of the Messiah Christ in His person and members, shall prove the pretence<sup>6</sup> to be just, for *ye did not so, and so to me*, says he. [2.] The omission of good deeds will serve sufficiently for a dittay<sup>7</sup> against the wicked; for *Ye fed me not, clothed me not &c.* [3.] The common fault of all the wicked shall be found want of love to Christ and his members; for, because they did not cherish such as did believe in Christ, it shall be said to them, *Ye did it not to me.* And here it appears that all his process<sup>8</sup> concerns them especially to whom the gospel comes; for to them to whom the gospel never came, this cannot be said, and therefore we have not to search any further of the day of judgment than what concerns ourselves and what we may make use of.

44. *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?*

45. *Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*

46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

In the answer which the damned are brought in giving to Christ as pleading for themselves, learn: [1.] The wicked do conceive they have such excuses as will bear them out at the great day, but which will fail them altogether. Therefore, *When saw we thee &c.* say they. [2.] If omission of duties shall be a sufficient dittay to condemnation, how

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great shall the dittay<sup>9</sup> be when all commissions shall be joined with all omissions, and all sorts of sins shall be joined together; for here is their dittay; *Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least.* &c. [3.] Mis-regarding of Christ's servants and children in their need of our help shall be interpreted a mis-regarding of Christ: for so imports *ye did it not to me.* [4.] The sentence of absolution shall be executed as it is pronounced and so shall the sentence of condemnation also. Everlasting life shall be the portion of the godly and everlasting punishment the portion of the ungodly; for *These shall go away, &c. but the righteous into life eternal.*

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## CHAPTER 26

Christ forewarns his disciples of the manner of his death, to be within three days, which accordingly was fulfilled; for his enemies resolve to kill him before the feast day (vv 1–5). And Christ gives warning again of his death and burial, in Simon's house, by occasion of ointment poured on him (vv 6–13). Then Judas sells him to the priests (vv 14–16). But Christ, before he was apprehended, celebrates the Passover and institutes the sacrament of his Supper that night he was betrayed, and forewarns his disciples of his being betrayed that same night, (vv 17–35). After which he goes to the garden, and endures horrible agonies in his soul (vv 36–46). Being apprehended, he willingly endures hard things of the priests and elders, and is condemned in Caiaphas' hall, where Peter, having denied him, is raised up again by repentance (vv 47–75).

*1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,*

*2. Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.*

After Christ has taught his disciples what was fit to be told them in answer to their questions about the time of the day of judgment, he tells them of the time of his passion, because that was most necessary. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord hides and shows secrets to his people as may best profit them. [2.] His foretelling the time of his sufferings, which his enemies knew not, although they longed for it, shows his fore-knowledge of, and resolute willingness toward the work of redemption; for he says, *After two days the Son of man shall be betrayed.*

*3. Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas.*

4. *And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.*

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5. *But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.*

In this wicked assembly decreeing to kill Christ, learn: [1.] That councils may err, and such as have the title of rulers and elders in the Church may prove enemies to Christ, for such is the assembly of the chief rulers here. [2.] Satan labours to have, and often finds men of most power in Church and state to be against Christ, as here elders and scribes. [3.] The craft and malice and blood-thirstiness of Christ's enemies is great; as here, *They resolve to take him by subtilty, and kill him.* [4.] Wicked men are wise to foresee temporal inconveniences, but blind to see the danger of sinning, as here, *Not on the feast day, say they, lest there be an uproar among the people,* but no fear of God is in their heart to kill the innocent. [5.] When the people are zealous for Christ it muffles the mouths of bloody dogs, as here: *Lest there be an uproar, say they, among the people.* Therefore these wicked men prevened<sup>t</sup> the feast day.

6. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,*

7. *There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.*

There is a remarkable passage of anointing of Christ to his burial observed here; in which history, learn: [1.] That in little Bethany, as well as in great Jerusalem, God has his own: as here, *Simon and this woman.* [2.] The man who is sensible of his cleansing by Christ will love him all his life long after, as *Simon the leper* here receives, and entertains Christ and his disciples. [3.] When our past infirmities may glorify Christ, it is no shame to bear the memorials thereof; for here the evangelist calls *Simon the leper* though now *whole.* [4.] Love spares no cost. Where love is hot, there nothing is dear, as is to be seen in this woman, who breaks an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and pours it out upon Christ.



8. *But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?*

9. *For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.*

12. *When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.*

13. *For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.*

Judas bearing the bag, was offended that this ointment was not sold and put in his custody, and moves the rest to dislike the *waste*, as he called it. DOCTRINE: [1.] One murmurer may infect a whole company; one Judas ensnares in his fault other disciples. Therefore it is said, *When his disciples saw it, they had indignation.* [2.] When, after the manner of the world, men look upon Christ, they account all to be lost that is bestowed on him. *To what purpose is this waste?* say they. [3.] Avarice lacks not fair pretences, as here: *It might have been sold for much and given to the poor,* say they. [4.] Good men's best actions may be misconstrued even by Christ's own disciples, as here may be seen. [5.] It is no small trouble to the godly to find their good works misinterpreted, especially by the godly. Therefore says Christ, *Why trouble ye the woman?* [6.] Although men misinterpret good works, yet Christ will judge aright of them and take part with his own and defend them, as here is seen; *She hath wrought a good work,* says he. [7.] Such good works as offer themselves rarely, and will not readily occur again, should not be neglected but instantly be followed and preferred to other good works, whereof more frequent occasion is offered; as here, *The poor ye have always with you,* says he.

12. *For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.*

13. *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.*

This holy woman foresaw his death and does the last duty to him.

DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord knows the intentions of

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his honest servants, and sets a price on their good deeds thereby. Therefore says he, *She did it for my burial.* [2.] Our Lord knew that the gospel should be preached through the world, and what was to be preached also, for *Where this gospel shall be preached,* says he, *this shall be told &c.* [3.] True faith sees afar off, for this woman sees life in death, believes the Lord Jesus to be the true Saviour, worthy of all honour in his death, as well as in his life; believes that he should not see corruption, believes that his death should be a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God and the savour of life to his people, for *She did it,* says Christ, *for my burial.* [4.] The memorial of the just shall not go to the grave with them, but their good deeds shall be had in everlasting remembrance. In this woman we have assurance of it; for, *This shall be preached for a memorial of her,* says he. [5.] Whosoever does anything for Christ shall never have cause to rue; Christ accounts more of it than it is all worthy; for, *She hath wrought a good work on me,* says Christ, before, and now *This shall be told of her for a memorial.*

14. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,*

15. *And said unto them, What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

16. *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.*

Judas, minding to have gain some way, seeks opportunity first to sell, then to betray Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] When a wicked man is engaged to do an evil turn he never takes rest till he act it, as is here seen in *Judas; from that time he sought opportunity to betray Christ.* [2.] When men have an evil turn in their heart, and want opportunity only, they shall not want occasion long: as Judas, minding to sell Christ, seeks and finds fit merchants, *the chief priests.* [3.] God will suffer wicked men to follow their designs even against himself when he sees it fit for his own glory: as here he will not hinder a *Judas* to go to the high priests. [4.] He that is greedy of gain will sell his soul and heaven and Christ for money, as

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*Judas* does here. [5.] He that is not Christ's friend in truth will soon turn traitor as *Judas*

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*here does.* [6.] Hypocrites will be found in best societies, for here a traitor is one of the twelve. [7.] The wicked shall bear their own blame and the society shall be free: as here *Judas* is named alone. [8.] Secret enemies and open will easily agree together, and own one another, as here *Judas* and the high priests make a short bargain. [9.] He that sells Christ knows not his worth: for, *What will you give me?* says the seller. [10.] He that will sin and sell Christ will do it upon a naughty condition, ere he want all. *Thirty pieces of silver*, or what may be had, will make the bargain fast.

*17. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?*

The doctrine of the covenant of grace, being delivered by our Lord and confirmed abundantly by miracles, the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper follows, for sealing up of this covenant to the believer: and to this intent mention is made of Christ's last eating of the sacrament of the Passover to which was subjoined the institution and celebration of the sacramental supper: for the clearing of some circumstances whereof, and of the duty of preparation for right receiving of it, that which is here spoken of the Passover gives light. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is commendable to remember God's ordinances in due time and to prepare for them; as here, *The first day of the Feast, the disciples came*, and make ready for it. [2.] Our Lord made himself so poor that he had not a house of his own although he was owner of all the earth; as, *Where wilt thou that we prepare?* imports. [3.] Our Lord subjected himself to the law and kept exactly both the moral and ceremonial law that he might deliver us from the yoke of the one, and from the curse for breaking of the other; *He kept the Passover.* [4.] The terms of sacramental speech were well understood by Christ's disciples as to put the thing signified for the sign, namely, by this phrase, *to eat the Passover*, they mean *to eat the Lamb*, the sacramental memorial of the angels' passing over of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt.

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18. *And he said, Go into the city to such a man and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.*

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and they made ready the Passover.*

Christ directs them to a friend's house, a worthy man for so holy a service. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord will not lack friends wherever he is; here in Jerusalem he has friends, as he had also in Bethany. *Go into the city to such a man*, says he. [2.] He has such commandment of the spirits of men as he can bow their will to do what service he pleases, for he is sure to make such a man obey. [3.] Christ has taken on him to be our teacher, and to him only the dignity of *Master* is due, therefore he calls himself *the Master*. [4.] It is of his own free choice that our Lord employs any man more than another; for, *Go to such a man, and say*, imports this. [5.] The more near our time to depart this life draws the more careful should we be to have all things done by us which should be done; therefore says he, *My time is at hand, I will keep the Passover*. [6.] It is the part of true disciples to follow Christ's direction in all things, and being clear in the command to go about the obedience of it; for, *The disciples did as Jesus appointed*.

20. *Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.*

For clearing of the history of the Lord's Supper which was instituted at the close of the Passover, we have here set down the circumstances of eating of the Passover, as time, place and persons, whereby we have ground to conceive that *Judas* was present at the sacrament of the Passover, he being one of the twelve: for first, seeing there is no question made, that as *Judas* was employed in the apostleship with the rest, so he was admitted also with the rest to the fellowship of all worship and divine ordinances and was present at so many former feasts of the Passover as Christ kept with his disciples, there can be no inconvenience to support him present at the Passover

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at this time also. Secondly, seeing whatsoever is said by historiographers concerning a common supper before the sacrament to be observed by

the Jews (a people too much given to their own inventions, and the traditions of elders) it is safest for us to think that Christ did keep the law of the Passover as was written in Exodus 12, wherein was appointed a whole lamb with unleavened bread (not prescribing how much) and sour or bitter herbs for a sauce—drink being presupposed and included, as naturally necessary, to make the Passover to be a supper and an holy feast; all which making up sufficient store of meat to be a meal to so many men and to furnish a sop to *Judas* ere he went forth, and elements also to the new sacrament after he was gone. There is no ground to make us conceive that there was a common supper preceding the Passover, but when we find *Judas* to be eating with the rest, after their downsitting to the Passover, we have good ground to think that *Judas* was partaker of the Passover supper. Thirdly, seeing the evangelist expressly says that they made ready the Passover, and that Christ when the even was come sat down with the twelve, to wit, to eat the Passover, and that as they, that is, Christ with the twelve, were eating, he said to them, One of you shall betray me (vv 19–21), we may without any scruple conclude that *Judas* was present at the Passover; and so much the more as we find that the Evangelists hereafter number only eleven disciples, until the time that *Matthias*, who used always to be present with the apostles, was chosen to supply the room of *Judas*, and to make up again the number of twelve, (Acts 1:26). In regard of them the apostle Paul had just ground to say, that Christ was seen of the twelve, because *Matthias* being present always with the twelve, and so at this apparition, and reckoned with the eleven in *Judas*' room, makes the number complete (Acts 1:22,23; 1 Corinthians 15:6). This being presupposed, we learn: [1.] That neither is the sacrament the worse, nor are the communicants polluted, even though an undiscovered hypocrite be in company with them at the Lord's table, for *Judas* was one of the twelve with whom Christ sat down to eat the Passover, and neither the ordinance nor the rest of the apostles were tainted with *Judas*' fault. The pollution of the sacrament was in *Judas* only and remained with him alone. [2.] The Lord

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will not discover<sup>2</sup> hypocrites till they by their own deed discover themselves, but will suffer them to lurk among the saints till his own time come, as here he suffers *Judas* to lurk and to eat the Passover. [3.] Social sitting at table is a very fit posture for a religious feast, for here Christ and his disciples sat down at table together to eat the Passover.

