

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 14

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass*, etc.] The Persic version adds, “on a certain day”; and it is afterwards said to be the sabbath day. This seems to have been somewhere or other in Galilee; (see ^{<471>}Luke 17:11).

As he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees; or rather, one of the rulers, and of the sect of the Pharisees: and he might be either a ruler of a synagogue, or a member of one of the lesser or greater sanhedrim; such another as Nicodemus, who was of the Pharisees, and a ruler of the Jews, (^{<471>}John 3:1) for that there was any distinction among the Pharisees as a sect, does not appear: to this man's house Christ went, after he came out of the synagogue, being invited by him;

to eat bread on the sabbath day. The sabbath day was a feasting day with the Jews, in which they made very large and magnificent entertainments, for the honour of the sabbath; and he was reckoned the most praiseworthy, that exceeded this way; and no doubt, since this man was a Pharisee, one that was tenacious of the traditions of the elders, and was also a ruler, his table was well spread: the rules concerning this part of keeping the sabbath, are these ^{f439};

“what is this delight? the wise men say, a man ought to prepare abundance of food and spiced liquids, for the sabbath, all according to a man's substance; and whoever multiplies in the expenses of the sabbath, and in preparing food, much and good, lo, he is praiseworthy; and if he is not able, though he only prepares boiled food, and such like, on account of the glory of the sabbath, lo, this is the delight of the sabbath: and he is not obliged to straiten himself, nor to ask of others, to increase the food of the sabbath: the ancient wise men said, make thy sabbath a common day, and do not make thyself necessitous to men; he who is delicate and rich, and lo, all his days are as a sabbath day, ought to have food on a sabbath day, different from that on a weekday; and if it is not possible to change, let him alter the time of eating; if he had been

used to have it soon, let him have it late; and if late, let him have it sooner: a man is obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath day; one in the evening, and one in the morning, and one at the time of the meat offering; and he ought to take heed to those three feasts, that he does not diminish them at all; and even a poor man that is maintained by alms, must keep the three feasts.”

And this last canon, or rule, is of the utmost importance with them; for they ^{f440} say,

“whoever keeps the three feasts on the sabbath day, shall be delivered from three punishments, from the sorrows of the Messiah, from the judgment of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog.”

That they watched him; that is, those that sat down to meat with him, the lawyers and Pharisees: and it is very probable, that it was not out of pure respect to him, that he was asked to eat meat at this ruler's house; but with a design to observe whatever might be said, or done by him, they could take any advantage from, against him.

Ver. 2. *And behold, there was a certain man before him*, etc.] Who sat just before him, as he was at table; who either came there of himself, in order to receive a cure; or rather, since it was in a private house, and he at table too, was brought and set there on purpose by the Pharisees, to try whether Christ would heal him on the sabbath day, that they might have somewhat against him; which they doubted not but he would do, knowing his compassionate and beneficent disposition to do good to creatures in distress, whenever he had an opportunity:

which had the dropsy: or “gathered waters”, as the Syriac version renders it; was filled with water, which is the nature of that disease, and distinguishes it from what is called the dry dropsy: this disease is a preternatural collection of serum, or water in some part of the body; or a too great proportion thereof in the blood. The “dropsy” acquires different names, from the different parts it afflicts, or the different parts the waters are collected in; that of the “abdomen”, or lower belly, called simply and absolutely “dropsy”, is particularly denominated “ascites”; that of the whole habit of the body, “anasarca”, or “leucophlegmatia”; that of the head, “hydrocephalus”; that of the scrotum, “hydrocele”. — -There is also a species of this disease, supposed to be caused instead of water, by a collection of wind, called “tympanites”; and by Hippocrates, the “dry

dropsy”: we also meet with dropsies of the breast, pericardium, uterus, ovaries, etc. The causes of dropsies in general, are whatever may obstruct the serous part of the blood, so as to make it stagnate in the vessels; or burst the vessels themselves, so as to let the blood out among the membranes; or weaken and relax the tone of the vessels; or thin the blood, and make it watery; or lessen perspiration. These causes are various, viz. sometimes acute diseases, scirrhus tumours of any of the more noble viscera, excessive evacuations, particularly haemorrhages, hard drinking, etc. The “ascites”, or “water dropsy” of the “abdomen”, is the most usual case, and what we particularly call the “dropsy”: its symptoms are tumours, first of the feet and legs, and afterwards of the “abdomen.” which keep continually growing; and if the belly be struck or shook, there is heard a quashing of water: add to this, three other attendants, viz. a dyspnoea, intense thirst, and sparing urine; with which may be numbered heaviness, listlessness, costiveness, a light fever, and an emaciation of the body^{f441}. Such we must suppose to be the case of this man, and that he was now in such a condition, as to be thought incurable.

