

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 12

**Ver. 1.** *In the mean time*, etc.] While Christ was discoursing with the Pharisees, and they were using him in the vilest manner, throwing out their invectives against him in order to draw off the people from him:

*when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people.*

There were “myriads” of them, as in the original text, and a myriad is ten thousand; the meaning is, that there were several thousands of them:

*insomuch that they trod one upon another*; striving to get near to Christ, either to see his person, or to hear his discourses; and particularly, what he would say to the Pharisees, who had fallen upon him in so violent a manner:

*he began to say unto his disciples first of all*; he directed his discourse not to the Pharisees, nor to the multitude, but to his disciples in the first place; at least, chiefly to them; for whom he had a regard, who were his dear friends, and were to be the preachers of his Gospel every where; and therefore it was proper that they should be aware of the dissembling arts of the Scribes and Pharisees, and have their minds fortified against approaching dangers, persecutions, and death itself: the last phrase, “first of all”, is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version; and by all the Oriental versions, it is joined to the next clause, and read thus, “especially”, or

*before all things, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*; expressed both in their doctrines, and in their lives; which carried a great show of piety and holiness, but was in appearance only: very aptly is hypocrisy in doctrine and manners, compared to leaven; which at first is small and little, but gradually increases and spreads itself, and lies hid and covered, and is not easily discerned, nor its influence and effects observed; but in time, it infects and corrupts the whole of men's principles and practices, and puffs and swells them up with a vain opinion of themselves; and when our Lord bids his disciples beware of it, his meaning not only is, that they take heed that they were not infected with it

themselves, but that they were not imposed upon by the specious pretences of these artful and designing men.

**Ver. 2.** *For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed*, etc.] No sin, be it ever so secret or privately done, as nothing is more covered than hypocrisy, but what shall be detected sooner or later; if not in this world, which is often the case, yet the last judgment, and in the world to come:

*neither hid, that shall not be known*; for how careful soever men may be to hide their vices from others, they are known to God; who will bring every thing into judgment, and make manifest the secrets of all hearts. These were general sentences, which were used by Christ at different times, upon different occasions, and applied to particular cases; (see Gill on <sup>“~~4005~~Matthew 10:26”</sup>).

**Ver. 3.** *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness*, etc.] In the most private manner, to one another:

*shall be heard in the light*; which makes all things manifest, the day shall declare it:

*and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets*; whispered to persons in their bedchambers, and places of the most secret retirement;

*shall be proclaimed upon the housetops*; declared in the most public manner: in (<sup>“~~4007~~Matthew 10:27</sup>) these words are so expressed, as to carry in them such a sense as this; that what was told the disciples by Christ, in the most private place and way, should be published by them, in the most free and open manner; (see Gill on <sup>““~~4007~~Matthew 10:27”</sup>).

**Ver. 4.** *And I say unto you, my friends*, etc.] Whom he dearly loved, and had taken into the greatest intimacy and familiarity; making known to them whatever he had heard from his Father; giving them the best instructions, the most faithful and friendly advice, and proper precautions; all which, and more, showed them to be his friends, and for whom he after laid down his life:

*be not afraid of them that kill the body*; though he would have them beware of the Pharisees, he would not have them be afraid of them; he would have them know them, and avoid their hypocrisy, and guard against it; but not fear them, or the worst they could do unto them, which was to kill the body; and that they had no need to be afraid of, since at death, their

souls would be immediately happy, in the enjoyment and vision of God; and their bodies would sleep in Jesus, and be raised in the resurrection morn, and be united to their souls, and be both for ever blessed:

*and after that have no more that they can do*; they have nothing more to kill, or which they can put to pain or misery; the soul is out of their reach, is an immortal spirit, and cannot be hurt or destroyed by them.

**Ver. 5.** *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear*, I will be your monitor, and direct you to the proper object of fear and reverence, and whom you should be careful to displease and offend:

*fear him, which after he hath killed*; your body, as the Persic version adds; hath taken away the life of it, by separating soul and body asunder, by sending one disease or another, or death in one shape or another:

*hath power to cast into hell*; your soul, as the above version also adds; yea, to destroy both body and soul in hell, as in (see Gill on “<sup>40B</sup>Matthew 10:28”)

*yea, I say unto you, fear him*; and none else, not with a servile, but with a filial fear.

**Ver. 6.** *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings*, etc.] As two were sold for one farthing, (see Gill on “<sup>40B</sup>Matthew 10:29”); so in buying and selling, where more money is laid out, things are bought cheaper; the Persic version reads, “for two barley corns”:

*and not one of them is forgotten before God*; a single sparrow, a bird of little value and worth, is taken notice and care of by him; it has its life from him, and is provided for with food by him, and is under his protection; nor does he ever forget it, nor can any thing be done to it, without his permission; it cannot be struck, so as to cause it to fall on the ground, or be taken in a snare, or be killed in any shape, without the knowledge of God: his providence reaches to the minutest creatures and things, and much more then to rational creatures, to men; and still more to his dear children, ministers, and apostles.

**Ver. 7.** *But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered*, etc.] Not only their persons had passed under the hands of him that telleth them, who is the “Palmoni”, or “wonderful numberer”, as in the margin of (<sup>27B3</sup>Daniel 8:13) and not only the several members of their bodies, or the more

substantial parts of them, were written in the book of his purposes, according to which they were fashioned in time, but the more minute parts, and less to be regarded, were all told over, and kept in account; even the very hairs of their head, and not one of them could fall to the ground, any more than a sparrow; or be plucked off by men, without the knowledge and will of God; so careful is the providence of God, of all his people:

*fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows*; for if the hairs of their heads are as much regarded as sparrows, their persons and their lives must be of more account, than an infinite number of them, nor are they to be mentioned with them.

**Ver. 8.** *Also I say unto you*, etc. The same as in (~~4002~~ Matthew 10:32)

*whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the son of man also confess before the angels of God*; only instead of I, he here calls himself “the son of man”; and instead of “before my Father which is in heaven”, here it is, “before the angels of God”; who will accompany Christ when he comes to judgment, and will be present, when he shall acknowledge his true followers as the blessed of his Father, the chosen of God, his redeemed and sanctified ones; and reject others before his Father, and the whole universe of rational beings: it is said in the Targum on (~~2015~~ Song of Solomon 1:15).

“when the children of Israel do the will of their king, he by his word (the Logos) praises them in the family of the holy angels.”

This Christ, the eternal word, will do at the great day.

**Ver. 9.** *But he that denieth me before men*, etc.] That is, that continues to deny Christ, and lives and dies a denier of him; for otherwise it is possible for a person to deny Jesus to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, and afterwards confess him, as a Pagan or Jew; and through temptation, a real Christian may be left for a while, in one shape or another, to deny him and his truths, and afterwards truly repent, and at last be saved, as Peter; but they that deny Christ publicly, and persist in it,

*shall be denied before the angels of God*: they will be denied by Christ as belonging to him; they will be denied admission into heaven; they will be covered with shame and confusion publicly; they will be sent into everlasting burnings, and be ever tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels.

**Ver. 10.** *And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him*, etc.] These words, though introduced by Luke among the sayings of Christ, recorded in Matt. 10 yet were said by Christ, on occasion of the Pharisees, ascribing his works to diabolical influence and assistance, (see Gill on “<sup>4022</sup>Matthew 12:32”)

*but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost*; as the Pharisees did, by charging the miracles of Christ with being done by the help of the devil, when they were wrought by the finger of the Spirit:

*it shall not be forgiven*. The Ethiopic version adds at the close of this verse, as in Matthew, “neither in this world, nor in that which is to come”.