21. *And as they did eat he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.*

22. *And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?*

Our Lord forewarns the disciples that he was to be betrayed by one of them, and puts each man to try himself. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is possible that a man may come to the Lord's table the one day and betray him shortly after; the like fell out in Christ's own apostles: *One of you*, says he, *shall betray me*. [2.] The possibility that a communicant may become a traitor should put all men to search themselves, as here the apostles are put to it, saying, *Is it I?* Sincerity and charity will make men search and suspect themselves rather than another, as here the apostles say not, *Is it Judas?* but *Is it I?* [4.] The sincere man dares not trust the deceitfulness of his own heart, but brings it to the searcher thereof, and relies on his testimony, as here the apostles do, saying to Christ, *Is it I?*

23. *And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.*

24. *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man, if he had not been born.*

Christ answers their question and takes away the stumbling block of his suffering himself to be betrayed by application of the prediction of the Scripture to the present case, to let them see that the betraying of him was foretold in the Scripture. DOCTRINE: [1.] A benumbed conscience and a shameless face are easily joined with a resolute purpose

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to sin, as here the traitor stands<sup>3</sup> not to dip his hand in the dish with Christ when he was minded presently<sup>4</sup> to betray him. [2.] No kindness or good which the godly can bestow upon the wicked will hinder the wicked to prove enemies to the godly when they are put to trial, as all Christ's kind usage of *Judas* and admitting him to eat of the dish with him, stayed him not from going to betray him. [3.] The known will of God is the best remedy to save us from stumbling at the cross of Christ, as here, *It is written*, says Christ, that he may keep them from stumbling.

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[4.] The prediction of God's Word and the foredetermination of a fact does not exempt the sinner, the committer of the fact, from guilt or punishment, for not the less it is said, *Woe to that man!* [5.] Sin turns all the benefits of God into curses, and makes them matter of misery: for, *It had been better for the traitor that he had never been born*, says Christ.

25. *Then Judas which betrayed him answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.*

*Judas* feigns himself a friend and is loath to betray himself by not saying as the rest did. DOCTRINE: [1.] Hypocrites for shame will profess sincerity as the sincere do; so says *Judas*, *Is it I?* [2.] A seared conscience will make an affronted face, as here *Judas* dares say, *Is it I?* [3.] The more the hypocrite will hide his sin the more is it brought forth, as here, *Thou hast said it*, says Christ.

26. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body.*

27. *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying Drink ye all of it;*

28. *For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Now follows a more particular relation of the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the whole doctrine

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whereof is not to be found in anyone of the evangelists or apostles, but to be collected out of all, each contributing their part to express the full meaning of the Lord's spirit in this matter. Here we take up only that which *Matthew* says. And first we observe that the celebration of the first sacramental Supper of the Lord was joined in one continued supperly action with the sacrament of the Passover; our Lord herein declaring the old Church, and the new to be one in him, and the sacraments of both to have himself for their signification, for the sacrament began as *they were eating*, that is, sitting still at table and the supper not closed. [2.] For the nature of the action it is required there be a table prepared, and elements ready to be made use of. For the first Supper, which is our

pattern, was celebrated at the same table whereat the Passover was celebrated, whereupon there were yet remaining elements for eating, for this much is imported in *As they were eating*. [3.] It is requisite also, that the minister of the gospel and his flock, so many of them as may communicate together at one table at once, be assembled together and jointly set down together, for celebration of this holy feast, for so was it in the pattern, *as they were eating, they ...* that is, Christ as minister and his disciples as the flock. [4.] The fittest posture of the communicants in the action of this holy feasting is social sitting together at the Lord's table; for this was the behaviour of the first communicants. The Lord began to give the sacrament *as they were eating*, that is, as they yet continued sitting together socially at the table, materials for eating not being removed, during which time men are said to *be eating*. [5.] The elements of this holy feast are only bread and wine, for Christ took bread and the cup. [6.] The part of the minister is to take the elements and by the word of institution and prayer to sanctify, separate and appoint them for this holy and sacramental use, so much of them and insofar as they shall be employed by the communicants; for *Christ blessed the bread, blessed the cup, and gave thanks to the Father*. [7.] The part of the minister also is to break the bread and give it to the community of the communicants, with a command to them in common, or in the plural number, to take the bread and eat it; for Christ brake the bread and gave it to the disciples, saying *Take ye, eat yeo* [8.] It is the part

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of the minister to expound and declare with authority in the Lord's name what this bread thus blessed, thus broken, thus given and taken signifies, exhibits and seals up by Christ's appointment, to the believing communicant; to wit, that *this bread is Christ's body*: which speech is to be understood, not physically nor miraculously, but judicially; that is to say, in the sense that civil judgment makes the instruments of security of any thing to be called by the name of it, and holden in law for it; and therefore as the instrumental elements, whereby men are infest<sup>s</sup> in any house or land or rent, being orderly given or taken, are by the appointment of men's law, the very house or land or rent, really, and truly in law made sure to the receiver, for all lawful and profitable effects, before the bar of civil justice; so this bread, thus given, and thus taken, is by the institution and appointment of divine ordinance, in a judicial sense the very body of Christ suffering, judicially and truly, or really in divine law, made sure to the receiver for all profitable effects before the bar of divine justice.



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And as the instrumental elements of seizing<sup>6</sup> a man in a house, or land, or rent, (such as are, for example, a piece of earth or a stone or a staff or a penny) orderly given and taken, do signify, exhibit and confirm in law a man's right and title to such a house or land or rent more strongly, than if a man did take the house or land physically in his arms, if it were possible; so this bread by divine ordinance, does signify, exhibit and confirm the believer's right and title to Christ's body, as suffering for the believer's redemption, more surely and certainly than if Christ's suffering body were physically embraced by him in his arms, if it were possible; and therefore, as the instrumental elements of civil infestment, in the terms of human ordinance and institution, are rightly called by the name of the land dispo<sup>n</sup>ed,<sup>7</sup> so the sacramental element of bread is rightly called Christ's body, dispo<sup>n</sup>ed in the terms of divine ordinance and institution, which appoints hereby right to be given to us unto Christ's body, as suffering for our redemption. [9.] To assure us of full satisfaction

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and complete furniture<sup>8</sup> for eternal life, Christ our Lord has not only taken bread in the sacrament, but also has instituted a cup, that is, both meat and drink, for certifying us that we shall have complete nourishment in him, commanding the community of the believers, or communicants, in the plural number, to drink thereof; for he also *took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.* [10.] As it is necessary that the people receive the sacramental bread with the exposition and declaration in the Lord's name of what it gives them right to by divine institution, so it is also necessary that the people receive, all of them, the sacramental cup with declaration of what it gives them right to by Christ's ordinance; for this cup, or wine in the cup, *is my blood*, says the Lord, to wit, appointed of me judicially to make you truly or really sure of your right to my death and blood-shed, and to all benefits bought thereof. [11.] There is a covenant of redemption passed between the Father and the mediator Christ, wherein Christ was bound to lay down his life by the shedding of his blood to purchase to the redeemed remission of sins. This is imported in the words, *the blood of the covenant for remission of sins*, showing that the Son had before promised to pour out his blood for purchasing remission and that the Father had granted remission upon this condition. [12.] Christ made his testament before his death and left remission of sins in legacy to his redeemed people, namely, to believing communicants. This is imported in the words, *the testament for remission*

of sins. [13.] Christ made his testament two ways, (1) in typical promises under the law before he came in the flesh: and so also in types and figures he died, as it were, and was the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. (2) He made his testament after his incarnation in plain and clear terms, after which he fulfilled the types of his death and actually laid down his life for his redeemed people. This is imported in the words, *new testament in my blood shed*, presupposing an old testament in the blood of typical lambs and other sacrifices. [14.] Conformed to this twofold manner of making of a testament there was also a twofold manner of making of a covenant of grace between God and the Church in Christ her head;

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one before he came, called an *old covenant*, of typical promises, painful and chargeable rites and harder conditions to the external beholder; another after his incarnation called a *new covenant* of better promises and more comfortable conditions, because now the dimness of the shadow is removed, the yoke of the ceremonies is broken, and the substance of the covenant is more clearly seen, and this is imported in the words *new covenant*; for the word in the original, which signifies *testament*, also signifies *covenant*, and is indifferently used for either, for the testament and covenant, is much of the same articles to and with the same persons. [15.] The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a seal of the new covenant of righteousness and eternal life by faith in Jesus Christ the Redeemer. This is imported in the words, *this cup is my blood of the new covenant*, that is, it is the seal of the new covenant, whereby I make<sup>9</sup> you sure right unto my blood, shed for remission of sins. [16.] By the new covenant of righteousness and life through faith in Christ, sealed in the sacrament, the believer gets right unto the *covenant of redemption* made between God and Christ, to the behove<sup>10</sup> of the redeemed. This is imported in the words *testament*, or *covenant of bloodshed*, to satisfy the Father; *and for many, for the remission of sins*.

*29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

That our Lord may put upon his disciples the impression of his death shortly to follow, and so both ingraft the doctrine of the sacrament more deeply in them, and prepare them the better for his death, he shows them that this was the last draught of wine he was to take in a sacramental

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way with them and that the time was coming when he and his disciples should in heaven together be partakers of the joy and comfort signified by this sacramental wine, which he calls *the drinking of it new*, or in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, for the

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external sacrament and sacramental elements are at last to be abolished as old. But the joy and life and honour signified by the sacramental participation of them shall never be abolished, shall never wax old, but shall be fresh and new for ever. DOCTRINE: [1.] Our Lord beside all other relations which he has to the sacrament as the *instituter* thereof, the *end* thereof, the *thing signified* thereby, and the *minister* in the first celebration thereof, is also a *fellow-banqueter* and communicant with us in his own way; for he did drink of the sacramental wine as it signified communion of life and joy with us in heaven: *I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you, &c.* [2.] Whatever change is put upon the wine in the sacrament by instituting that it should signify and seal up spiritual life and joy, yet after the sanctifying of it and in the time of drinking of it by the communicants, it remains wine in its own natural properties without being transubstantiate; for, *I will not*, says he, *drink of this fruit of the vine henceforth.* [3.] The drinking of the sacramental wine is a sign and pledge of our spiritual and new communion in life and joy in the kingdom of heaven, for Christ expounds it, saying, *until the day that I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.* [4.] Christ will not be content to be without his disciples in heaven, for *I will drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father*, says he.

*30. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

This is the close of the whole action. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is fit that God be glorified in the assembly of the Church by singing of psalms, and in particular, when the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, for *they did sing a hymn.* [2.] How sad hours soever the Lord sends to us it is our part always to sing his praises, for the disciples, although they all knew that our Lord was presently to suffer, yet *they did sing unto God an hymn.*

*31. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

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32. *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

Christ foretells his disciples of their stumbling at his sufferings and denying of him that night, according as was foretold (Zechariah 13:7), and that he would rise again from death and would gather them to him and meet them in Galilee whither they were to fly; yea, and that he should be there before them. DOCTRINE: [1.] The afflictions for the gospel may be such that the stoutest disciples may stumble at them and fall at a time; for, *All ye shall be offended because of me*, says he. [2.] The visibility of the Church is not such but that possibly open profession of the gospel and open communion of saints may be interrupted by persecution; for it is written, *I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad*. [3.] Christ shall be victorious over the power of persecutors, and after a scattering he will gather to himself again the upright in heart. He gives ground to us for so much, saying, *After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee*.

33. *Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*

34. *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

35. *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.*

Honest Peter cannot believe such weakness, at least in himself, and therefore, although forewarned the second time, he speaks stoutly and so do the rest of the disciples also. DOCTRINE: [1.] Inexpert Christians can hardly believe themselves to be so weak and sinful as the Lord's word shows them to be, but so much the more as they have an honest purpose to stand they have fleshly confidence in their own strength, and assure themselves that they shall stand in all assays,<sup>11</sup> however others fall beside them. Therefore

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is it that Peter says, *Though all men should be offended, yet not I; although I should die I will not deny thee*, and so also do the rest say. [2.] He that

trusts most to his own strength is nearest to the most fearful fall. Therefore it is said to Peter, *Ere the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

36. *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*

Our Lord's last sufferings may be for memory's cause distinguished by the places wherein he suffered. First, in the garden on mount Olivet, (to verse 57) and next in Caiaphas' hall (to the end of the chapter). Our Lord takes his eleven trusty disciples with him into the garden, where he knew the traitor with the enemies should shortly come to apprehend him, and acquaints his disciples with his purpose of going apart to prepare himself by prayer for suffering. DOCTRINE: [1.] As the truth of the gospel, so the right way of suffering for the truth must be learned from Christ. Therefore our Lord takes with him his disciples to Gethsemane, a garden and place where he is to begin his last sufferings, that they might see how voluntarily and holily he addressed himself to that service. [2.] As we should not make ostentation of going to private prayer, so neither need we scrupulously to conceal our purpose when it may edify; for Christ says here, *Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*

37. *And he took with him, Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful, and very heavy.*

38. *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

Out of the eleven disciples he chooses three to be witnesses of the hardest parts of his sufferings, even the same who were lately witnesses of his glorious transfiguration. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although all the redeemed be alike dear to Christ, yet will he acquaint some with more deep passages of his sufferings than others, and readily such as he hath acquainted before with clearer sight of his glory;

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as here *he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.* [2.] Our Lord suffered for our sins, not only in his body but also in his soul, sadness and heaviness in a measure unspeakable. *My soul,* says he, *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* [3.] Our Lord kept back from his own human nature the consolations of the personal union thereof with the divine

nature so far, that he as man did not despise the smallest means of ease or relaxation that could be, but calls for the company of his slippery<sup>12</sup> disciples; and hereby teaches us in our sad perplexities to take the company of some of the saints to whom we may reveal our mind; for, *Tarry ye here, and watch with me*, says he to them.