Ver. 3. *And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees,* etc.] All the Oriental versions, for “lawyers”, read “Scribes”: these, with the Pharisees, were got together in a body, in their brother Pharisee's house, to watch the motions of Christ; who knew their designs upon him, and the thoughts of their hearts, and made answer to them, by putting the following question;

saying, is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? The occasion of the question was the object before him, whom Christ had a compassionate regard to, and determined to cure; but knowing that these men were catching at every thing, to traduce him, was desirous of having their sentiments first; not but that he knew full well, what was agreeable to the law of God, and what was not; and what also were the traditions of their elders, which they held, and which allowed of healing on the sabbath day, where life was in danger.

Ver. 4. *And they held their peace,* etc.] Or were silent, choosing to say nothing, which might countenance such an action; and yet knew not how to condemn it:

and he took [him], and healed him, and let him go; he took him by the hand, or laid his hands on him; he touched him, and, it may be, stroked the part affected, and in an instant the prodigious swelling of his body came

down: for he who at his rebuke could dry up the sea, could by a touch dry up such a quantity of water, as was in this man's body; and then he dismissed him from the table and company, and he went home perfectly cured.

Ver. 5. *And answered them, saying*, etc.] Murmuring secretly at what he had done:

which of you shall have an ass, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? being just ready to be drowned there; and therefore it must be much more right and necessary to cure a man, a reasonable creature, just drowning with a dropsy, as this man was. The Syriac and Persic versions, instead of “an ass”, read “a son”, very wrongly: a like kind of reasoning is used by Christ, in (see Gill on “~~4021~~ Matthew 12:11”), (see Gill on “~~4035~~ Luke 13:15”).

Ver. 6. *And they could not answer him again to these things*, etc.] The justice, equity, mercy, and humanity that appeared in our Lord's reasonings, and the cases he instanced in, being agreeable to their own tenets and practices, their mouths were shut up, and they could not return an answer to them, without being exposed,

Ver. 7. *And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden*, etc.] To the dinner at the Pharisee's house, particularly the lawyers, or Scribes and Pharisees:

when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; the uppermost places at the table, which these men loved, coveted, and sought after; (see Gill on “~~4036~~ Matthew 23:6”)

saying unto them; as follows.

Ver. 8. *When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding*, etc.] To a wedding dinner, or to any other; such an one as the present entertainment was, which was not a marriage feast, for they might not marry on the sabbath day; (see Gill on “~~4040~~ John 2:1”) but a common sabbath meal:

sit not down in the highest room: in the chief place at table, as soon as come in:

lest a more honourable man; for age, office, dignity, wisdom, learning, or riches:

than thou be bidden of him: the master of the feast; and who may not yet be come, and for whom the chief place may be designed, and will better suit him.

Ver. 9. *And he that bade thee and him*, etc.] To the feast, and who is the master of it, and has a right to dispose of, and order his guests at his table, as he thinks fit:

come and say to thee, give this man place; pray rise up, and give this honourable man this seat, which is more suitable for a person of his rank and figure, and take another:

and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room; or place, which must unavoidably fill a man with shame and confusion; because hereby his pride and vanity, in affecting the uppermost room, will be publicly exposed; and he who before sat in the chief place, will have the mortification, before all the guests, to be seated in the lowest.

Ver. 10. *But when thou art bidden*, etc.] To an entertainment, and the time is come,

go and sit down in the lowest room: place thyself at the lower end of the table, or in the most inferior seat; which will show humility and lowliness of mind, and prevent shame and mortification; since there can be no putting into a lower place, and there may be an advance to an higher:

that when he that bade thee cometh; into the dining room, and observe in what place thou art:

he may say unto thee, friend, go up higher; to a more honourable seat at table, pointing to it, and saying, there is such a seat empty, go up and take it, it best becomes thee:

then shalt thou have worship; or glory, as the word signifies; honour and esteem, instead of shame and blushing; not only from the master of the feast,

but in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; and from them, who will take notice of the honour done thee, and will entertain an high opinion of thee, and commend thee for thine humility and modesty. Advice, like to this, is given by Solomon in (²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 25:6,7) and which is explained by the Jews in like manner as here ^{f442}:

“Ben Azzai used to say, descend, from thy place two or three degrees, and sit; it is better that it should be said to thee, **hl** [, “go up”, than that it should be said to thee, descend, as it is said in (^{א127}Proverbs 25:7).”