**Ver. 11.** *And when they bring you unto the synagogues*, etc.] Of the Jews, to be examined and scourged by the rulers of them:

*and unto magistrates and powers*; Heathen ones; the Persic version reads, “princes and kings”; and the Ethiopic version, “princes, kings, and judges”; (see <sup>4008</sup>Matthew 10:18)

*Take ye no thought how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say*; be not anxiously concerned, neither about the manner, nor the matter of your answer, apology, and defence: in the first part of this clause, the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions, only read, “how”; and the Arabic version only, “what”; (see Gill on “<sup>4009</sup>Matthew 10:19”).

**Ver. 12.** *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you*, etc.] Shall give both words and matter: in the same hour; instantly, immediately:

*what ye ought to say*; what will be proper to be said, for the honour of Christ, the defence of the Gospel, and the confusion of enemies; (see Gill on “<sup>4000</sup>Matthew 10:20”).

**Ver. 13.** *And one of the company said unto him*, etc.] Not one of the disciples of Christ, but one of the multitude, or crowd, about him, (<sup>4011</sup>Luke 12:1)

*Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me*: the firstborn, according to the law, in (<sup>4217</sup>Deuteronomy 21:17) had a double portion: but the eider brother here, it seems, was for keeping all, and would not divide any part to his younger brother; wherefore he applies to Christ, to interpose his authority, which he imagined would have great weight with his brother, who might be a hearer of Christ, and favourer of him: or

however, such was the fame of Christ, and such credit he obtained by his ministry and miracles, that he concluded a word from him, would go a great way with his brother, to engage him to make a right and proper division, as he ought; and especially, if he looked upon him, as the king Messiah the Jews expected, he might take this to be part of his work and office, to settle such civil affairs as these: we often read in the Jewish writings, of brethren dividing their substance, left by their parents; so it is said <sup>f391</sup>,

“wql j ç `yj aj , “brethren that divide”, (a field,) give two corners (to the poor); if they return and become partners, they give but one.”

Where there were but two brethren, as here, the one was called **rwkbb**, “the firstborn”; and the other, **j wçp**, “simple”; having no title or character: and concerning dividing inheritances, there are the following rules <sup>f392</sup>:

“the firstborn takes a double portion of his father's goods, as is said, (<sup>f217</sup>Deuteronomy 21:17) how? a man leaves five children, and one of them is the firstborn: the firstborn takes the third part of the substance, and every one of the four simple ones, takes a sixth part: if he leaves nine children, and one of them is the firstborn, he takes the fifth part, and every one of the eight simple ones, takes a tenth part; and so according to this division, they divided for ever — — he that has two sons, a firstborn and a simple one, and they both die in his lifetime, the firstborn leaves a daughter, and the simple one leaves a son; lo, the son of the simple one inherits the third part of the old man's goods, which is his father's part; and the daughter of the firstborn, inherits the two thirds, which is the part of her father.”

And again <sup>f393</sup>,

“two brethren that “divide”, and a brother comes to them from the province of the sea: and so three brethren that “divide”, and a creditor comes and takes the part of one of them, though the one takes land, and the other money, the division is void, and they return and divide the rest equally: if any one orders at the time of death, that there should be given to such an one a palm tree, or a field out of his substance, and the brethren “divide”, and do not give such an one any thing, lo, the division is void; and how do they

do? they give what he ordered the heirs, and after that they return and divide as at the beginning: brethren that divide, value what is upon them; but what is upon their sons and their daughters, which they have in possession, they do not value — he that leaves fatherless children, some that are grown up, and others little ones, and they are willing to divide their father's goods, so that those that are grown up may take their part, the sanhedrim appoint a guardian for the little ones, and he chooses a good part for them: and when they are grown up, they cannot make it void, for lo, by the decree of the sanhedrim, they divided for them; but if the sanhedrim err in computation, and give them less, they may make it void, and make another division when, they are grown up.”

But it would be tedious to transcribe all the rules, relating to such cases.

**Ver. 14.** *And he said unto him, man,* etc.] Or “friend”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, Jesus said to him, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it:

*who made me a judge, or a divider over you?* referring to the words of one of the Hebrews to Moses, when he interposed in a difference, (<sup>(1014)</sup>Exodus 2:14) suggesting, that the same might be retorted on him, should he engage in such an affair: the reason why Christ avoided meddling with it, was not because it is unlawful for Christians to concern themselves in arbitrations about civil affairs, and in making up family differences, which is very commendable; but lest by such a step, he should give occasion to them, to conclude he was a temporal king: whereas his kingdom was not of this world, and his business lay not in civil affairs, and the management of them; but in spiritual concerns, in preaching the Gospel, and doing good to the souls of men; wherefore this was out of his province: and besides, it was a matter of covetousness, either in this person, or his brother, or both; which Christ takes an occasion from hence to expose, agreeably to his office; to which may be added, that this man seems to have disturbed Christ in his public work, and was of such a worldly spirit, as to prefer the care of his secular affairs, to the hearing of the word, and the welfare of his immortal soul.

**Ver. 15.** *And he said unto them,* etc.] Either to the two brethren, or to his disciples, as the Syriac and Persic versions read, or to the whole company:

*take heed, and beware of covetousness*; of all covetousness, as read the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies; that is, of all sorts of covetousness, and every degree of it, which of all vices is to be avoided and guarded against, being the root of all evil; and as the Persic version renders it, is worse than all evil, and leads into it:

*for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*; of flocks and beasts, as the Persic version renders it: a man's natural life cannot be prolonged by all the good things of the world he is possessed of; they cannot prevent diseases nor death; nor do the comfort and happiness of life, lie in these things; which are either not enjoyed by them, but kept for the hurt of the owners of them, or are intemperately used, or some way or other imbittered to them, so that they have no peace nor pleasure in them: and a man's spiritual life is neither had nor advantaged hereby, and much less is eternal life to be acquired by any of these things; which a man may have, and be lost for ever, as the following parable shows.

**Ver. 16.** *And he spake a parable unto them, saying*, etc.] He supposed the following case, and made use of it by way of illustration of what he had said:

*the ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully*; who notwithstanding his riches, was but a fool, as the sequel shows; rich men are not always wise in things natural and civil; and very few of them are spiritually wise, or wise in spiritual things, in things which relate to the welfare of their souls; but however, this man was very prosperous in his worldly affairs, as a man of a small share of common sense may be, and wicked men often are: the word translated “ground”, signifies a “region”, or “country”, which expresses the more, the riches of this man, that he had not a common and ordinary farm, but a whole country as it were; at least a very large part of one, and all this fruitful.

**Ver. 17.** *And, he thought within himself*, etc.] And foolish thoughts they were; he did not think of God, or that there was one, and much less that he was the author, of all his outward prosperity and plenty; and was still further off of thinking of returning thanks to God for it: or of asking counsel of him, what he should do with it; but he consults himself only, and thought only within, and for himself; and not at all of his poor neighbours, or for the good of others; nor did he think even of his own soul, but altogether about his worldly substance:

*saying, what shall I do?* he does not say what shall I do for God? for his interest service, and glory? for the poor, the hungry, and thirsty, and naked? or for my own soul, that that may be eternally saved? but what shall I do with my goods?