*39. And he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Although their company could be of some use, yet but of small use to him, therefore he goes on and prays. DOCTRINE: [1.] There is no ease to a perplexed soul under the sense of wrath till it be alone with God where it may sigh and groan, utter broken words, keep silence or freely express itself as it pleases without mis-construction. Therefore *he goeth a little from them, and fell on his face, and prayed*. [2.] The sense of the wrath of God felt by Christ, and the weight of the curse due to our sins laid upon him, was so horrible that his holy nature looking upon it, simply as it tends to the destruction of the creatures, could not but abhor it, and so wish to be rid of it, if it had been possible; therefore does holy nature say, *My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*. [3.] The love that our Lord has to our redemption, and his special covenant made with the Father for the paying of our ransom, made him to subject his holy nature and will to that which otherwise it abhorred: therefore looking to the Father's will thus to expiate the sins of the redeemed, he says, *Nevertheless not as I will* (in an holy natural choice) *but as thou wilt, let it be*; I voluntarily do choose it, that is, according to the condition passed between us, for redemption of the elect,

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*Let me drink this cup*. And here the merit<sup>13</sup> of sin, the strictness of divine justice, the horror of the wrath of God, with the weight of the curse, the mercy of God toward sinners, and the unspeakable love both of God and Christ toward the elect, is to be seen lively set forth before us in our Lord's passion.

*40. And he cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

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41. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Here is a short breathing time after his wrestling, wherein he comes to his disciples whom no trouble could make him forget, because for them and for the rest of his own people these sufferings were sustained; and finding them asleep, he gently reproves them, and exhorts them to watch and pray, by three reasons. The first is joined with a reproof: it is but an hour you have to watch till you be yoked with a temptation, by occasion of my sufferings approaching. Therefore why do you not watch this one hour with me? The second reason: except you watch and pray you may readily come under the power of temptation. Therefore watch and pray lest you enter into or begin to come under the power of temptation. The third reason: although the *spirit* or your renewed part be ready and willing to resist and oppose temptations, yet the *flesh*, your natural and unrenewed part, is weak and ready to be overcome. Therefore watch and pray. DOCTRINE: [1.] When we are in greatest danger and the matters most concerning us are in hand, when God calls most for our service and we have most need to watch, then are we readily most secure, as it fares with these disciples whom Christ called to watch with him and *now finds them asleep*. [2.] Seeing we have no strength of our own to overcome temptations, the only way to prevail is to watch and pray to God for assistance; therefore Christ says, *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation*. [3.] Seeing the godly are in great part flesh and unrenewed, and so are easily ensnared by temptations, the spirit

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and renewed part has so much more need of the help of spiritual exercises, for therefore Christ bids them watch and pray upon this reason, that howsoever the *spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak*.

42. *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done.*

43. *And he came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.*

44. *And he left them, and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

Our Lord's agony under the sense of wrath and weight of the curse due to our sins, is renewed again and again, while he is coming and going between his Father and his slippery disciples, praying to the Father the second and third time, in the same words. For understanding whereof let us consider that it stands with the holiness of human nature so well to be naturally and necessarily sensible of pain and grief, as to be voluntarily patient under it; so well to tremble and be feared<sup>14</sup> for the wrath of the Creator as to love to have his consolation and to have joyful communion with him; so well naturally and necessarily to abhor and seek to be rid of every thing which is destructive of itself and separative from felt joy in God as to submit itself to whatever trouble or cross it shall please God to lay upon it. And therefore it is alike agreeable to the holiness of human nature in Christ to speak one word to the Father, in the language of pure holy nature, simply looking to what is destructive of nature, and another word from holy voluntary resolution, subjecting the simple desires of nature to the furthering of the supreme designs of the Creator; and so it stands well with his holiness to say to the Father, as the truth was, to this sense. This cup of thy wrath is so horrible and unspeakably terrible that, looking simply on it, I cannot be a man and not abhor it, tremble at it and be feared for it, and seek by all lawful means to be rid of it and to express so much of the simple desires of holy human nature in me, *Let this cup depart from*

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*me*; but seeing it is thy will, that by my sufferings measured out to me, as in a cup, the price of redemption of the elect shall be paid, *Let me have it, Thy will be done*, I consent to it, I will the same which thou wilt, give it to me; I will drink it to the dregs. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ trod the winepress of the Lord's wrath alone; his own most intire<sup>15</sup> disciples could not so much as watch with him one hour, in his agony: he comes to them thrice, and thrice *finds* them asleep. [2.] The measure of the felt wrath of God and curse due to our sins, poured forth on Christ, was such as holy nature could not but be astonished at it and declare how much it was to be abhorred and eschewed if love to lost souls had not made it tolerable; for it behoved to be fearful and horrible above all that we can imagine, which made the Son of God thrice to pray, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me*. [3.] Such is the love our Lord had to the redemption of the elect that rather than we should not be saved, he chose that the cup of wrath due to our sins should kill him;



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and therefore, no other way of salvation at this time being possible, love made him submit to the condition and say, *Thy will be done.*

45. *Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

46. *Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.*

The time of the disciples' preparation for the following temptation being spent in sleeping, our Lord sharply rebukes them for losing the time so, and goes on with them to meet the traitor and the soldiers with him, whom he knew to be approaching. In Christ's speeches we must look to his meaning and not captiously misconstrue his words; for, *Sleep on now, and take your rest*, is a reproof, telling them that they shall not be suffered any longer to sleep or take rest, as that which follows makes plain. DOCTRINE: [1.] When time granted to prepare us for trial is mispent in sluggishness and carnal rest, the trial shall

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come upon us on a sudden; our carnal rest shall be taken from us and we must rancounter<sup>16</sup> with the trouble and trial, unprepared as we are, as it fares with the disciples, to whom it is said, *Sleep on now, take your rest: rise, let us be going.* [2.] Our Lord was not surprised in his sufferings; he is God, and knew perfectly whatsoever was to befall him; therefore said he, *Behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.*

47. *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came and with him a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders of the people.*

48. *Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he, hold him fast.*

49. *And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, master, and kissed him.*

The traitor comes and because it was night and Christ was not known to the soldiers by face, therefore he gives them a sign, whereby they should know Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] A man unrenewed, of whatsoever

gifts of learning, place in the Church or relation to Christ, may become a mortal enemy to Christ; for not only the chief priests and elders do send out soldiers to take Christ, but also one of the twelve apostles, *Judas*, turns traitor. [2.] An apostate from a good course may readily become a ringleader to others in an ill course, for, *Judas here, one of the twelve, comes and with him a great multitude*. [3.] Dissemblers and hypocrites deal plainly among their followers, but among the godly they counterfeit, for to the soldiers *Judas gives a sign* whereby they shall really know Christ, that they may take him; but when he came to Christ, he says, *Hail, master*, and kisses him, in dissimulation.

50. *And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?  
Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took him.*

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Christ speaks so much to the traitor as might make him compare his pretence of friendship to his Master with his intention of bringing soldiers of him, and then he suffers himself to be taken and bound. DOCTRINE: [1.] Hypocrites may deceive others and themselves, but cannot deceive God; for here Christ puts his finger to this traitor's intention, saying, *Wherefore came you hither?* [2.] To compare our profession with our practice and our pretences with our intentions is a means to give us a right sight of ourselves; therefore is it that Christ calls *Judas, Friend*, in respect of his profession and asks him *why he came*, to put him to look to his intention. [3.] Christ being surety for the redeemed who cannot defray their own debt, he behoved to answer to justice for them, and therefore must he be *laid hands on and taken*.

51. *And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's and smote off his ear.*

52. *Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?*

54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?*

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One of the disciples goes about by the sword to rescue Christ from suffering and is reprov'd. [1.] For doing so without a calling. [2.] Because Christ could have helped the matter another way, if he had pleased. [3.] Because the Scripture behoved to be fulfilled, which foretold of his sufferings. DOCTRINE: [1.] Rash zeal is dangerous in Christ's matters, and gloss<sup>17</sup> miscarries men where it is followed, as here is to be seen. *One of Christ's followers engages the rest, to resist the magistrate, with the present hazard of their life, and draws on the blot of sedition upon religion.* [2.] No man shall have thanks to fight for Christ without

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a warrant; for, to *Peter* Christ says, *Put up thy sword.* [3.] They deserve to perish by the sword whosoever draws the sword, under whatsoever pretence, without God's warrant; for it is said, *They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* [4.] They entertain wrong thoughts of God whosoever goes about to help their cause by unlawful means. *Thinkest thou that I cannot help myself?* says Christ. [5.] When the Lord sees it fit to glorify himself rather by the deliverance than by the sufferings of his servants, he can find means to save them, and has angels in abundance ready, if men should fail; for he says, *Cannot I pray for legions of angels?* [6.] Our Lord suffered most willingly, with express purpose to fulfil the Scriptures which speak of the way of our redemption; for, *How,* says he, *shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?*

*55. In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.*

*56. But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.*

Christ clears himself and convicts his enemies of an evil conscience in their apprehending of him; because although openly they could not challenge him, yet did they now in the night time come with armed men against him, as if he had been guilty of crimes and a fugitive from the law. Then after he has thus convicted them he yields himself to them according to the Scriptures: whereupon the disciples flee. DOCTRINE: [1.] To clear our own innocency, and to convince the adversary of wrong done to us, may stand well with readiness to suffer; for Christ in yielding

himself to suffering gives us example in both. [2.] The conscience of a man's holy conversation<sup>18</sup> by-past<sup>19</sup> is comfortable in the day of suffering, as Christ here comforts himself that they could lay nothing to his charge, save care and painfulness to save their souls, by *daily teaching*

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*in the temple.* [3.] The course which Christ's enemies follow against him bewrays<sup>20</sup> them to have an ill cause and conscience; for they come now in the night, as against a thief, and yet when he sat daily teaching *in the temple, they laid no hold on him.* [4.] The Scripture is a fit means to lead us by the stumbling block of the cross; therefore says Christ, *All this was done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* [5.] Resolution to suffer will fail in the day of trial except God gives strength, as here is to be seen: *the disciples who promised to stand fast all forsake Christ and flee.*

*57. And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.*

After Christ's sufferings in the Garden are set down his sufferings in *Caiaphas' hall*, together with *Peter's denial*; and first, an assembly of Churchmen are gathered at *Caiaphas' house* to judge him. DOCTRINE: [1.] God disposes of the sufferings of his martyrs as he sees fittest for his glory; for those who are permitted to apprehend Christ are not permitted to kill him in a tumultuous way but must present him to judgment before *Caiaphas* and the scribes and elders assembled in *Caiaphas' house.* [2.] It is no new thing that such as are begun to persecute Christ in any degree, go on from one degree to another, as these men who were his adversaries in affection had spoken against him and consulted how to take him, shall not now be rid of him, but he is taken and set before them in judgment where his part and theirs also, his innocency and their cruelty, may both be seen.

*58. But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in and sat with the servants to see the end.*

Peter follows on, to wit, what should befall Christ. DOCTRINE: Although the evidences of love to Christ may be cut off for a time, yet love cannot be rooted out of the heart of a sincere disciple, for though *Peter* fled once, yet

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he follows on again, and although he follows afar off, yet he seeks to be where Christ was, that he might see the end.

*59. Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death,*

*60. But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,*

*61. And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.*

This corrupt Church assembly is resolute to have his life, yet will they seek to keep a form of justice, and to lead witnesses. DOCTRINE: [1.] Malice against the innocent is so shameful a thing that such as are most guilty of it shun to seem guilty; as these men seek to have some appearance of witnesses against Christ; and when they have found disagreeing false witnesses they reject them, till they find such false witnesses as might agree in one and seem true. [2.] Christ's greatest enemies could find no fault in him but were forced to make that a fault which was none, to wit, his foretelling of his own death and resurrection, which was the matter of his glory and our comfort: *Destroy this temple, and I will build it in three days*, says Christ; that is, do your worst against me in destroying the temple of this body of mine and I will raise it up again the third day, which words the witnesses do alter and repeat them as if he had promised to destroy the temple of Jerusalem, and build it again in three days, and therefore are these men justly called here *false witnesses*.

*62. And the high priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?*

Our Lord could have answered for himself, but because he stood in our room he answered nothing and was content to be condemned for our faults, though he was free of all sin in himself; as also, the matter witnessed was not worthy to be disputed; for presuppose he had said so, it

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was no matter of accusation, he had done greater miracles than to do this; yea, the raising of his own body promised by him, in case the witnesses had faithfully reported his words, was a greater work than the

building of the temple, alleged, we always learn, to his glory and our comfort, that against our Redeemer no more than this could be alleged.

*63. But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*

The high priest, finding all matters witnessed to be but frivolous, adjures our Lord to confess whether he were the Christ, the Son of God. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Messiah by the Jews' own acknowledgment behoved to be the Son of God; for, *Tell us*, says the high priest, *whether thou be Christ, the Son of God*, importing that the promised Messiah or Christ was to be no other than the Son of God. [2.] The wicked labour to make the fear of God a trap to take the godly, when they cannot otherwise overtake them: *I adjure thee by God, to tell us*, says the high priest. [3.] Profane and crafty men stand<sup>21</sup>I not to take the name of God in vain, when it may serve to their own ends; for, *I adjure thee by the living God*, says the high priest, when he minds nothing but to make the answer a snare.

*64. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Christ avows himself to be what the high priest had said, and forewarns them all that though he was to them a despised man, yet should they see him to be the Son of God and judge over them at the day of judgment, and so in a manner summons them to answer at his tribunal that day.

DOCTRINE: [1.] That *Christ is the Son of God* is a

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truth judicially deponed<sup>22</sup> by himself, being adjured to answer upon his oath and being now ready to die: for, *Thou hast said*, says he; or, I am the same whom thou inquirest for. [2.] Such as will not receive Christ's word as divine shall be forced to acknowledge his power to be divine; for thus says he, *Nevertheless* (or, though ye believe me not) yet *ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power*. This in part came to pass, first in his resurrection, next in his Spirit poured forth on the apostles, thirdly, in the conversion of multitudes of souls, and fourthly, in the overthrow of the Jewish Church and nation, in their own time, not long after. [3.] Such as will not acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of

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God for their salvation shall see him come to judge them at the last day, for, *Ye shall see me coming in the clouds of heaven*, says Christ.

65. *Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.*

66. *What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.*

67. *Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him: and others smote him with the palms of their hands,*

68. *Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?*

This good confession of Christ is counted blasphemy and he is therefore condemned, buffeted, spat upon and mocked. DOCTRINE: [1.] A man given over to unbelief, though he pretend to desire to know truth, yet will he not believe when truth is told him (no, not when it is confirmed by the oath of him who cannot lie, and when it is proved by many miracles) but he will affront his own conscience in all this; as here, *He hath spoken blasphemy, said the high priest*, when Christ had told the truth, which before was proved by his works and was undertaken to be proved yet more. [2.] Profane and graceless hypocrites, when it may serve their turn, will put on the mask of marvellous zeal to the glory of God; as here, *The high priest rent*

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*his clothes and saith, ye have heard his blasphemy.* [3.] Partiality and malice, in Christ's cause especially, can hardly be hid; for the high priest, even when he will seem to do justice, first condemns Christ of blasphemy and *then asks the voices of the council.* [4.] Assemblies and councils may err so far as to agree in one to condemn Christ to death; for here this council answered and said, *He is worthy of death.* [5.] Although Christ be most free of blasphemy and of all sin, yet because they in whose room he did stand are guilty of it and of all sorts of sin, therefore it is provided by divine justice that Christ shall be condemned for our cause; and sentence given thus, *He is guilty of death.* [6.] What must we be worthy of, when Christ is spitted upon, buffeted, blindfolded and mocked for our cause?

69. *Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.*

70. *But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.*

How Peter denied Christ thrice and then repented is set down to the end of the chapter, wherein we learn: [1.] That it is dangerous to be in the place with and company of Christ's enemies without a special calling; for the occasion of *Peter's being tempted was his sitting in the high priest's hall*. [2.] A small blast of temptation is sufficient to overturn a man who is puffed up with confidence of his own strength; as here, *the voice of a damsel overturns Peter*. [3.] The shifting of a confession for Christ when it is requisite is in effect a denial of him; for, Peter's saying, *he knew not what the damsel said*, is called here, *a denying*.

71. *And when he was gone into the porch, another maid saw him and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.*

72. *And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.*

The second denial follows, wherein learn: [1.] That when temptation prevails, change of place will not hinder the tempter to pursue the victory. He will follow on and press

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his point so long as the sickness and sin adhere, for, *another damsel is set on work by Satan to tempt Peter, when he goes out into the porch*. [2.] Sin grows by degrees; from the time that a man falls therein till he repent he still grows worse; for, *Now Peter denies expressly and with an oath that he did not know Christ*.

73. *And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.*

74. *Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.*



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This is the third denial, wherein learn the horrible tyranny of Satan, and unspeakable weakness of a sinner left to himself. Still Satan draws men unto deeper and further sinning, and the sinner, as he is more tempted, sins more: for now standers-by fall on Peter and press him yet more, and he at last denies *with oaths, and cursing.. of himself, that he knew Christ*. This was a pitiful spectacle.

*75. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.*

After this fearful fall, the Lord raises Peter up again by bringing to his remembrance the words which he did not believe till now; and by this means he works repentance in him. DOCTRINE: [1.] The elect may fearfully fall, but cannot fall away utterly; for Peter by temptation is driven to deny the Lord, but does not lie still in the sin. [2.] As the forgetting of the Lord's word opens the door to temptation, so the calling of it to remembrance, mixed with faith, is a means of repentance: for ere Peter's repentance be mentioned, it is said, *Peter remembered the word of the Lord*. [3.] Sincere repentance weeps seriously and in secret: as here, *Peter went out* when he repented, and wept bitterly.

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## CHAPTER 27

After Christ is delivered unto Pilate, Judas hangs himself and leaves the money to the priests to be disposed of (vv 1–10). Pilate examines Christ and without cause condemns him and delivers him to be scourged and crucified (vv 11–44). After which Christ's Godhead is more manifested, and he is buried with some respect (vv 45–66).

1. *When the morning was come all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:*
2. *And when they had bound him they led him away and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

The corrupt Churchmen, having unjustly condemned Christ, now seek to put him to death by the power of the civil magistrate. DOCTRINE: [1.] The wicked are exceeding watchful and painful to accomplish an ill turn, especially against Christ, for late at night, and early in the morning, are the chief priests and others busy to have Christ put to death. [2.] It is no new thing to see corrupt Church governors abuse the civil magistrate in execution of their unjust and cruel conclusions, as here the priests and elders *deliver Christ bound to Pilate the governor.*

3. *Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,*
4. *Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.*
5. *And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

Now Judas' conscience is wakened, but out of time, whereupon he confesses his sin to them who ensnared him; but

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finding them to despise him he casts back the price of his treachery and hangs himself. DOCTRINE: [1.] Though before a sin be committed the bait and allurement is only seen and the conscience blindfolded, kept captive and benumbed, yet after sin is committed, it shall be awakened

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at last, and see the ugliness of sin discovered, for as Judas sees now and says now, *he has betrayed the innocent blood*. [2.] When the evil of sin is discovered, then is the naughtiness of every inducement to it discovered also; and the grief is more than any gain or pleasure inducing to it can counterbalance; for Judas now counts little of the thirty pieces of silver, brings back the price, and *casts it down in the temple*. [3.] Such as sin by the inducement of others need not look for comfort from the enticers of them to it, but must bear the guiltiness of it alone; for when Judas regrates<sup>1</sup> his sin to the priests, *What is that to us?* they say to him, *see thou to that*. [4.] When justice pursues the sinner and he flies not to God's mercy in Christ, there needs no other judge or witness or Burrio<sup>2</sup> against him, but his own conscience only; it is sufficient to convict, condemn and torture him so that he will choose to strangle himself rather than endure the vexation of it: for Judas, being forsaken of those who ensnared him in the sin, goes not to God, but *departs and hangs himself*.

6. *And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury because it is the price of blood.*

7. *And they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in.*

8. *Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.*

This cursed money the priests will not bring into the treasury of the temple, but use it in a charitable work, to buy a burial-place for strangers, by which means a prophecy of the Scripture is fulfilled in God's providence. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord will have no offering made to him of that which is not a man's own, and that in such a way as may

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be free of all appearance of allowing of men's unjust or dishonourable gain; for, *It is not lawful*, say they, *to put this money into the treasury*. (Deuteronomy 23:18) [2.] It is no new thing to see Christ's most cruel adversaries deep in hypocrisy, pretending to be afraid to offend in the least things; as these men stand<sup>3</sup> not to give Judas a hire, to betray innocent blood, but will not meddle with the gain when it is cast back. [3.] Hypocrites, even when they are deepest in a mischief, will seek to hide

their course with seeming to do some good work, as these men will be charitable to the poor, in buying a burial-place for the strangers, with the price of *Christ's blood*. [4.] The Lord can make the mask of men's hypocrisy the special means to discover them, as here these wicked priests seek to hide their cruelty against Christ by seeming to be charitable in buying the potter's field for burying of strangers, with the price of Christ's life; and in God's providence it is turned to the contrary, that this field should in all time coming bear the name of the bloody bargain made with Judas: for, the field was called, *the field of blood, unto this day*, says the evangelist.

9. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value:*

10. *And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.*

The evangelist observes the Lord's over-ruling providence, who by this means fulfilled the words of the prophet Zechariah (chapter 11, verses 12 and 13) where the Lord complains of the ingratitude of the people, who accounted less of all his personal care over them than ordinarily men account of their basest servants, on whom they will, one way or other, in a short time bestow more than what they prize all the Lord's labour on them to be worth; and withal the Lord foretells that at length they should put no other price upon him, when he should come to be bought and sold among them, save thirty pieces of silver, with which

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money should be bought the potter's field, for a memorial to all ages of their undervaluing of him. As for the calling of the prophet Zechariah by the name of Jeremiah, although it were presupposed that this verbal mistake crept into the text by the inadvertence of the first transcribers of the evangelist's copy, yet this is no material depraving of the text, but such an accident of the letter only, as any intelligent reader being acquainted with Scripture could easily satisfy himself into, calling to mind the place of Zechariah where this is written. But seeing it is noted that the Hebrews usually were called by divers names, it is most reasonable to affirm that Zechariah was also called Jeremiah, seeing in the Scripture

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we find him called by both their names. In the inscription of the prophecy he is called Zecharias, and in this Scripture Jeremias. Now the Spirit who dyted<sup>d</sup> the Scripture knew his names best of any. As for the citation of the words, it is several times observed before, that the evangelists stood not upon letters and syllables, but took hold of the sense, insofar as concerned their present purpose. DOCTRINE: [1.] The pastoral care which God manifested over his people by his ministers is of less value to misbelievers than the basest service of any tradesman; for Christ and all the works done by his ministers are not valued above thirty pieces of silver *by the children of Israel*. [2.] The stumbling block of the indignities done to Christ is best removed when we consider that they were all foretold in Scripture, for so does the evangelist ward off the offence of the cross by telling us that thereby *was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet*.

11. *And Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? and Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.*

What our Lord suffered before the civil judges is here set down, and first of what things he is accused: wherein observe: [1.] As Christ is brought before the ecclesiastical court, so also before the civil; and as he is charged before the high priest with blasphemy, which is the sum of all sins against the first Table, so is he charged before the

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civil judge with sedition and treason, the sum of all sins against the second Table: that he might bear the imputation off and take away all our sins, both against the first and second Table, and prevent our arraignment before the justice seat of God; for here, while he stood before the governor, he is asked, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* as if he had usurped an earthly kingdom to the prejudice of Caesar. [2.] There was not so much as a probable appearance of sedition in Christ, but a mere calumny alleged; therefore Christ answered, *Thou sayest*, that is, *so thou allegest*.

12. *And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.*

13. *Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?*

14. *And he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.*

Christ being accused of many things, answered not, partly because the contrary was well known, and the conscience of the chief accusers did answer for him; and partly because he had taken on him to stand in our room, and to bear our sins; therefore he held his peace, as in some sense guilty in our name of all, though free in himself. DOCTRINE: [1.] Never was there such a person arraigned before any court as Christ, so innocent and willing to be condemned as guilty of other men's faults, for he loved our justification more than his own reputation; no wonder therefore *that the governor wondered greatly*. [2.] There is more honesty to be expected of heathen men and pagans than of corrupt professors, for the chief priests and elders load him with false imputations, but Pontius Pilate will not admit the accusation till he hear Christ's answer.

15. *Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.*

16. *And they had a notable prisoner called Barabbas.*

17. *Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?*

18. *For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.*

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Pilate seeks indirectly to set Christ free, knowing in his conscience that they had delivered him for envy, and not for any fault in him: and this he does by making use of an unwarrantable custom of releasing at the feast some notable prisoner, whom the people should choose. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is a notable providence that Christ's sufferings were at the time of the feast of the Passover; for then were all the Jews gathered together to Jerusalem; then was a confluence of all sorts of people from all countries about, whereby Christ's sufferings might be the more public, and the type of the sacrificing of the paschal lamb more notably fulfilled. Therefore it is marked that, *It was now the feast*, to wit, of the Passover. [2.] It is no new thing to see corrupt customs, prejudicial to justice, to creep in

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among people and to be kept for gratifying of people, as here the governor was wont to *release a prisoner unto the people, whom they would*. [3.] Carnal men use not to resist sin directly, but to go about to shift it by, if they can, without the loss of credit or profit, or any other beloved lust, for when Pilate should have expressly dealt for innocent Jesus, he propones<sup>s</sup> to the people their choice, whether *they will have released Barabbas or Jesus*. [4.] As avarice is one, so envy is another of the sins which killed Christ. As avarice is ready to sell Christ, so is malice and envy to pursue Christ to the death. As Judas' avarice is already manifested, so now the priests' envy is made manifest also; for *Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered him*.

19. *When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.*

A special warning is given to Pilate from his wife, to beware to condemn righteous Christ. DOCTRINE: [1.] It was necessary that by all means the righteousness of Christ should be borne witness to, that in his condemnation, not for his own sins, but for ours, our justification from sin might shine the more clearly. Therefore among other testimonies of Christ's innocency, *Pilate's wife*, extraordinarily moved,

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sent to *Pilate* saying, *Have nothing to do with that just man*. [2.] However natural dreams are, yet God has a hand in them and sometimes in a special manner makes use thereof for notable ends; as here, *Pilate's wife* is troubled in her sleep about the wrongs done to Christ, and *Pilate* the judge has advertisement thereby, so that in God's providence *Pilate* was moved, though not to set Christ free from suffering, yet to absolve him of all fault laid to his charge.