*because I have no room where to bestow my fruits:* he had gathered in his harvest, and filled his barns as full as they could hold, so that they had no room for more; and yet had still an abundance to lay up, and about which he was anxiously concerned; not thinking of the empty bellies, barns, and houses of the poor, where he might have stowed much.

**Ver. 18.** *And he said, this will I do,* etc.] This was the resolution he came to, and which he took up, without consulting God, or asking leave of him:

*I will pull down my barns, and build greater;* which was not a very wise one; for he might have let his present barns have stood, and have added new ones to them:

*and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods;* he ascribes the increase of his substance to himself, and reckons them his own acquisitions, and entirely owing to his diligence and industry; and therefore calls them my fruits, and my goods; and accounts them his good things, his only good things; as worldly men place all good and happiness in outward enjoyments, having no notion of spiritual and eternal good things he determines to lay up all in his barns, for his own use and service, and nothing for God and his interest, nor any thing for the poor and their relief.

**Ver. 19.** *And I will say to my soul,* etc.] Himself, (see <sup>1918</sup> Psalm 49:18) or to his sensual appetite, which he sought to indulge and gratify, for he was wholly a sensual and carnal man:

*soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years:* he foolishly promises himself a long life, when no man can boast of tomorrow, or knows what a day will bring forth; or can assure himself he shall live a day, an hour, or moment longer: and he also depended upon the safety of his goods, thus laid up; whereas his barns might be consumed by fire at once, or his goods be devoured by vermin, or plundered by thieves, and by various ways taken out of his hands; for riches are uncertain things, and make themselves wings and fly away:

*take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;* spend thy life in ease, luxury, and mirth; put away the evil day far from thee: never trouble thyself about a

future state, tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundantly; and thou hast enough to make thyself happy, and let nothing disturb thee, and give a loose to all sensual pleasures, and carnal joys. This is the language of epicure among the Jews, and is forbidden to be used, especially on fast days; for so it is said, <sup>f394</sup>

“let not a man say I will go to my house, “and I will eat and drink”, (and say) *ϣϥⲛ Ⲍϥⲓ [ ⲙⲓⲗ ϥ*, “peace to thee, O my soul”; if he does so, of him the Scripture says, (<sup>2213</sup> Isaiah 22:13,14) “Behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die — surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, etc.””

**Ver. 20.** *But God said unto him*, etc.] He determined within himself he should die that night; for the time of a man's death, as well as of his birth, is fixed by God; or he sent the messenger of death, some disease or another, the language of which was, immediate death, or death in a very short time; or spoke to his conscience, and impressed it on his mind, that he should die that night, and not live:

*thou fool*: as he appeared to be, throughout the whole of his conduct:

*this night thy soul shall be required of thee*: which is of God's immediate formation, is immortal, of more worth than a world, and its loss is irreparable; and for which a man is accountable to God, the Father of spirits; and which he requires at a man's hands at death, which is here designed; and shows, that a man has no power over it to retain it, but must give it up when it is called for, even that very instant, “this night” which may refer to the time when covetous persons are employing their thoughts about their worldly goods, or when epicures and sensual persons are indulging themselves in luxury and intemperance; and to the condition the soul is in, being in the night and in darkness, and knows not whither it is going; and denotes its immediate remove, and the suddenness of divine wrath and vengeance; the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, agreeably to the Greek text, read the words, “this night do they require thy soul of thee”; or “out of thy body”, as the Persic version reads: the Ethiopic version renders it, “they shall take thy soul from thee”; that is, the evil angels, the devils having a commission from God, shall demand thy soul; and as soon as ever it is separated from the body, shall seize upon it, and

carry it to hell; just as the good angels carry the souls of the saints to heaven, (<sup><4162></sup>Luke 16:22)

*Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* not his own, for he can carry nothing with him; nor does he know whose they will be, whether the persons he designed them for, or some others whom he abhorred, and would, if possible, have prevented their enjoyment of them; and should he have them for whom he intended them, he does not know how he will turn out, whether a wise man or a fool, or what use he will make of them.

**Ver. 21.** *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself*, etc.] This is the accommodation of the parable. Just such a fool is he, and this will be the end or him, who employs all his thoughts, and spends all his time, in amassing to himself worldly riches and wealth, in laying up treasures on earth for himself, for futurity: and makes no use of his earthly substance to be the good of others; nor shows any concern for spiritual and eternal riches; but places all his hope, trust, and confidence, in uncertain riches:

*and is not rich towards God*; or “in God”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read; in things pertaining to God, in spiritual things, in faith, and in good works; and is not concerned to lay up a treasure in heaven, to have an interest in durable riches and righteousness; whereas one that is rich towards God, acknowledges that he receives all his riches from God, as the Ethiopic version reads; he gives up all into the hands of God, depends upon his providence for the increase, security, and continuance of it; and uses it to his honour and glory, and for the good of his interest; and is chiefly concerned for the riches of grace and glory; and enjoys much of God, and places all his riches in him: such a man is a wise man, but the reverse of this is the fool in the parable.

**Ver. 22.** *And he said unto his disciples*, etc.] Having finished the parable which he spake to the whole audience in common, he directed himself to his disciples, who were poor, and apt to be over anxious about their living in the world:

*therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat.* The Ethiopic version adds, “and what ye shall drink”; and so a manuscript in Gonvill and Caius College in Cambridge, which seems to be transcribed from (<sup><4167></sup>Matthew 6:27) life is very near and dear to man; all that a man has, he will give for it; and it is his duty to be careful to preserve it, and to

make use of means for the support of it; but then, as he should not be dainty about the food he eats, and should refuse no good creature of God, but receive it with thanksgiving, so he should not distress himself for fear of wanting bread, nor distrust the promises of God, and a supply from him; but should cast all his care upon the Lord, who daily cares for him:

*neither for the body, what ye shall put on:* it is highly proper and necessary that the body should be clothed, partly for decency, and partly to secure it from the inclemency of the weather; but then persons should not be difficult and over nice about what they wear, nor be distressed, fearing they should be clothed with rags; but should trust in the Lord, who gives food and raiment, and all things richly to enjoy.

**Ver. 23.** *The life is more than meat,* etc.] What in Matthew is put by way of question, is here strongly affirmed; and these words contain a reason or argument to dissuade from an anxious, distressing thought and care about the necessaries, conveniencies, and comforts of life: and all the Oriental versions read, “for”, or “seeing the life is more than meat”; that is, it is more excellent and valuable in its own nature, being that for the support of which meat is provided; and seeing God is the author and giver of life, it need not be doubted but he will give meat for the maintenance and continuance of it, so long as is his pleasure it should subsist.

*And the body is more than raiment;* it is of more worth than the richest clothing that can be had; the finest piece of embroidery is not comparable to the curious workmanship of the body, (<sup><4015></sup>Psalm 139:15) and he that has so curiously wrought that, will not fail to provide suitable and proper clothing for it; and therefore there ought to be no anxiety on this account; (see Gill on “<sup><4015></sup>Matthew 6:5”).

**Ver. 24.** *Consider the ravens,* etc.] According to the Jews <sup>f395</sup> there are three sorts of ravens, the black raven, the raven of the valley, which is said to be white, and the raven whose head is like a dove. In Matthew the “fowls of the air” in general are mentioned, as they are here in the Cambridge copy of Beza’s; but in others, “the ravens” in particular, they being fowls of very little worth, and disregarded by men, and odious to them, as well as unclean by the law; and yet these are taken care of by God. The Arabic version reads, “the young ravens”; and these are which are said to cry unto God, who provides food for them, and gives it to them, (<sup><4384></sup>Job 38:41, <sup><4970></sup>Psalm 147:9)

*for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn;* and yet they are provided for, and therefore, why should men, and especially God's own people, distrust his providence over them, when they both sow and reap, have the seedtime, and harvest in the appointed seasons: they cast their seed into the earth, and it springs up and brings forth much fruit, which they reap when ripe, and gather into their barns and storehouses, from whence they are supplied till another season returns; wherefore they have no reason to distress themselves, seeing, though this is not the case of ravens, yet

*God feedeth them;* their young ones, as the above places show. Jerom says <sup>f396</sup>, that it is affirmed by some philosophers, that they live upon dew. The Jews <sup>f397</sup> have a notion, that the old ravens being cruel to their young, and hating them, the Lord has pity on them, and prepares flies, or worms for them, which arise out of their dung, and enter into their mouths, and they them. One of their commentators says <sup>f398</sup>, when the young ones are hatched they are white, and the old ones leave them, not taking them for their own, and therefore bring them no food, and then they cry to God; and this is mentioned by some Christian writers, but not sufficiently confirmed: and another of them observes <sup>f399</sup>, that the philosophers of the Gentiles say, that the ravens leave their young as soon as they are hatched; but what Aristotle <sup>f400</sup>, Pliny <sup>f401</sup>, and Aelianus <sup>f402</sup> affirm of these creatures is, that as soon as they are able to fly they turn them out of their nests, and even drive them out of the country where they are; when, as it is said in Job, “they wander for lack of meat, and cry unto God, who gives it to them”: and since this is the case, and the providence of God is so much concerned for such worthless creatures, the people of God, and disciples of Christ, ought by no means to distrust it: for as it follows,

*how much more are ye better than the fowls:* or “than these”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is than these ravens, or any other fowls whatever; (see Gill on “<sup>405</sup>Matthew 6:26”).

**Ver. 25.** *And which of you with taking thought,* etc.] In an anxious and distressing manner, for food and raiment, in order to preserve and continue life,

*add to his stature one cubit?* The Persic version reads, “to his stature and height”, as if this referred to the height of stature; whereas it seems rather to regard the age of a man, and the continuance of his life; (see Gill on “<sup>407</sup>Matthew 6:27”).

**Ver. 26.** *If ye then be not able to do that which is least*, etc.] As to make the smallest addition to a man's stature, or rather to add one moment to his days:

*why take ye thought for the rest?* which are much greater, as to preserve the body in its whole bulk, and all its parts, or for the feeding and clothing of it, or rather for the continuation and preservation of life to any length of time; for if it cannot be by all a man's care and solicitude lengthened out one moment longer than is the pleasure of God, how should it be by such anxiety continued for months and years?

**Ver. 27.** *Consider the lilies how they grow*, etc.] Some copies read, “the lilies of the field”, as in (<sup>416B</sup>Matthew 6:28) The Persic version renders the word, “the roses and lilies of the field”: and the Arabic version, the “flowers”; any flowers of the field; for what is afterwards said, is true of any of them, but particularly of the lilies: now, as the former instance of God's feeding the ravens is designed to remove all anxious and distressing thoughts about food for the body; this is mentioned to take off every thing of that kind with respect to clothing for it; wherefore, in Matthew, these words are premised to it, “and why take ye thought for raiment?” there will be no need of it, when it considered how the lilies, or tulips, or any other flowers grow up out of the earth, and in what a fine beautiful dress they appear, without any care or labour of their own, and even without the care and management of a gardener; for flowers of the field are here meant:

*they toil not, they spin not*; they neither labour as men do, in sowing flax, and dressing it, or in combing of wool, or in spinning of either:

*and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* The Ethiopic version renders it, “in the whole time of his glory”; throughout his glorious reign, at any time; whenever upon any extraordinary occasion he was dressed out in the finest manner, yet even then a lily outdid him; its glory being natural to it, whereas his, at best, was but artificial, and an imitation of nature; (see Gill on “<sup>416B</sup>Matthew 6:29”).

**Ver. 28.** *If then God so clothe the grass*, etc.] lilies and tulips; for they are no other than grass, weak, frail, fading, short lived flowers, which have all their gaiety and beauty from the great Creator of them:

*which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven*: the grass is one day in the field, in all its verdure, glory, and beauty; and being cut

down before evening, the next day it is withered and dried, and made fit to put into an oven, or under a furnace to heat them with:

*how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?* The Persic version renders the words, “how much more excellent are ye than that, O ye of little faith?” they are more excellent in their nature, and of a longer duration, and are designed for greater ends and purposes; and therefore if God clothes the one in such a manner as he does, how much more will he not clothe the other? and such who are distrustful and diffident in this matter, may well be called men of little faith; (see Gill on “<sup>4063</sup>Matthew 6:30”).

**Ver. 29.** *And seek not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink,* etc.] That is, in an anxious and distressing manner, with a tormenting and vexatious care; otherwise food is to be both asked of God every day, and to be sought for and after in the use of proper means:

*neither be ye of doubtful minds;* questioning and distrusting that ye shall have any thing to eat or drink: be not fickle, unstable, and inconstant, and wandering in your thoughts about these things, like the meteors in the air, which are carried about here and there; let not your minds be disturbed and distracted about them; or be anxiously solicitous for them; (see Gill on “<sup>4063</sup>Matthew 6:31”).

**Ver. 30.** *For all these things do the nations of the world seek after,* etc.] That is, the Gentiles, as in (<sup>4062</sup>Matthew 6:32) who are frequently, in the Jewish writings, called, in distinction from the Jews,  $\mu\lambda\ \omega[\eta\ \tau\omega\mu\omega\alpha$ , “the nations of the world”<sup>f403</sup>. This is an argument used to dissuade from an immediate and anxious concern for food and raiment, because it is Heathenish, and therefore very unbecoming the disciples and followers of Christ: it need not be wondered at in those that know not God, and do not acknowledge his providence, and are strangers to his covenant and promises; but must be very unsuitable to the characters of such who know that godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come:

*and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;* and therefore it is needless to be so anxious about them: the Persic version reads, “all these things”, and so some copies; that is, meat, drink, and clothing, all the necessaries of life; (see Gill on “<sup>4062</sup>Matthew 6:32”).

**Ver. 31.** *But rather seek ye the kingdom of God*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin version adds, “first”, as also, “and his righteousness”, as in (<sup>4063</sup>Matthew 6:33) and the Ethiopic version reads, “seek his kingdom and righteousness” meaning either the grace of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, (<sup>547</sup>Romans 14:17) or the heavenly glory; unless the Gospel, and the dispensation of it, which is the Messiah's kingdom, and which was then just ushering in, should rather be intended.

*And all these things shall be added unto you*; food and raiment, which are as much as can be enjoyed; and godliness with these, and contentment with them, is great gain; (see Gill on “<sup>4063</sup>Matthew 6:33”).