20. *But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.*

21. *The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.*

22. *Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.*

23. *And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.*

The people choose *Barabbas* and refuse Christ by their rulers' persuasion. DOCTRINE: [1.] Wicked men have a greater hatred against Christ than against the most vicious amongst them, as here they ask that *Barabbas* be saved and seek that Christ may be destroyed. [2.] Woe to the people when their leaders are corrupt, for then shall they be tempted by wicked counsel; and woe unto them yet more if they follow their wicked directions, for so may they be led with these cursed Jews to preserve *Barabbas* and destroy Christ. [3.] Half friendship, lukewarm affection toward Christ, wily working for him, so as men who are Christ's adversaries may be pleased also, may well show the righteousness of Christ's cause, but cannot deliver him or his servants from suffering, nor exempt the cold-rife friend from sin: therefore either must a man be a right down friend, plain and frank for Christ, or nothing. *Pilate's* wiles, striving to save Christ and to please the people also, do not serve the turn but do rather ensnare him and enrage Christ's adversaries the more; for *they cried out the more, Let him be crucified.*

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24. *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it.*

*Pilate*, overcome with the temptation of pleasing the people, first absolves Christ and then yields him over to the fury of his adversaries, and will have them only to be guilty of his death. DOCTRINE: [1.] He that is not resolute to resist sin upon all hazards, will yield to it at last, as *Pilate* does here. [2.] Ignorant men are easily deceived, counting themselves free of such sins as men or inconveniences from men do press them unto, as *Pilate* is here; for because the people made a tumult *he washes his hands and says, I am innocent of the blood of this just person.* [3.] Whatsoever be the fault of instruments in a wicked deed, the prime authors and instigators have the chief guiltiness; therefore not without ground says *Pilate* to, the Jews, *See ye to it.*

25. *Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us and on our children.*



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The mad people, deluded by their leaders, take on them the guilt without fear. DOCTRINE: The stupidity of a misled conscience is fearful. When it is most deep in guiltiness, it dare defy God's justice, in the opinion it has of its own innocence, as here the people answer *Pilate, His blood be upon us*, wherein their mouth does pronounce their own doom, and wrath is from that time come on them to this day.

*26. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.*

Thus is Jesus absolved from all guiltiness in himself and declared in the face of his accusers to be a just person, and yet is he dealt with as a guilty man, scourged and delivered to be crucified, wherein we must look up to the dispensation of a higher judge (who had the sins of the whole elect in a roll, to charge upon him, and now to

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exact of him above what he had already suffered, yet more satisfaction to justice, for the full redemption of his people), that so we may behold him, as he is, to wit, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, in his human nature suffering, according to the paction<sup>6</sup> of redemption passed between him and the Father all that justice could crave for the expiation of our sins, and purchase of righteousness and life eternal unto us; and to this end we must take along with us in all Christ's sufferings: [1.] The consideration of the worthiness of the person who is surety suffering for us, that he is the Lord God Almighty, filling the whole earth with his glory, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel, personally united with our nature, now upon him while he stands before *Pontius Pilate*. [2.] The consideration of the fearful and horrible deservings of sin in us which calls for our everlasting torment, with the curse of God upon us. [3.] The consideration of the strictness of divine justice, which will have sin punished severely and will neither quit<sup>7</sup> the sinner without a ransom, nor the Redeemer without full satisfaction and punishment, equivalent to the principal debtor's deservings. [4.] The consideration of the wonderful grace of God, who is content to take satisfaction to justice for the sins of men from one man in the name of all those for whom he offers to satisfy. [5.] The consideration of the unspeakable love of God, who gives his own eternal Son to be the man who shall pay for the rest of the adopted children. [6.] The consideration of the meekness and patience of our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us, even to the cursed death on the cross, yea to be made a curse for

us, that we might obtain the blessing of righteousness and eternal life through him. If these considerations go along with us, we shall see ourselves worthy for ever of the shame and torment which our Lord endured for a short time, and we shall see Christ in his deepest humiliation shining gloriously in our eyes. Our faith shall find food, and our sins shall find poison in the sufferings of our Redeemer. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as think they cannot stand, except by the good will of princes or people, whenever they are

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put to declare themselves whether they love Christ or the world better, will certainly choose to please princes or people, whatever may become of Christ; as here the people will have *Barabbas* set free, and Christ executed to please their rulers, and *Pilate* will both release *Barabbas* and scourge Christ, to give to the people *satisfaction*. [2.] It is no wonder that Christ's servants find hard measure of men at the bar of justice; for, no fault is found in Christ, *and yet he is scourged and delivered to his adversaries to be crucified*. [3.] Christ's servants should resolve after lesser sufferings to endure yet more, and at last to suffer death, for Christ, after suffering of many things, is scourged and then *delivered to be crucified*. [4.] Our sins deserve to be punished with extremity of pain and torment and with extremity of shame and disgrace; for our Redeemer behaved *to be scourged and crucified* also.

*27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.*

*28. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe.*

*29. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns they put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews.*

*30. And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head.*

*31. And after they had mocked him, they took the robe from off him and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

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While the cross is making ready the soldiers fall on Christ and abuse him despitefully. DOCTRINE: [1.] When governors and great men are against Christ, no wonder to see their servants against him also, and to go about to please their masters by wronging of Christ's members; for here, *the soldiers of the governor* gather together to take their sport in abusing Christ himself. [2.] As the doctrine of Christ's Godhead is counted blasphemy by the corrupt Church rulers (chapter 26:65), so is Christ's spiritual kingdom mocked by graceless statesmen and servants of civil rulers. The soldiers of the civil governor here make a laughing stock

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of Christ, the king of the Jews, offering him a soldier's coat for a robe, a reed for a sceptre, thorns for a crown, a mocking beck for reverence, spitting on his face for a kiss of love and subjection, and smiting on the head for loyalty and service; but so behaved our pride and vainglory to be punished and expiated. [3.] The malice of Christ's enemies will not be satisfied with less than blood, for when they have mocked Christ, and shamefully used him, *They led him away to be crucified.*

32. *And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*

Our Lord was so exercised in the garden through agony of spirit, so tossed all the night with the soldiers, so agitated and vexed before the judgment seat of *Caiaphas* and *Pilate*, so sore spent by scourging, by buffeting, by piercing of his head with thorns, that now there remained not so much natural strength in his body as to bear the tree of the cross through the way to the place of execution: therefore they finding one *Simon* of Cyrene by the way, coming from his work in the field, they compel him to bear Christ's cross. DOCTRINE: [1.] It was not by any human strength that Christ did bear the weight of the curse of God due to our sins; for as his body, so also his natural strength of body was like another man's; and here he who upon the tree of the cross bare our sins (which are of more weight than all the mountains and the sand of the sea) has not so much natural strength as to bear that tree to the place of execution; for *Simon* a fresh man *must bear it after him.* [2.] The death of the cross was so shameful, so abhorred, and so cursed a death, that none of all the multitude which followed him would touch the cross, but *Simon must be compelled to bear it.*

33. *And when they were come into a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull.*

Follows that which our Lord did suffer in Golgotha, or Calvary (to which place the skulls or powers of malefactors executed, there to be seen, apparently did give the name),

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a filthy place without the town, as was fore-signified by the offering of those beasts which were burnt without the camp. DOCTRINE: Our sins deserve that punishment should be poured in upon us by the conduit of every sense, that as we have abused all our senses to sin, so we in every one of them should be tormented, for beside weariness and much pain, the place of Christ's execution is Golgotha, where the sight of dead men's bones formerly executed as malefactors and the scent of their rotten relics might offend both sight and smell.

34. *They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.*

A further degree of Christ's suffering is his thirst which he could have willingly quenched with water, but they gave *him vinegar and gall to drink*; no wonder he was thirsty, being now spent with his bloody sweat and agony in the garden, being tossed and toiled all night, scourged and beaten, and burdened with the cross and such like other exercises. DOCTRINE: [1.] For our abuse of meat and drink, and to the end that liberty might be purchased to us to eat and drink the sweet with God's blessing, Christ our Lord is put to thirst, and not so much as a cup of cold water is furnished to him, but instead of the common favour of some refreshful drink usually granted even to malefactors, the Father out of justice and his enemies out of malice *give unto him to drink vinegar mixed with gall*. [2.] Our Lord, how great soever his pain was, was so patient in his suffering, that he would not hasten his own death by such a drink; therefore, *Having tasted thereof he would not drink*, thereby also teaching us that no pain nor misery should make us so impatient, as to do any thing which may shorten our life.

35. *And they crucified him and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*

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Our Lord's enemies go on to fulfil their malice. Meantime they do nothing but what was agreed upon in the counsel

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of God and was foretold in the Scripture. DOCTRINE: [1.] No other death could satisfy men's cruel malice, or God's justice, or was fit to deliver us from the curse of the law due to us, except the cursed death of the cross, therefore *they crucified him*. [2.] Though the death of the cross had in it shame abundant above all other sorts of death, yet for satisfaction of justice, for expiation of our abuse of apparel, and for purchasing to us not only liberty, with God's blessing, to put on comely raiment, each man according to his place, but also to cover our sinful nakedness with righteousness and glory, our Lord was *stripped naked and his garments parted in his sight*. [3.] It is necessary, in looking upon our Lord's sufferings, that we keep our eye upon the determinate counsel of God, and upon the prophecies and types, foretelling the sufferings of the Messiah, that we may be kept from stumbling at the cross of our Lord; for this was done, that what was typified in the spoliation of David's goods might be literally fulfilled in Christ, *They parted my garments among them*.

36. *And sitting down they watched him there;*

It was necessary that Jesus, being nailed on the cross, should lay down his life and that we should be certified of the complete payment of our ransom; therefore malice on men's part and divine justice and wisdom on God's part, do provide for a guard to secure the cross and to be witnesses of the certainty of our Lord's suffering. DOCTRINE: God so disposes of matters that when his enemies are doing their worst against him, they are doing most for him, contrary to their mind; therefore it is marked, that *they who crucified Christ sat down, and watched him there*.

37. *And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

It was usual to put the cause of men's crucifying over their head upon the cross, for the clearing of justice and shaming of the condemned: but here is a superscription put over Christ's head intended for shame, namely, to brand him falsely with the calumny of usurpation of an earthly kingdom, yet it tended indeed to his glory: for Christ is indeed

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Jesus the Saviour, indeed a *king*, and specially *of the Jews*, or the true Israelites of God. DOCTRINE: [1.] All the shame which men could devise against Christ, is matter of his glory. The mouths and hands of the wicked are so ruled by God that when he pleases they shall honour him, (nill they, will they), as the inscription of the cross is here a crown of glory to Christ. [2.] No wonder to see Christ's servants charged of treason when we see what the wicked made to be Christ's ditty.<sup>8</sup> [3.] Christ died for no fault in himself, for even his ditty, was no fault and *Pilate* absolved him.

*38. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand and another on the left.*

There are here two thieves crucified, to bear Christ company, and he is set in the midst as a greater malefactor than either of them. DOCTRINE: [1.] Though human justice could not charge Christ as a sinner, yet our sins being imputed, that he might bear them on the tree, divine justice can well put our cautioner<sup>9</sup> with his own consent in the chiefest room of sinners; for here is Christ reckoned among thieves, robbers, throat-cutters, traitors, and is executed *in the midst of them*. [2.] No wonder that Christ's servants (however innocent) be accounted of and used as malefactors, seeing Christ is crucified between two thieves. [3.] Wonderful is our Lord's love, who is content to be used as a malefactor, that we malefactors might be set free.

*39. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,*

*40. And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

When malice has done what it can to Christ's body, now Satan in his instruments makes assault on his mind by mocking his holiness and fellowship with God, and so will God's justice have it, that our sins may be severely punished

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in Christ's person. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is the top and height of affliction, to be mocked in trouble; for here cruel mockings are marked as the capstone of the malice of Christ's enemies. [2.] The affliction of the

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most vile malefactor will find more compassion and humanity from beholders than Christ or his followers; for *they who go by revile none of the thieves on the cross but Christ only*. [3.] How unjustly soever Christ or his servants be condemned of men, the world will hold all accusations of them to be true, as here, the deposition of false witnesses is made a reproach to Christ. *Thou that destroyest the temple*, say they. [4.] The world thinks that the cross and fellowship with God cannot consist together; the cross so blinds their eyes that they cannot see the glory of the saints, as here they think Christ cannot be God's Son because he is crucified. No wonder that in trouble the adoption of God's children be questioned also; *If you be the Son of God*, say they. [5.] No proof of the saints' interest in God will suffice Satan and his instruments, except they will give such evidences as he and they do prescribe, and which cannot be given without sin and offending of God; for, *If thou be the Son of God*, say they, *come down from the cross*. [6.] No temptation so sore, no dart so poisonous, as is the question of the grounds of faith. *If thou be the Son of God*, is the sharpest arrow which Satan could shoot.