**Ver. 32.** *Fear not little flock*, etc.] these words are particularly directed to the immediate apostles and disciples of Christ; but are true of all the saints in all ages of time, who are compared to a “flock of sheep”, being separated from the rest of the world in election, redemption, and the effectual calling, and being folded together in a Gospel church state; and also for their patience, meekness, humility, and harmlessness: these are a “little” flock; few in number, when compared with the wicked of the world; and mean and despicable in the account of men; and little in their own eyes: these are subject to many “fears”; some relate to their outward state, and condition, as that they shall want food and raiment, and not have the necessaries of life; which seems to be in the first place here intended, as appears from the context: and some regard their spiritual and eternal estate, as lest they should have no interest in the love of God, and in the covenant, in the blessings and promises of his grace; lest they should not belong to Christ; or the good work of grace should not be begun in them; or that they should not persevere to the end, and should at last miscarry of eternal life and happiness: and these fears arise from a body of sin, from the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and the prevalence of unbelief; for they have no true reason for them: God is on their side, and will not leave, nor forsake them, nor shall they want any good thing Christ is their shepherd, and he has bought them, with his own blood, and will lose none of them; and therefore they need not fear being taken care of both in soul and body, for time and eternity: and especially when what follows is considered,

*for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*; not only the Gospel, and the knowledge of the mysteries of it; nor the Gospel church

state, and a right to all its ordinances; nor only the kingdom of grace, which cannot be moved; but the kingdom of glory: and which is a gift unto them, not obtained by any deserts or works of theirs; nor is their right unto, and enjoyment of it depending upon any such thing: and it their Father's gift, who is so by adopting grace, and through Christ Jesus their Lord; and which he gives according to his sovereign will and pleasure, and with a good will, delighting in them, and rejoicing over them to do them good, both here and hereafter: so that they may depend upon every good thing needful for them both in this world, and in the world to come; nor should they indulge anxious cares, or slavish fears.

**Ver. 33.** *Sell that ye have, and give alms*, etc.] Since they had a kingdom bequeathed them by their heavenly Father, they should be so far from indulging an anxious care about food and raiment, that when there was a call in providence for it, and rather than the poor should go without a supply, it became them to sell their houses and lands, and whatever possessions they had, and relieve them; and so they did not long after; for some of those who sold their estates, and brought the money to the apostles, (~~406~~ Acts 4:34,35), might be now present; and the more readily and cheerfully do what they did, remembering these words of Christ:

*provide yourselves bags which wax not old*; as do the bags of misers: their bag is, **bwqn rwrx**, “a bag pierced through”, or that has a hole in it, which lets the money out as it is put in, (~~3706~~ Haggai 1:6) and which the Targum renders by, **atraml**, “for a curse”; as money hoarded up in bags by covetous persons generally is: Christ would have his followers put their money up in other bags; not in such which rot through age, or are worn out, and are full of holes through use; but into the hands and bellies of the poor, the fruit and reward of which will always abide;

*a treasure in the heavens that faileth not*: whereas treasure on earth does, being either taken away from the possessors of it by various ways, or they from that:

*where no thief approacheth*; can come near to steal it away, which is often the case here on earth:

*neither moth corrupteth*; as it does the best of garments, wore by men: but the robes of glory and immortality can never be corrupted: (see Gill on ~~406~~ Matthew 6:20”).

**Ver. 34.** *For where your treasure is*, etc.] Whether in heaven, or in earth, there will your heart be also: the heart is always set upon the treasure, and as is a man's treasure, such is his heart, that is, set upon it; if his treasure is only here, and he has not the true riches, his heart is only earthly and carnal; but if his treasure is heavenly, his heart and conversation will be in heaven; (see Gill on “<sup><4064></sup>Matthew 6:21”).

**Ver. 35.** *Let your loins be girded about*, etc.] With the girdle of truth, (<sup><4064></sup>Ephesians 6:14) keeping close to the doctrines of the Gospel, abiding faithfully by them, even unto death: the allusion is either to the eating of the first passover, (<sup><4021></sup>Exodus 12:11) or rather to servants, who, in these eastern countries, wore long garments; and therefore, when in business, used to gather them up, and gird them about them, that they might perform their service with greater strength, more ease, quicker dispatch, and less hinderance: the phrase denotes readiness for business:

*and your lights burning.* The Vulgate Latin version adds, “in your hands”; meaning torches that were held in the hand: and may design either the Scriptures of truth, which were to be a light or lamp unto them, guiding and directing them in the ministration of the Gospel; or the lamps of profession, which should be kept clear and bright, and good works, becoming them, that should so shine before men, that all may see them, and glorify God. The allusion is to persons waiting at a wedding in the night, with torches and flambeaus in their hands.

**Ver. 36.** *And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord*, etc.] Who either was at a wedding, or was the bridegroom himself; so be ye in a readiness, waiting for the coming of Christ, the bridegroom of the church:

*when he will return from the wedding,* The Syriac version renders it, “from the house of feasting”; from any entertainment, or from the marriage feast, or rather the marriage itself, to the bride chamber: so when Christ has, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of his grace, espoused all his elect, he will descend from heaven, and take them to himself; they shall then be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and enter with him into the nuptial chamber, and be for ever with him:

*that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately;* and let him in without any delay, as soon as ever he comes to the door; and at the first knock, open it to him at once, having light, and being in a posture of readiness, and in constant expectation of him: so such who have

believed in Christ, and have been faithful to his cause and interest, and have held fast the profession of their faith without wavering, when Christ shall either come and knock at their doors by death, or shall come to judgment, and sound the alarm of it, they shall be ready to obey the summons with the greatest cheerfulness, and meet him with the utmost pleasure.

**Ver. 37.** *Blessed are those servants whom the Lord*, etc.] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “their Lord”, the master of them, or the Lord Jesus Christ:

*when he cometh shall find watching*: for him, and not asleep. The Ethiopic version reads, “so doing, and watching”; girding up their loins, trimming their lamps, and waiting for their Lord's coming: such servants are happy, they will appear to be in the favour of their master, who will take notice of them and show some marks of respect to them; as Christ will to all his good and faithful servants, whenever he comes, whether at death, or at judgment; and who will be happy then, being found so doing, and found in him:

*verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself*; not that Christ shall really do this, or appear in the form of a servant; but that he shall readily, cheerfully, and at once introduce his servants into his joy, and make them partakers of all the glories of the other world:

*and make them to sit down to meat*; at his table in his kingdom; (see <sup><4081></sup>Matthew 8:11, <sup><4220></sup>Luke 22:30)

*and will come forth and serve them*; with food, yea, will feed them himself, and lead them to fountains of living water, (<sup><4017></sup>Revelation 7:17) The Arabic version renders it, “he shall stand to minister unto them”: the phrase is expressive of the posture of a servant; who, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, is *Æl wh*, “walking”, and who goes round about the table, whilst others sit <sup>f404</sup>: some think there is allusion in the words to a custom used at some feasts, particularly at the feasts in honour of Saturn, in which servants changed clothes with their masters, and sat at their tables, and their masters served them <sup>f405</sup>

**Ver. 38.** *And if he shall come in the second watch*, etc.] Of the night, that is, after nine o'clock, or any time between nine or twelve; for the second watch was from nine o'clock till twelve; and this was coming early from an

entertainment, or a wedding, which were commonly kept in the night, and late;

*or come in the third watch*, or after twelve o'clock, or any time between twelve and three; for the third watch was from twelve o'clock to three, which was late; (see Gill on "<sup>4045</sup>Matthew 14:25") The Persic version reads, "in the second, or third part of the night"; and the Ethiopic version, "in the second or third hour of the night";

*and find them so*. The Arabic version adds, "doing"; as above described, with their loins girt, lights burning, and they watching for their Lord's coming:

*blessed are those servants*; since they shall be used and treated as before related.

**Ver. 39.** *And this know*, etc.] The Ethiopic version reads, "this only know"; only take notice of this one thing, and it may be of some use to direct you in your conduct how to behave during the absence of your Lord, until the time he shall come again:

*that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come*; that is, if the owner, or master of the house, whose the goods in the house are, could by any means know what time of the night the thief would come to break into his house, in order to plunder it, and carry off his goods:

*he would have watched*; either he himself in person, or he would have set a watch about his house, or in it:

*and not have suffered his house to be broken through*; either the door to be broken up, or the wall to be dug through, but by a guard about it, or within it, would have prevented such a design. And so in like manner, could it be known in what time Christ would come, either to the destruction of Jerusalem, or at death, or to judgment, every thoughtful, prudent man that should know it, would be upon his guard, that he might not be surprised with it; and though the precise time could not be known, yet inasmuch as the thing itself is certain, it became all the servants of Christ to be watching for it; (see Gill on "<sup>4043</sup>Matthew 24:43").

**Ver. 40.** *Be ye therefore ready also*, etc.] Not habitually, but actually, in the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty, with loins girt, and lights

burning. This may be understood either of a readiness to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and particularly the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to be in a few years; or of a preparation for death, and the last judgment, which lies in the righteousness of Christ imputed, and his grace imparted: and to have a comfortable view of the one, and a gracious experience of the other, as they will engage to the performance of good works, to which such are ready; so they make meet for the coming of Christ, be it in what way, and whensoever it will: and the rather, a concern should be had for such a preparation, because of the following reason,

*for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not*; in either of the above ways; (see Gill on “<sup>4134</sup>Matthew 24:44”).

**Ver. 41.** *Then Peter said unto him, Lord*, etc.] The Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions read, “our Lord”:

*speakest thou this parable*: of the master at the wedding, and his servants waiting for him, or of the housekeeper watching that his house be not broken up, or both:

*unto us, or unto all?* Peter was in doubt whether the above discourse was peculiarly directed to them, the apostles, as containing special instructions to them in the discharge of the ministerial work; or whether it was designed for all his disciples and followers, both in the present age, and in time to come, to the end of the world.

**Ver. 42.** *And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward*, etc.] Christ does not directly, and in express words, answer to Peter's question, but suggests, that though he intended it as a caution to all his people, and in it spoke to them all to be upon their watch and guard, (<sup>4135</sup>Mark 13:37) yet that he had a special regard to them, his apostles, and succeeding ministers of the Gospel, whose characters, office, work, dignity, and honour, are here described. Such are stewards in Christ's family, they are entrusted with the stores and provisions of his house, and “faithfulness” and “wisdom” are requisite in them; the one, that they do not corrupt and adulterate the word of God, and mix it with human doctrines, but that they deliver it out pure and sincere as it is; and the other, that they may rightly divide it, and wisely distribute it:

*whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household*: Christ's “household”, or family, is his church, over which the ministers of the Gospel are appointed “rulers”, to govern the house according to the laws of Christ,

and keep every thing in good decorum and order; and particularly their work, and which agrees to their character as stewards is,

*to give them their portion of meat in due season*: in doing which they answer the characters of faithful and wise stewards: they are faithful who give out the whole portion allotted, without adulterating it, or keeping back any part of it; and they are wise, who deliver it to them in proper time and season. The word translated “portion of meat”, is only used in this place, and is rendered in the Vulgate Latin version, “a measure of wheat”; but it may be applied to any food in general, and an allotment of it; and signifies such a portion as was given to servants for one month, or rather every day; and may signify that portion of the word of God, and the interpretation of it, which is to be given forth every Lord's day to his people, suitable to their condition, cases, and circumstances. The Septuagint translators use the verb in (<sup>41472</sup>Genesis 47:12) who render the text thus, “and Joseph, *εσιτομετρι*, measured out to his father”, and to “his brethren, and to all the house of father, wheat”, or bread, “according to their persons”, i.e. the number of them: to which passage there may be some reference here; at least it serves to illustrate this; (see Gill on <sup>41445</sup>Matthew 24:45”).

**Ver. 43.** *Blessed is that servant*, etc.] Who is faithful and wise, rules well, and discharges his trust with integrity, and disposes of the provisions of the house, in his hands, with great discretion and prudence:

*whom his Lord, when he cometh*; to take vengeance on the wicked Jews, or by death, or at judgment:

*shall find so doing*; behaving as a good ruler, and as a wise and faithful steward.

**Ver. 44.** *Of a truth I say unto you*, etc.] This, with Christ, was a strong way of asserting the truth of any thing; and the sense is, you may assure yourselves of it, this will certainly be the happy case of such servant:

*that he will make him ruler over all that he hath*; as Joseph was made by Pharaoh. Such an one shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years, and then in heaven with him to all eternity, where he shall enjoy all things; (see Gill on <sup>41447</sup>Matthew 24:47”)

**Ver. 45.** *But and if that servant say in his heart*, etc.] Not the same servant before spoken of as a wise and faithful steward, that gives to all in

the family the portion of meat in due season, and shall be found doing, and be made ruler over his master's goods but another, who also, as he, is made by his Lord ruler over his household, and is in a like post, and in the same office, but is an "evil servant", as Matthew calls him, to distinguish him from the other; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read here:

*my Lord delayeth his coming*; though a wicked servant, he calls Christ his Lord; but it is not saying Lord, Lord, that will be of any avail, but doing the will of God, by believing in Christ, and obeying his commands: he had a notion of the coming of Christ, though he did not desire it; and because he tarried longer than was expected, supposed him to be slack concerning his promise, and began to think, and hope, and at length to believe, that he would not come at all, and therefore gave himself up to a wicked and licentious way of living:

*and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens*; to persecute the ministers of the Gospel, and the true disciples of Christ, the undefiled virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes:

*and to eat, and drink, and to be drunken*: to live a voluptuous and sensual life, to give himself up to intemperance and debauchery: and, generally speaking, as professors of religion, when they turn apostates, are the most violent persecutors of the saints; so such persecutors of Christ's, faithful followers are commonly drunkards and debauchees; (see Gill on "~~4248~~ Matthew 24:48-49").

**Ver. 46.** *The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him*, etc.] For, not coming as was expected, he gives over looking, and concludes he will not come at all; in which he will find himself mistaken, for he will come in the very day which is appointed, though men know not of it, and do not look for it:

*and at an hour when he is not aware*; for as neither the day, nor hour of Christ's coming are known to any man, it becomes men to look for it every day and hour, lest it come upon them unawares; as it will, on such evil servants before described, with whom it will go ill, as follows:

*and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with unbelievers*; whose portion is the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, (~~6208~~ Revelation 21:8) and by these are meant, not only the Heathens, who never heard of Christ; nor the Jews only, who disbelieved the Messiah, and rejected him when he came; but all deists and atheists,

who deny revelation; even all unbelievers of, and scoffers at the coming of Christ, and who put away the evil day far from them; compare with this (~~ⲓⲃⲏ~~ Job 20:29 see Gill on “~~ⲁⲓⲃⲏ~~ Matthew 24:50-51”).