41. *Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,*

42. *He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him.*

43. *He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*

In the mocking of the chief priests and scribes and elders here marked as a higher degree of insolent insulting over Christ, learn: [1.] The opposition which men of place and understanding make to Christ, and the wrongs which they do, are observed of God and agreed by the gifts, office and place which they have above the rest of the people, as here such men are marked by themselves, with a special description of them: *the chief priests mocked him*. [2.] Present

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sufferings blind worldly men's eyes, so as they can neither see the glory of the saints gone by nor to come; for all Christ's miracles and evidences of his being the Saviour of others are counted nothing of now by these

wretches because of his sufferings, and yet in these sufferings Christ was doing the part of a Saviour, more than in any of his miracles, for not his miracles, but his sufferings, are the price of our redemption. [3.] The most vile and wicked reprobates will offer to believe upon such conditions as they themselves shall prescribe to God, as here these men do, but they who will not believe upon the grounds of faith offered to them, shall not have any such grounds as they would be at. Let him now *come down from the cross*, say they, *and we will believe him*, but Christ will not come down till he satisfy justice for us. [4.] It is the nature of misbelief to esteem little of whatsoever God has said or done, except he satisfy present demands and take orders and direction from the misbeliever, *Let him come down now, and we will believe him: he saved others, himself he cannot save*, and such like, say they. [5.] The world will not believe that God's love toward a man, and the subjection of him to trouble till he die, can consist together; therefore, *Let God deliver him*, say they, *if he will have him*. [6.] The world counts faith in God which endures longer than prosperity lasts, or than prosperity may be had in this life, to be but fancy. Therefore mockingly, say they, *He trusted in God; let him deliver him now*: as if they said, His trust is nothing if he be suffered to die on the cross. [7.] The point of truth which the devil and reprobate men can least endure is the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ, which is the rock whereupon the elect are builded. Therefore, say they, *he said I am the Son of God*. This point among all did gall them most.

*44. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

Christ suffers at the hands of those that were crucified with him; it is not unusual in the Scripture to speak indefinitely of a plurality, that which is to be instanced of any one of that sort: for the meaning is, that not only common beholders and formerly known enemies did mock our

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Lord, but also the two thieves hanging now on the cross beside him, justly condemned for their robbery, were not free of mocking the innocent Son of God, for one of them did cast the same *scoff in his teeth also*. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is no wonder to see the innocency of Christ's followers mocked by rascals, for our Lord did suffer cruel mocking by a condemned robber. [2.] Straits and torment will not tame a reprobate; even on the



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threshold of hell he will blaspheme God, without a cause offered, as here is to be seen.

*45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.*

In the midst of this infirmity of the human nature, Christ lets forth the glory of his Godhead in showing himself Lord of heaven and earth, as by other evidences remarked by the rest of the evangelists, so by darkening the whole land, at the noontide of the day, for the space of three hours; and drawing (as it were) the curtain of darkness over his naked body while he hung upon the cross, and thus not suffering the creatures to show their glory where their Maker is suffering the extremity of shame.

DOCTRINE: Our Lord did not empty himself in the days of his humiliation but so as he did ever let some spark of his glory appear to such as believed in him, whereby they might discern the divine majesty of his Person, even in his lowest condition.

*46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Our Lord a little before his death, being now under the full weight and burden of the curse due to our sins, and finding all sensible consolation from heaven and earth withdrawn from his human spirit, breaks forth into this heavy representation of his case, in the words of Psalm 22, wherein this agony was foretold. By which speech we understand that however the human nature of the Mediator kept constantly the same room in God's estimation and love, and could no more be loosed from the incomprehensible

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fervent love of God than the personal union of the divine and human nature could be dissolved, yet it was necessary that it should suffer the punishment of our sins and feel the effects of the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin in as high a degree and measure as should be equivalent to our perpetual destruction, and be found satisfactory to divine justice for us. And therefore, although it was impossible that the human nature could be deserted *in regard of God's love, or of sustaining strength, or in regard of inherent holiness, or any other thing else necessarily* joined with the stability of the hypostatical union, yet in regard of *sensible*

*consolation* it was not only possible but also necessary that for a time it should be deserted and should taste of horrible bitterness accompanying such a desertion; and this sort of torment and anguish of spirit could as well consist with the personal union, as the pain and torment of body could consist with it. Yea, as the personal union gave way to his death and remained fast till the time of the separation of his soul and body, so did it also give way to this temporal affliction of his human spirit, and to this desertion in regard of *felt comfort*, and yet remained constantly fixed, and unmoveable notwithstanding. And if any should doubt how Christ's persuasion of the union of the two natures and of the necessity and profitableness of his sufferings could stand with this expression, let us consider that no persuasion of whatsoever truth can make holy nature senseless of what is destructive of it, nor hinder it to express how it is naturally affected with what it naturally feels, and as persuasion of the necessity and profitableness of the firing of a bleeding wound with a hot iron cannot hinder nature to be sensible of the pain or to cry out in the sense thereof; so no knowledge or persuasion of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, or certainty of the necessity and profitableness of his sufferings, could reasonably hinder such an expression as this, wherein persuasion of love and union with God cries *My, God, My God*, and holy nature, filled with the sense of wrath due to our sins, and destitute of all comfortable feeling of God's presence for the time, cries forth, *Why hast thou forsaken me?*, not by way of quarrelling but by way of admiring the terribleness and abhorring the bitterness of divine wrath now felt, to be far surpassing all human apprehension

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which could precede the feeling of it. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ our surety, beside all the sufferings which he suffered in his body, did suffer also sorrow, grief, anguish, torment and desertion in regard of comfort in his soul, for this and other expressions prove so much. [2.] Our sins deserved that we should have been utterly forsaken of God, for it behoved our Redeemer to taste a little of the hell of being *forsaken* ere we could be redeemed. [3.] Heaviness of spirit, sense of wrath, appearance of being forsaken, and want of felt consolation may consist with the love of God towards a man's person, yea and with a man's adoption to the state of a child of God, for here it consists with the personal union of the manhood of Christ with the divine nature. [4.] Whensoever natural sense does miss the consolations of God, faith must grip more straitly to God, as

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Christ's faith does here, crying, *My God, my God*, when sense sees nothing but *forsaking*.

47. *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said,  
This man calleth for Elias.*

This, Christ's speech to God, some of the beholders did mock, and say of him as much as if he had left God and prayed to Elias. DOCTRINE: [1.] No wonder the griefs and troubles of the souls of God's children be ridiculous to the world, for even the deep anguish of Christ and his prayer to the Father were mocked by some, as here we see. [2.] In common reason it is a just reproach for any man to call upon any other, except God only, for even profane sinners here do make it a matter of mocking to pray to *Elias*, supposing that Christ had done so; *this man calls for Elias*, say they.

48. *And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.*

Here in his thirst, as was fore-signified (Psalm 69) vinegar is given him to drink. DOCTRINE: No consolation, no, not so much as a drink of water, was yielded to our Lord till he paid all our debt, but only what could be devised to augment his grief, as here, *They gave him vinegar to drink*.

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49. *The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.*

They had wrested his prayer before, as if he had prayed not to God but to Elias: now they mock also the falsely supposed prayer to Elias, in this speech, importing that there was help for him neither from God nor man. DOCTRINE: [1.] By what means he can, Satan drives hard to have men despairing when they are in extremity, as here, speaking by his instruments, he tempts Christ. [2.] Till Christ had ended the work of redemption, all sort of vexations did run together and by course upon him; for now, unto all the former exercises in body and soul, he must hear his prayer to the Father wrested and mocked, he must see himself insulted over as a man smitten and plagued of God and as forsaken of God and man; *Let us see, say they, if Elias will come to him*.

50. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.*

In this close of Christ's suffering, learn: [1.] That the Son of God according to his manhood verily died and his soul was separate from his body; for *he yielded up the ghost*. [2.] He died not by constraint but willingly; for of his own accord *he yielded up his spirit*. [3.] In dying, he was conqueror over death, for before death could come at him as a weakling which cannot live any longer, Christ being so strong as *to cry with a loud voice*, sets upon death *and yieldeth up the ghost*.

51. *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.*

Our Lord, being dead as man, lets forth the glory of his Godhead more than before in four wonders. The first wonder, is: *the veil of the temple*, or the middle wall of partition, which divided between the sanctuary and the body of the temple, *was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*, wherein Christ gave all men to understand: [1.] his death was the fulfilling and the accomplishment of all the Levitical rites

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and figures of the temple, and of all the ceremonies annexed to it, and that now they were to be esteemed as rent and to be done away. [2.] Now by the gospel sealed up in his death the way to heaven was made plain and open. [3.] The partition wall between Jew and Gentile, to wit, the ceremonial law, which divided them asunder was rent and no more to stand in force. The second wonder is, *the earth did quake*, whereby the Lord gave men to understand: [1.] That as he is Lord of heaven, which gave testimony to him by hiding its glory when he is suffering shame; so also he is Lord of the earth which now trembles before her Lord. [2.] That he was to shake the heavens and the earth by the gospel of his sufferings and of the redemption purchased to sinners by his sufferings. The third wonder is, *the rocks rent*, to show the power of Jesus who could subdue the greatest difficulties and overcome the hardness of whatsoever obstinate hearts upon whom he pleases to show his power.

52. *And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose,*

53. *And came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.*

The fourth wonder is the opening of the graves, and the resurrection of many deceased saints after Christ's resurrection, which was done: [1.] To show that Christ died and was buried, not to remain under the power of death and the grave, but to quicken the dead and to raise them out of their graves, and that he neither died nor arose for his own particular, but that he might redeem his own from death, and give to them resurrection and life. [2.] To let us understand that he is the Saviour of all those who believed in him before his Incarnation and were deceased in hope to be saved by the Messiah, no less than of those who believed since, and that the former are partakers of the fruit of his death and resurrection no less than the latter. [3.] The death of the godly is only as a sleep of the body till the morning of resurrection come; for it is said: *the bodies of the saints which slept*. [4.] Resurrection and the rest of the effects of Christ's death and resurrection

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are benefits only to the saints. Therefore only the bodies of the saints arose. [5.] Although the great harvest of Christ's death and resurrection is not to be expected till the day of judgment, yet the first-fruits of that harvest are abundantly manifested in that *many of the bodies of the saints arose*. [6.] The resurrection of the saints depends upon the resurrection of Christ who is their Head; for *he is the first born from the dead*. The rest who arose to an immortal life came out of their graves after his resurrection. [7.] The wonders which our Lord did work were all able to abide the light and did not lack sufficient witnesses; for amongst the rest, these saints which were raised out of their graves *came into Jerusalem and appeared unto many*. [8.] Such as did not believe in Jesus and did not belong to his election were not worthy to be called to be witnesses of the blessing following upon his death and resurrection: it is sufficient that those saints raised from death did appear to many, for they which believe in any measure shall have confirmations abundant, that they may believe still more. To them that have it shall be given; others are worthy to be despised. [9.] Although a visible Church be very corrupt, yet so long as there is a number of true believers in it, so long as it has not got a bill of divorcement from God, it is to be esteemed of honourably, as a Church belonging to Christ; therefore is Jerusalem here called *the holy city*.

54. *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*

These wonders did not lack their effects, for the captain of the guard and the soldiers which were with him were convinced by these wonders that truly Christ was the Son of God. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord's works as well as his Word do the errand for which they are sent, for when the wonders were seen, the soldiers were afraid and confessed the deity of Jesus Christ, saying, *Truly this was the Son of God*. [2.] Profane soldiers are more easily gained to Christ than misbelieving rabbis, for we hear thus much of the one, but nothing of the other that they were any

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whit moved. [3.] Christ's love is such that when sinners are doing him all the dishonour they can, he will reveal himself to them and overcome them with free love: for here is a centurion and other soldiers with him turned subjects to him, and confessors of his name: even when he is hanging dead on the cross, life springs forth of him to open the eyes of these soldiers to see his Godhead, and gives them courage to confess it in his deepest humiliation.

55. *And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him.*

56. *Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.*

When the disciples were fled, except John, it is observed here that many women waited on and were witnesses of Christ's death. DOCTRINE: [1.] It is usual with the Lord to show his power and grace most upon the weak and the despised; for here he gives strength and courage to women to attend his sufferings when men had failed. [2.] Whatever grace the Lord bestows upon his own it is so bestowed as their weakness in themselves does usually appear also; for these women attend, but for fear they behold afar off. [3.] The power of faith in Christ and love to him is such that it will make those that are weakest in the midst of fear and infirmities to spare no travel nor expense, but to hazard, if need be, their life for him; for, *many women were there, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him*. [4.] So acceptable to Christ are the evidences of

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believers' love that he will subject himself to the standing in need thereof and will receive the fruit of their love and cause others to register it; for the parties' honour and other edification as here, he causes it to be written down that these women ministered unto him of their means, followed him out of Galilee, and attended on him at his death, the name of some of whom he causes to be set down, to let us see that none of them, nor such as they, are forgotten.