**Ver. 47.** *And that servant which knew his Lord's will*, etc.] Not his secret, but his revealed will; the will of God, which lies in the declarations of his grace and mercy in the Gospel, and in the commands and ordinances expressed in his word; and which are the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God; the knowledge of which is necessary, in order to practice: and where there is a spiritual and saving knowledge, there will be practice: but there may be knowledge, where there is no practice, and which was the case here: Christ here distinguishes between wicked servants, some being knowing, and others ignorant; and accordingly the aggravations of their guilt are more or less:

*and prepared not* himself; so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply, but the Syriac version, “for him”, that is, for his Lord: but it may as well be read as in the Vulgate Latin, without any supplement, “and prepared not”; he took no thought nor care about doing it; there is no preparation, readiness, nor disposition, in a natural man, to the will of God: no man is prepared or ready to do it, but he that is regenerated, or is made a new creature; who has the laws of God written on his heart, and who has the Spirit of God put within him, to cause him to keep them; and who has faith in Christ, and strength from him to observe them; but there may be knowledge, where such a preparation is wanting; persons may know much, and profess to know more, and in works deny all, and be to every good work, unfit, disobedient, and reprobate: this clause is left out in the Persic version:

*neither did according to his will*; the will of God is done aright, when what is done, is done according to the command of God, in the strength of Christ, from love to him, in the exercise of faith on him, and with a view to his glory, and without any dependence on what is done; but there may be knowledge, without any thing of this: the words, “neither did”, are wanting in the Syriac version: and such a man that has knowledge without practice,

*shall be beaten with many stripes*; alluding to the law of the Jews, by which a wicked man was to be punished, by beating him with stripes, not exceeding, forty, according to the nature of his fault, (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲏ~~ Deuteronomy 25:2,3) and here it signifies, that persons who have light and knowledge, and the means thereof, and act not according to them, shall be punished

with the greatest severity, and endure the greatest degree of torments in hell; (see <sup>f412</sup>Matthew 11:21-24)

**Ver. 48.** *But he that knew not*, etc.] His Lord's will; either not having the means of knowing it, as the Heathens; or through neglect of them, not attending to them, and making use of them, which is the case of many, where the Gospel revelation is:

*and did commit things worthy of stripes*; or punishment; as the Gentiles, by sinning against the law, and light of nature; and those who might have the advantage of a divine revelation, but neglect it: the Septuagint in (<sup>f421</sup>Deuteronomy 25:2) have the same phrase as here, *αξιός πληγών*, “worthy of stripes”:

*shall be beaten with few stripes*; their punishment shall be less, and it shall be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, than for knowing professors. The Jews did not always inflict forty stripes, or forty save one, upon delinquents; but according to their crimes, and as they were able to bear them, more or fewer: so it is said <sup>f406</sup>,

“when they judge a sinner, how many (stripes) he can bear, they do not reckon, but by stripes that are fit to be trebled: if they judge he is able to bear “twenty”, they do not order that he be beaten with twenty one, that so they may be trebled, but that he be beaten with “eighteen”: if they condemn him to receive forty, and after he is begun to be beaten, they observe him to be weak, and they say he cannot bear any more than these “nine”, or “twelve”, with which he has been beaten, lo, he is free; if they condemn him to receive “twelve”, and after that he is beaten, they see that he is strong and able to bear more, lo, he is free, and he is not to be beaten any more, upon that estimation: if they condemn him today that he is to be beaten with “twelve” (stripes), and they do not beat him till tomorrow, and lo, tomorrow he is able to bear eighteen, they do not beat him but with twelve.”

And elsewhere the rule is <sup>f407</sup>,

“he that commits a sin, in which there are two negative (commands broken) if they pronounce but one sentence, he is beaten and is free; but if not (i.e. if more than one) he is beaten, and when he is healed, he is beaten again.”

*For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall, much be required:* the more knowledge a man has, the more practice is expected from him; and the greater his gifts are, the more useful he ought to be, and diligent in the improvement of them:

*and to whom men have committed much, or to whom much is committed, of him they will ask the more;* not more than what was committed to him, but more than from him, who has less committed to him; in proportion to what a man is entrusted with, the greater increase and improvement it is expected he should make.

**Ver. 49.** *I am come to send fire on the earth,* etc.] Meaning either the Gospel, which is as fire, that gives both light and heat, warms the hearts of God's people, and causes them to burn within them; though very distressing and torturing to wicked men; so the word of God is compared to fire, in (<sup>24th</sup> Jeremiah 20:9 23:29). Or else zeal for it, and which would be opposed with sharp contentions by others; or rather persecution for the sake of the Gospel, called sometimes the fiery trial; which tries men, as gold is tried in the fire, what they are, and what their principles and profession be; unless the Holy Ghost, and baptizing with him, and with fire, should be meant; since Christ in the next verse, speaks of the baptism of his sufferings, which that was to follow:

*and what will I?* what shall I say concerning this fire? what shall I wish and pray for? what would be pleasing and agreeable to me? even this,

*if it be already kindled;* or “that it were already kindled”, or “O that it were already kindled”; meaning either that the Gospel was warmly preached by his disciples, and zealously defended by them, as it was after his death and resurrection; or that hot persecution was raised against it which was now beginning, since the advantage of it would be far greater than the evil in it: or that the Holy Ghost was come down in cloven tongues, like as of fire.

**Ver. 50.** *But I have a baptism to be baptized with,* etc.] Not water baptism, for he had been baptized with that already; nor the baptism of the Spirit, which he had also received without measure; though the Ethiopic version reads it actively, “with which I shall baptize”, referring doubtless to that; but the baptism of his sufferings is meant, which are compared to a baptism, because of the largeness and abundance of them; he was as it were immersed, or plunged into them; and which almost all interpreters observe

on the text, and by which they confess the true import and primary signification of the word used; as in baptism, performed by immersion, the person is plunged into water, is covered with it, and continues awhile under it, and then is raised out of it, and which being once done, is done no more; so the sufferings of Christ were so many and large, that he was as it were covered with them, and he continued under them for a time, and under the power of death and the grave, when being raised from thence, he dies no more, death hath no more dominion over him. This baptism he “had”, there was a necessity of his being baptized with it, on his Father's account; it was his will, his decree, and the command he enjoined him as Mediator; it was the portion he allotted him, and the cup he gave unto him: and on his own part, he obliged himself unto it, in the counsel and covenant of peace; for this purpose he came into this world, and had substituted himself in the room and stead of his people; and it was necessary on their part, for their sins could not be atoned for without sufferings, nor without the sufferings of Christ; moreover, the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament concerning them, made them necessary:

*and how am I straitened until it be accomplished:* these words express both the trouble and distress Christ was in, at the apprehension of his sufferings as man; which were like to the distress of persons, closely besieged by an enemy; or rather of a woman, whose time of travail draws nigh, when she dreads it, and yet longs to have it over: and likewise they signify, his restless desire to have them accomplished; not that he desired that Judas should betray him, or the Jews crucify him, as these were sins of theirs; nor merely his sufferings as such; but that thereby the justice of God might be satisfied, the law might be fulfilled, and the salvation of his people be obtained: and this eager desire of his, he had shown in various instances, and did show afterwards; as in his ready compliance with his Father's proposal in eternity; in his frequent appearances in human form before his incarnation; in sending one message after another, to give notice of his coming; in his willingness to be about his Father's business, as soon as possible; in rebuking Peter, when he would have dissuaded him from all thoughts of suffering: in going to Jerusalem on his own accord, in order to suffer there; in his earnest wish to eat the last passover with his disciples; in the joy that possessed him, when Judas was gone out, in order to betray him; in stopping in the midst of his sermon, lest he should overrun, or outslip the time of meeting him in the garden, (<sup>434</sup>John 14:30,31) in his going thither, and willingly surrendering himself up into the hands of his

enemies; and in cheerfully laying down his life: all which arose from the entire love he had for the persons he died for; and because it was his Father's will, and his glory was concerned herein, and his own glory also was advanced thereby; moreover, his death was the life of others, and the work required haste.

**Ver 51.** *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?* etc.] To set up a temporal kingdom, in great pomp, and outward peace and tranquility? Christ came to make peace with God for men, and to give the Gospel of peace, and spiritual and eternal peace to men; but not external peace, especially that, which is not consistent with the preservation of truth:

*I tell you, nay;* whatever suppositions you have made, or whatever notions you have entertained, I solemnly affirm, and you may depend upon it, I am not come into the world on any such account, as to establish outward peace among men;

*but rather division;* so he calls the Gospel, which in Matthew is styled a "sword"; and the Ethiopic version seems to have read both here, since it renders it, "but a sword that I may divide": the Gospel is the sword of the Spirit, which divides asunder soul and Spirit, and separates a man from his former principles and practices; and sets men apart from one another, even the nearest relations, at the greatest distance; and is, through the sin of man, the occasion of great contention, discord, and division.

**Ver. 52.** *For from henceforth there shall be five in one house,* etc.] Which are the five following, mentioned in the next verse; the father and the son, the mother and the daughter, and her daughter-in-law, or son's wife; for the mother and mother-in-law are one and the same person, only standing in different relations; as a mother to her own daughter, and a mother-in-law to her son's wife, or to her husband's daughter by his first wife; though the former best answers to the word used: now from the time of Christ's saying these words, or quickly after this, immediately upon his baptism of sufferings, or soon after his death, when the Gospel should be preached more publicly and extensively, this should be the effect of it; that supposing a family consisting of the above number, they should be

*divided* from one another, in the following manner:

*three against two, and two against three;* three that did not believe in Christ, against two that did believe in him; or two that did not believe, against three that did; or three that did, against two that did not; or two

that did, against three that did not. The Ethiopic version reads, “two shall be separated from three, and one shall be separated from two”.

**Ver. 53.** *The father shall be divided against the* etc.] Shall oppose him, differ with him, and be alienated from him, and so the other relations as follow; (see Gill on “~~4005~~ Matthew 10:35-36”).

**Ver. 54.** *And he said also to the people,* etc.] For what Christ had before said, were chiefly, if not solely, directed to his disciples; but now he turned himself to the innumerable multitude that were about him, and particularly addressed himself to the Scribes and Pharisees that were among them:

*when ye see a cloud rise out of the west;* the watery vapours being attracted by the heat of the sun, out of the Mediterranean Sea, which lies west of the land of Judea, and formed into a cloud, and drove by the wind:

*straightway ye say there comes a shower;* as soon as it is seen, it is presently concluded and affirmed, that a very heavy shower will soon fall, it having been frequently observed so to do, when this has been the case:

*and so it is;* for the most part, there commonly follows a large shower on such an appearance, and they were seldom mistaken in their conclusions.

**Ver. 55.** *And when ye see the south wind blow,* etc.] From the hot countries of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia, which lay south of Judea:

*ye say there will be heat;* or hot sultry weather, scorching heat, which such a wind brings with it:

*and it cometh to pass;* generally speaking, as is asserted.

**Ver. 56.** *Ye hypocrites,* etc.] A word often used of the Scribes and Pharisees, and which suggests, that there were such in company, to whom Christ more especially directs his discourse; and this may be the rather thought, since much the like things are said by him to the Pharisees, with the Sadducees, in (~~4101~~ Matthew 16:1-3) and the same appellation is given them there, as here:

*ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth;* from the appearance of the sky, they could tell how it would be with the earth, and the inhabitants of it, whether they should have dry or wet weather, heat or cold:

*but how is it that ye do not discern this time?* that this is the time of the Messiah's coming, and that it is the accepted time, and day of salvation, if

ye receive him, and believe in him; and a time of vengeance, if ye reject him: this might have been discerned by the prophecies of the Old Testament, which fix the characters of the Messiah, and the time of his coming; and describe the manners of the men of that generation, in which he should come: and point out both their happiness and their ruin; as also by the doctrines they heard Christ preach, and especially by the miracles which were wrought by him, it might have been known he was come.

**Ver. 57.** *Yea, and why even of yourselves*, etc.] From their own observation, as in discerning the signs of the weather; in a rational way, by the light of reason, and according to the dictates of their own consciences; by what they themselves saw and heard; by the signs and wonders which were done, they might have concluded, that now was the time of the Messiah's coming; and that he was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he: this was as easy, by observation, to be discerned, as the face of the sky was; even of themselves, without any hints or directions from others:

*judge ye not what is right?* or “truth”, as the Syriac and Persic versions render it; concerning the present time, the coming of the Messiah, and the accomplishment of the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament in him: or why do ye not of yourselves judge, what is fit and right to be done between man and man, without going to law? and that, in cases which are plain and clear, the consequences of which may be as easily discerned, as what weather it will be by the signs in the heavens; to which sense the following words incline.

**Ver. 58.** *When thou goest with thine adversary*, etc.] The creditor, as the Persic version, and who is the prosecutor, that has commenced a suit of law against another, in order to obtain his right: for Christ is here speaking of a bad man, that will not pay his just debts, so that his creditor is obliged to prosecute him, and have him to the

*magistrate*; ruler, or prince; the Nasi, or prince of the sanhedrim, who sat as judge there: as thou art in the way; going along with the creditor, or prosecutor, to the court of judicature;

*give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him.* The Persic version renders it, “give him the money”; and the Arabic version, “give what thou owest”; and the Syriac version, “give the gain”; or pay the interest, about which the dispute is, and so escape out of his hands; lest when the matter is brought into court, sentence should be given, to pay both interest and

principal, with all costs and charges; or however, make up matters with him, satisfy him in some way or other, before things are brought to an extremity:

*lest he hale thee to the judge*; the same that is called the magistrate, or prince before, that sits chief upon the bench, hears and tries causes, and passes sentence:

*and the judge deliver thee to the officer*: who upon hearing the matter in difference, and giving the cause against the defendant, and for the prosecutor, delivers the debtor into the hands of a proper officer, in order to commit him to prison: the word rendered “officer”, signifies an exactor of debts, or fines, and was one that obliged such as were cast, to do what the judge appointed to be done: in the Septuagint on (<sup><2182></sup>Isaiah 3:12) it answers to an “oppressor”; and such men were wont to use rigour, to bring persons to the payment of their debts, or fines:

*and the officer cast thee into prison*; which he had power to do, when committed into his hands by the judge, in case the sentence pronounced was not immediately complied with; (see Gill on “<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 5:25”).

**Ver. 59.** *I tell thee*, etc.] The Syriac version before these words, prefixes an “Amen”, or “verily”, for the sake of the stronger affirmation, which seems to be taken from (<sup><4126></sup>Matthew 5:26)

*thou shalt not depart thence*; get out of prison:

*till thou hast paid the very last mite*: of the sum in debate, which was what the Jews call a “prutah”, and that was the eighth part of an Italian farthing, and half a common farthing; (see Gill on “<sup><4127></sup>Mark 12:42”): with this agrees what Mainonides says <sup>f408</sup>, that

“when he that lends, requires what he has lent, though he is rich, and the borrower is distressed, and straitened for food, there is no mercy showed him in judgment, but his debt is, demanded of him, hnwrj a hj wrp d[, “unto the last prutah, or mite”.”