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*57. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:*

*58. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus: then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.*

*59. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,*

*60. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed.*

*61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.*

The manner of our Lord's burial is set down (to verse 61) and the securing of the burial place by the adversaries, on to the end. Our Lord being dead, it was expedient that he should be buried. [1.] That the type of Jonah, and other figures in Scripture, should be fulfilled. [2.] That the truth of his death might be known. [3.] That his burial might be as a step lower in humiliation, so also a mid-passage to a more glorious resurrection. [4.] That he might sanctify our burials, and by following death, as it were, to its den, make a way through the grave to our resurrection and full victory over death and the grave. DOCTRINE: [1.] When shame and sufferings are ended, some degrees of glory do begin, as God provides here for an honourable burial to Christ after the shame of the cross is past. [2.] Grace makes no difference of rich or poor, but sanctifies riches and poverty to his own, for Joseph of Arimathea is a rich man, and a disciple of Jesus also. [3.] Love to Christ fears no

inconveniences, neither thinks shame of any service to Christ, for Joseph goes boldly unto Pilate and professes it a favour to have liberty to take care of Christ's crucified body. [4.] Christ both in life and death was a friend to magistracy; he will have justice satisfied and order kept in his taking down from the cross no less than in his crucifying; he will be taken down at Pilate's command. [5.] God provided for Christ's burial so as it should be known that he verily arose; for he is put in a new tomb hewn out of a rock, wherein never man did lie before him. [6.] As persons are more zealous for Christ, so are they more particularly taken notice of by God.

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Therefore these women which did attend him so carefully are specially spoken of. [7.] Love will never shed<sup>10</sup> with Christ in whatever condition he be, and will bestow on him what it may; as these holy women do bestow looks upon the place he is put into, when they can do no more.

*62. Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,*

*63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.*

*64. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.*

*65. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as ye can.*

*66. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.*

To make the matter of our Lord's burial and resurrection yet more clear, divine providence makes use of the adversaries' malice. They think to keep Christ under and to provide against his resurrection, by setting a guard about the sepulchre and sealing of the stone. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's enemies are vexed about him, how to suppress him, as here is to be seen; while he is alive and while he is dead they can never be



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secure enough, for fear he shall overcome them: when they have him dead they know not how to make the sepulchre sure. [2.] They make of his words and of his servants' words as best serves their purpose; for when he told them that though they destroyed the temple of his body, yet he would raise it again the third day, they passed by his meaning and made it a matter of his ditty;<sup>11</sup> and now they take up his meaning and make advantage of it against him. [3.] When Christ and his cause is brought low, every wicked man will speak as he pleases,

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as here they call the God of truth a *deceiver*. [4.] Hypocrites respect religion only for their own ends and as it may serve their turn. They pretended to have great respect to the Sabbath that they may have Christ shortly out of the way; and now they stand<sup>12</sup> not to pollute the Sabbath by making a business to secure his sepulchre. [5.] Magistrates are in a dangerous condition when the rulers of the Church are enemies to Christ; they will ever be ensnaring them in some one thing or other against Christ: as here Pilate is used. [6.] He that sets not God before his eyes, but is given to please men, will prove a slave to every man's affection. Such a man is Pilate who grants whatever Christ's enemies require. [7.] Whatever power of craftiness can work for obscuring of Christ's glory, his enemies will go about it carefully, although with ill success; as here, *They seal the grave-stone and set a watch*, thinking to keep Christ fast in the tomb.

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## CHAPTER 28

In this chapter Christ's resurrection is declared by angels, (vv 18). By Christ himself (vv 9–10). By the watch to the priests, who do corrupt the watch, and make them to lie for money (vv 11–15). Christ meets with his disciples, and authorizes them to teach and baptize all nations (vv 16–20).

*1. In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre.*

Our Lord having satisfied justice for us to the full, in his obedience to the death could not be holden by death, but as the Son of God in power behoved to rise again according to the prediction of the Scriptures, that he might give righteousness, and resurrection to eternal life, to all his redeemed ones who do fly to him for refuge. In these two women who are made the first witnesses of his resurrection, learn: [1.] The power of love and faith in that soul which has found peace of conscience through Christ will not suffer the believer to be unmindful of him, as appears in Mary Magdalene and that other Mary. They must know what is become of him. *They come to see the sepulchre*, the third day after his burial. [2.] As any are before others in love to Christ, so are they in account in God's books, for this is the third time that Mary Magdalene is honourably made mention of, for her love to our Lord. [3.] It is wisdom to moderate the expressions of love and zeal, so as commanded duties be not neglected, for these holy women observe the Sabbath and come not forth till it be ended.

*2. And, behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

In the manner of our Lord's resurrection learn: [1.] That as our Lord's death was shameful, in suffering the punishment due to our sins, so his resurrection for our justification was wonderfully glorious: for as heaven sent forth an angel for his service now, so the earth trembled when he

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stirred to arise out of it: *There was a great earthquake and an angel descended from heaven.* [2.] Christ will make use of his creatures so as he sees most fit for his own glory; for some base rascals shall crucify him, honourable Joseph of Arimathea shall bury him, an angel shall roll the stone from the tomb. [3.] Although all the angels be at our Lord's call, yet he will make use only of one or two in a service, when one or two is sufficient for his purpose, as here one spoken of is abundant to roll away the stone, and to be porter to him at his going out of the sepulchre; one is sufficient to affray<sup>1</sup> and boast<sup>2</sup> all the priests' guard set about the sepulchre; for this one angel, when he had rolled away the stone, *sat upon it* as a commander.

3. *His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow;*

4. *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

In the description of the angel, learn: [1.] That angels take upon them bodily shapes when their commission to speak to men and to be seen of men requires so, as here this angel's countenance and his garments are observed.<sup>3</sup> [2.] Great must be the majesty of our Lord Jesus, when his servant's countenance is *like lightning, and his garment white as snow.* [3.] The plots of Christ's adversaries are turned about as engines of war against themselves; for these keepers are sent forth to keep Christ within the tomb, and now they are made, (nill they, will they) witnesses of his resurrection. [4.] Such as are most stout against Christ shall be most afraid and astonished when he shows his glory, for *The keepers now do shake and become as dead men.*

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5. *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.*

6. *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come: see the place where the Lord lay.*

The angel speaks comfortably to these two women and shows them that Christ is risen and commands them to carry the news to the apostles. DOCTRINE: [1.] By the same means the Lord can terrify his adversaries and comfort his people: those he suffers to lie still in their terror, these

he comforts. *Fear not ye, says the angel unto the women*, as much as these keepers may look for wrath; but, *Fear not ye*. [2.] Such as are seeking after Jesus, may take comfort, whatever come; for upon this ground the angel says, *Fear not, I know ye are seeking Jesus*. [3.] We have no reason to be ashamed of Christ's cross when the angels avow Christ crucified to be the Lord. [4.] If God should use kings and emperors to be preachers of Christ's cross and resurrection, it should be no disparagement to their high place; for this message is worthy of such an angel as this to be messenger, and even the angels do not so much honour the message as they are honoured by it, and who is he who thinks himself too good to be a preacher of the gospel? [5.] Christ's body after his resurrection retains the natural properties of a body; it is in one place and not in another; the Scripture knows no ubiquity of his body; for, *He is not here*, says the angel, *he is risen*. [6.] No rest for our faith, save in our Lord's Word; if it be once received, then other things serve to confirm faith; for first, *He is risen, as he said*, says the angel, and then bids them, *Come, see the place where the Lord lay*. [7.] It is a sufficient argument to prove that Christ's body is not present in a place, if sense perceive it not present, for the angel proves that Christ is not in the sepulchre by this reason, *Come, see the place where the Lord lay; he is not here*.

7. *And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you.*

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The angel sends away these women to carry joyful tidings to the scattered apostles. DOCTRINE: [1.] Although women be debarred from the ordinary office of preaching the gospel, yet it may serve them sufficiently for encouragement to believe in Jesus, that beside other extraordinary passages of Christ's respect to them, the sex is honoured with the carrying of the first tidings of the resurrection. *Go, tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead*, says the angel to the women. [2.] What concerns God's glory and others' comfort in the day of grief should be diligently gone about without delay, *Go quickly*. [3.] Christ is that good shepherd who gathers his people to him, after that the storm of persecution has scattered them and driven them from him, for here he sends his angel to his feeble disciples to gather them to him in *Galilee*. [4.] The Lord pities the infirmity of his people, and appoints their assemblies where they may be most secure and safe, as here he trusts his disciples not at Jerusalem

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at the first, but in their own *country, Galilee*. [5.] The Lord's order is first to crave belief of his hearers, and then to give them proof by sight and sensible experience, as here the angel gives command to carry the tidings of the truth delivered, and then promises that after that, *They shall see him in Galilee*. [6.] It is a special prop to our faith to consider from what Author the word of faith comes to us, and by what messenger. Therefore says the angel, *Behold, I have told you*.

8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word.*

These faithful women believe and tremble and rejoice and run away and carry their good news. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as know what a heart grieved for want of Christ means will be very ready to comfort such as are in such a grief, as these holy women are glad to carry good news to the heart-broken disciples. [2.] Mixed affections, fear and joy, at one time may well consist in the heart of a believer. One may tremble at the majesty of God and rejoice in his friendship, manifested by any means which he pleases, for thus are these godly souls affected. [3.] It is a choice

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good disposition to believe the Lord's word and diligently to go about the obedience of it, in fear and trembling, such as here is to be seen in these women. Having believed the glad tidings, *they run quickly, with fear and joy, to bring the disciples word*.

9. *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him.*

10. *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

They meet with Christ as they are in the way. DOCTRINE: [1.] Such as obey the directions of God's servants, and use prescribed means that they may meet with Christ, shall find him ere they be aware, much sooner than they expected; as these women do meet Christ before they looked for him; as they went his errand, *Jesus met them*. [2.] joyful is the meeting which a soul has with Christ, as here Christ bids these women *All hail*, or rejoice, and they *lay hold on him and worship him*. [3.] A humble sinner may be homely with Christ, as these women *fall down*

*and worship and hold him by the feet.* [4.] Such as believe God's word in the mouth of his messengers, shall find confirmation of it by Christ himself; for here the Lord bids them do the same things which the angel had commanded before, *to carry news to the apostles.* [5.] For all that can be said to us, our faith is still mixed with some doubtings which breed fear, and Christ only can remove them; therefore he says here, *Be not afraid.* [6.] The weakest of believers are much beloved and esteemed of by Christ. Oh how high love and estimation is this, *Go tell my brethren!* [7.] The place wherein Christ is most welcome to preach shall be most honoured by his presence, as here, *in Galilee,* says he, *shall they see me.* [8.] Howsoever our Lord be purposed to give sensible satisfaction to his people in due time, yet does he ever require some belief of his work in the mouth of his servants, and some obedience of faith to go before it. Therefore says he, *Tell them that they go to Galilee,* and adds, *There shall they see me.*

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*11. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.*

The watch set by the priests to guard the sepulchre, come, and tell the priests how Christ is risen. DOCTRINE: [1.] The witnesses of Christ's resurrection were not only angels and holy men and women, but also the profane soldiers who were set to watch his sepulchre; for, *The watch came and shewed the things that were done.* [2.] The Lord not only will disappoint his enemies, but also triumph over them, for the watch whom the priests sent out to obscure his glory, came back to the city, and *shewed these things to the chief priests.*

*12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,*

When they know that he is risen and so behaved to be convinced that he was the Son of God, powerfully manifested by resurrection from the dead, they resolve to bear down the truth. DOCTRINE: [1.] Christ's malicious enemies are of the devil's nature; they will never cease to oppose him, though they know him to be the Son of God, as appears in these chief priests and elders. [2.] The madness of malicious adversaries of the gospel and the slavery of Satan's captives is wonderful, as here is

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seen; for after they are assembled, they resolve to corrupt the witnesses against the light of their conscience. [3.] Money is a great idol in the world when the priests and elders think it may overbalance the most precious truth, and are confident for gain to make the soldiers make a lie against the resurrection of the known Messiah. [4.] The more men be engaged in a sin they are the more forward to go on in it, and will spare no cost to gain their point, for these priests and elders gave but thirty pieces of silver to have Christ crucified, but here they *gave large money* to keep down the report of his resurrection.

*13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept.*

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*14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you.*

*15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.*

They devise a lie and hire the soldiers to vent it. DOCTRINE: [1.] Calumnies and lies devised by Christ's adversaries are the special engine which they use against the gospel. When all other devices fail they make service to Satan by this means, such is this lie here. [2.] They who are entered in service of ungodly masters can hardly win out; still new and worse employment is furnished to them, as these godless soldiers are set on from step to step in this ungodly course of opposing Christ. [3.] The wicked care not what shame they put upon themselves, and one upon another, to gain their point, in case they cannot come to their purpose another way, as these men are put to say that they slept when they should have watched (which was a disgrace and a capital fault) that they may make out their device against Christ. [4.] Such as do tempt to sin, labour to make the sinners secure from worldly inconveniences, but cannot secure them against God's justice: as the priests here do undertake to secure the soldiers at the governor's hands, but no further. [5.] A profane person will make sale of conscience and tongue and all for money, as here the soldiers take the money upon the condition offered. [6.] Such as can be content to be silent, and to keep up truth for any earthly gain, will yield also to speak contrary to known truth for gain; as these men

*took the money, and did as they were taught.* [7.] Such as do not apprehend any wrath from God for sin seek no guard against it, but think it sufficient to be secure at men's hands, as here. Money and assurance to be secure at the governor's hand suffice these soldiers; having these granted to them, *They do as they were taught.* [8.] He that takes the bait of sin will also swallow the hook; for so soon as these men took the money, *They did as they were taught.* [9.] Where truth is rejected a lie will be received, were it never so incredible, and it is righteousness with God so to plague those that do not receive the truth in love; for what less probable speech could be spoken, than

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that Christ's few and fearful disciples should hazard to open the sepulchre when a guard of soldiers are about it; that all the guard set about the sepulchre should be sleeping at once, and be so fast asleep, as the great stone of the sepulchre should be rolled back and none be awake; yea, that there should be an earthquake in the mean time and none of them for this be awaked; and yet *this saying findeth credit among the unbelieving Jews.*

*16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.*

*17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.*

Beside sundry other meetings which Christ had with his apostles, we have here a solemn and appointed meeting which we judge to be that meeting wherein there were about five hundred brethren, whereof the apostle Paul speaks (1 Corinthians 15:6); in which meeting Christ establishes a ministry in his Church for preaching of the Word, administration of the sacraments and exercise of discipline for the better observation of his commands to the end of the world. DOCTRINE: [1.] Let the Lord show himself to us as he pleases, it is our duty to attend and keep what means and meetings he has appointed, as the *eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where he had appointed them.* [2.] Christ loves the assembly of his saints and does not disappoint the expectation of those who wait upon him in the appointed means, for in the appointed place it is said, *the apostles saw him.* [3.] The faith of believers is not always alike vigorous and active, neither in comparison one of another, nor in



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comparison of a man with himself at divers times: for here are disciples who doubt nothing of Christ's resurrection when they see him; and some also are *who doubted* at the first sight. [4.] As faith is clear and vigorous, so does it see Christ to be God, and brings the soul down before him to worship; for such as did not doubt, *when they saw him, they worshipped him.*

18. *And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

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19. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*

20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

To remove all doubting from every man, Christ draws nearer to them and speaks to the apostles in open audience, and gives order for gathering and ruling his Church unto the end of the world. DOCTRINE: [1.] The Lord draws near to his own and communicates himself familiarly to them when it is needful, and leaves no means unassayed which may remove doubting from his weak disciples, as here knowing that some doubted, *he came and spake* in their hearing. [2.] Christ not only as the Son of God has joint equal and the same sovereignty in heaven and earth with the Father, communicate unto him by eternal generation, but also as God Incarnate, God-man, he has supreme and absolute authority given to him over all things in heaven and earth to and for the Church, all things for the good thereof being put under his feet without exception of anything save of him who has put all things under his feet; and he hath supreme, sole and absolute authority as the only Head and King of the Church, to appoint and maintain the way and means of gathering, preserving and ruling his Church and all the affairs thereof to the end of the world, for so much will these words being compared with other Scriptures bear, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* [3.] Christ has instituted a ministry of teachers and rulers of his Church to continue from his resurrection to the end of the world; for he says, *Go ye, make disciples, teach them obedience to me; I will be with you to the end of the*

*world.* [4.] The community of ministers and rulers of the Church respective have all the nations of the earth under their charge to gather disciples to Christ out of them, *Go, make all nations disciples,* says he. Now those are made disciples whosoever are given up to Christ, to be taught and governed by him, whether by themselves or being brought by others who have power of them, as parents and masters are dedicated and consecrated to Christ, who has said of children elsewhere, *Suffer little children to*

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*come unto me, and forbid them not.* All those may and should be taken charge of, admitted into the Church as disciples, and baptized, for he says *Go, make disciples of all nations and baptize them.* [6.] The community of believers, or the body of covenanted and baptized disciples, are not the subject of this authority granted for gathering of Churches, administration of doctrine, sacraments, discipline and other public ordinances: but the community of the ministers, teachers and rulers, contra-distinguished from the body of disciples which is taught and governed; for it is said, *Go ye, my ministers, make ye disciples, baptize ye and teach ye them.* [7.] Ministers or Church rulers in this their ecclesiastical charge do not derive their power and authority from any under heaven but from Christ, who has made all in heaven and in earth, and who gives to them a commission to make disciples to him, out of all nations; for after he had said, *All power is given to me,* He subjoins, *Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations.* [8.] The commission of Christ's ministers extends to the drawing nations into subjection to Christ and into covenant with him, to be his disciples and to obey all his commandments, only by way of doctrine; for, *Go,* says he, *by doctrine make all nations disciples.* This is the force of the word *teach,* in the original. [9.] The ministers of the gospel, teaching and ruling elders respective, are the true successors of the apostles in the dispensation of the doctrine, sacraments and discipline appointed by Christ, for they are appointed in the same patent<sup>t</sup> with the apostles, and spoken to in the person by Christ, saying, *I will be with you to the end of the world.* [10.] Baptism is the seal of the covenant, made between God and all initiate disciples, elder and younger, for after that they are commanded to make disciples, they are commanded *to baptize them: Go, make disciples and baptize them.* [11.] There are three Persons in the Godhead distinct one from another in order of subsistence and operation, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, for so bears the text. [12.] These three are one GOD, undivided in essence and operation,

equal and one in authority and power; their name and their exercise of authority is one; for it is said, *Baptizing them*, not in the names but *in the name of the Father*,

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*Son and Holy Spirit.* [13.] The covenant of grace on both sides is made for cleansing and putting away sin, according to the way and order prescribed by God, in whose name *baptism* or sprinkling with water, for assuring disciples of remission of sins through CHRIST, and obliging them to study holiness, is given and taken. [14.] The ministers and rulers of the Church are limited to the commands given to them from CHRIST; they may not enjoin to the Church anything save the commands of Christ. These, and all these, and only these, must they teach: *teaching them*, says he, *to observe whatsoever I have commanded you.* [15.] The baptized disciples of Christ may not walk as they list but must study to observe all that Christ has commanded his ministers to teach them; for he says, *teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you.* [16.] Faithful ministers have assurance of Christ's assistance and blessing, in whatsoever part or time of the world they fall into. *I am with you*, says he, *unto the end of the world.* [17.] People need not fear to join themselves in Church society with any nation under such pastors as do faithfully teach whatsoever Christ has commanded: for Christ has promised to be with such teachers, and to bless their labours to the end of the world; *Behold, I am with you to the end of the world.* [18.] This whole gospel is solid truth, and worthy to be embraced, to be sealed, and to be settled upon by all men, according as the Evangelist gives example to us, closing the whole doctrine and this last promise with AMEN.

- 1 Fellow-disciple, fellow-student, schoolfellow.
- 1 The word meaning 'Saviour' as found in the Latin Vulgate.
- 2 Shut out, set apart.
- 3 Shut out, set apart.
- 1 Fail to recognize, mistake the identity of.
- 2 Spark.
- 3 Pass unfavourable judgment on (in advance).
- 4 Paid by fees, employed for wages.
- 1 Hesitate.
- 2 Regarded.
- 1 Maintaining.
- 2 Sanctioned, permitted.
- 3 Does not divulge.
- 4 Single.
- 5 Epitome.
- 6 Make up the mind to expect.
- 1 Differences.

- 2 Ways of escape (from).  
 3 Defence.  
 4 Manner of life.  
 5 Bankrupt (Scottish).  
 6 To take action [to avoid imprisonment].  
 7 To take action [to avoid sin].  
 8 Brought forward.  
 9 Surgeon.  
 10 Pressed down.  
 11 Gnawing, torturing.  
 12 Release [from penalty], exempt.  
 13 Turns upside down, overthrows.
- 1 Censures, reproves.  
 2 Retrench, restrict.  
 3 Advances.  
 4 Added.  
 5 Made known.  
 6 Manner of life.  
 7 Add.  
 8 Strokes (as made by a painter's brush).  
 1 Respond.  
 1 Exempts.  
 1 Uncovering, revealing.  
 2 Uncovering, revealing.  
 3 To the senses.  
 4 Collector of custom-duties.  
 5 Preceded.  
 6 i.e., under the conviction of sin.  
 7 Attacked (by word of mouth).  
 8 Find fault with.  
 9 Find fault with.  
 10 Maintained, carried on.  
 11 Hopeless.  
 1 Princely.  
 2 Lodging, entertaining.  
 3 Clever, skilful. crafty.  
 4 Remedy.  
 5 Appearing in court (a legal term).  
 6 i.e., belonged to the future.  
 7 Lying open.  
 8 Advanced, carried forward.  
 9 Union by marriage; also, consanguinity.  
 10 Refrain.  
 11 Refrain.  
 12 True, valid (in this context).  
 1 Singular.  
 2 Thrusting.  
 3 Aggravating.  
 4 Raise.  
 5 Use, benefit.  
 6 Welfare.  
 7 Way of escape or deliverance.  
 8 Refrained.  
 9 (dittay) The matter of charge or ground of indictment against a person for a criminal offence.

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- 1 Natural.  
 2 Husks, chaff: certain cereals are 'bearded' or 'awned' ('aunds' seems to be an alternative spelling that never came into general use).  
 3 Advancing, promoting.  
 4 Pressed.  
 5 Spark.  
 6 Defences.  
 7 Dictated.  
 8 See footnote on page 157.  
 9 Now written 'limiter'.  
 10 Avails.  
 11 Aggravate.  
 12 Untimely.  
 13 Dangers.  
 14 Untimely.  
 1 Pressure.  
 2 Expounded.  
 3 Put forth, propounded.  
 4 Take up (the disciples here acting as middlemen).  
 5 Hardening.  
 6 Had need.  
 7 Expounded.  
 8 Manner of life.  
 9 Take up (as middlemen).  
 10 Forbids.  
 1 Betimes.  
 2 Flutters.  
 3 Held on tenaciously.  
 4 Agitated, tossed about.  
 1 Prejudice.  
 2 Exposure.  
 3 Terrified, threatened.  
 4 i.e., not to refuse Christ's answer in the form in which he is pleased to give it.  
 5 Is not non-plussed or perplexed.  
 1 Band, followers.  
 2 Gates.  
 3 Private possession.  
 4 Deliverance.  
 5 Parted company.  
 6 Pledge.  
 1 Earnest, foretaste.  
 2 Use, benefit.  
 3 Is filling.  
 4 Immediately.  
 5 Deliverance.  
 6 Supposing.  
 7 Anticipated (Peter's inquiry).  
 1 Forbids, prohibits.  
 2 Occur.  
 3 Forbids, prohibits.  
 4 i.e., for not taking care to avoid offending them.  
 5 Restoring (from error).  
 1 Entire, complete, continuous.  
 2 i.e., raise as an objection (to Christ's saying).  
 3 Ought rightly to be.

- 1 Forbids, prohibits.  
 2 Turned upside down.  
 3 Depressed, daunted.  
 4 Means, instrumentality.  
 5 Ducking.  
 6 Closely related.  
 7 Forbids.  
 1 Market.  
 2 Prolific.  
 3 i.e., of speech.  
 4 Injured, wronged.  
 5 Ungrateful.  
 1 Worthless.  
 2 Response (for or against).  
 3 (Usually, rencounter) encounter, contest.  
 4 Essay.  
 5 To get the better of him.  
 6 Mask.  
 7 Misbehave (toward God).  
 8 Enter the lists, engage in encounter.  
 9 Encounter (involving contest).  
 10 Attempt.  
 11 Attacked.  
 12 Prejudice.  
 13 Proper.  
 14 Reconcile.  
 1 Chief.  
 2 Forbids.  
 3 Forbid.  
 4 Forbids.  
 5 Greatness.  
 6 Advancing.  
 7 Deficiency.  
 8 To be binding.  
 9 Display reluctance.  
 10 Hesitate.  
 11 Acquire.  
 12 Plastered.  
 13 Reveal.  
 14 Refuse, have no will for.  
 1 Sorrow (over).  
 2 To be wondered at.  
 3 Prepare ourselves.  
 4 Keen.  
 5 Dispute.  
 6 Cold and chilly in feeling and manner.  
 7 i.e., in others' estimation.  
 8 Restricted.  
 9 Bearable.  
 10 i.e., the greater part of the population.  
 11 Enactment, carrying out.  
 12 Consummation.  
 13 Immediately.  
 14 Lacking.  
 15 Divided.

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- 16 i.e., so far as he has the power.  
 1 Warn, admonish.  
 2 Turned back (upon himself).  
 3 Promoted, advanced.  
 4 Befitting.  
 5 Appear (in court).  
 6 Claim, charge.  
 7 Ground of indictment.  
 8 Drift, tenor.  
 9 Ground of indictment.  
 1 Anticipated.  
 2 Reveal, make known.  
 3 Refrains.  
 4 Immediately.  
 5 Fixed in, rendered secure in.  
 6 (Seising) pulling in legal possession of.  
 7 Legally conveyed.  
 8 Provision, necessities.  
 9 Give.  
 10 Behoof, benefit.  
 11 Tests, trials.  
 12 Not to be depended on.  
 13 Used here with the sense of demerit.  
 14 Fearful of.  
 15 Devoted, genuine.  
 16 (Rancounter): an encounter between two opposing forces.  
 17 Superficial lustre [seems to be used here with the sense of misplaced zeal].  
 18 Manner of life.  
 19 Of former days.  
 20 Reveals.  
 21 Refrain.  
 22 Declared upon oath.  
 1 Takes up.  
 2 Hangman, executioner.  
 3 Refrain.  
 4 Indited.  
 5 Propounds, puts forward.  
 6 Agreement, compact.  
 7 Acquit.  
 8 (Dittay) a formulated indictment.  
 9 Surety (Scottish legal term).  
 10 Part company with, separate from.  
 11 Indictment.  
 12 Refrain.  
 1 Frighten away.  
 2 Terrify.  
 3 Noted.  
 4 Authoritative document.