Which is elsewhere ^{f443} thus expressed:

“R. Akiba taught it (or expounded, (^{א127}Proverbs 25:7)) in the name of R. Simeon ben Azzai, remove from thy place two or three seats, and sit until it is said to thee, **hl** [, “go up”; but do not go up (i.e. first,) for it will be said to thee descend; it is better that it should be said to thee go up, go up, than that it should be said to thee go down, go down: and Ben Hillel used to say, my humiliation is my exaltation, and my exaltation is my humiliation.”

Ver. 11. *For whosoever exalteth himself*, etc.] Either in the above way, or any other, shall be abased, humbled and mortified:

and he that humbleth himself; behaves in an humble and modest manner, *shall be exalted*; (see Gill on “^{א132}Matthew 23:12”).

Ver. 12. *Then said he also to him that bad him*, etc.] As he had given advice and instructions to the guests, so he likewise thought fit to give some to the master of the house, that had given both him and them an invitation to the present meal; observing, very likely, that his guests consisted of such persons as are hereafter described.

When thou makest a dinner, or a supper; any entertainment for other persons, at what time of the day soever, whether sooner or later, at noon, or at night, on sabbath days, or others:

call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours: that is, do not invite thy rich friends, rich brethren, and rich kinsmen, as well as not rich neighbours: not that our Lord's meaning is, that such should not be invited at all; which would be to destroy friendship and sociable conversation among persons in such a relation, and of such rank and fortune: but his sense is, that not these only should be invited, to the neglect of poor friends, poor brethren, poor kinsmen, and poor neighbours; and who, comparatively speaking, should rather be invited than the former, as being what would be more serviceable to them, and of a greater advantage in the issue to the master of the feast himself.

Lest they also bid thee again; and thee only, and not the poor, to as grand an entertainment, which is commonly done:

and a recompense be made thee: one feasting bout for another, so that there will be no obligation on either side; and this will be all the advantage that will be gained; the return is made here, and there will be no reward hereafter.

Ver. 13. *But when thou makest a feast*, etc.] An entertainment for others, a dinner, or a supper:

call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind; that is, the poor maimed, the poor lame, and the poor blind; otherwise it is possible that rich men may be maimed, lame, and blind; whereas these are not intended, but such who are in indigent circumstances, that stand in need of a meal, and to whom it is welcome.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt be blessed*, etc.] By God, with an increase of worldly substance, or with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; and by these poor objects, who will pray to God for a blessing upon such a kind benefactor:

for they cannot recompense thee; by inviting again to a like entertainment, as rich guests can do, and when they have done that there is nothing else to be expected; but such that entertain the poor can have no return from them, and yet a retaliation will be made:

for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just; when the just shall rise again, which will be the first resurrection; and happy is he that has part in it: for the righteous, or dead in Christ will rise first; and notice will be taken of the good works of the saints, particularly of their acts of beneficence to the poor members of Christ; and which they have done in faith, from a principle of love to Christ, and with a view to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures and Christians.

Ver. 15. *And when one of them that sat at meat with him*, etc.] One of the Scribes, lawyers, or Pharisees, that were guests at this feast:

heard these things: which were spoken by Christ, and was pleased and affected with them, though he was ignorant:

he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God; in the world to come, in the kingdom of the Messiah; concerning feasting

in which, the Jews had entertained very gross notions; and which this man was reminded of by Christ's making mention of the resurrection of the just, and of recompense at that time, which the Jews expected at the Messiah's coming. They suppose, that God will make a splendid feast, a sumptuous entertainment; in which, besides "bread", which they call, **twkl m l ç hmj l**, "the bread of the kingdom", and "the bread of the world to come"^{f444}, there will be great variety of flesh, fish, and fowl, plenty of generous wine, and all sorts of delicious fruit: particularly they speak of a large ox, which they suppose to be the Behemoth in Job, that will then be prepared; and of Leviathan and his mate, which will then be dressed; and of a large fowl, called Ziz, of a monstrous size; and of old wine kept in the grape from the creation of the world, which will then be drunk; and of the rich fruits of the garden of Eden, that will then be served up^{f445}: such gross and carnal notions have they entertained of the world to come; and which this man seemed to have imbibed, and placed happiness in.

Ver. 16. *Then said he unto him*, etc.] That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; he said to the man that was so affected with the happiness of such that shall share in the provisions of the Messiah's kingdom;

a certain man made a great supper: by which is meant not the Lord's supper, which was not as yet instituted; nor the supper of the Lamb, which will be at the end of the world; but the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and the provisions of it in the word and ordinances: and which is called a "supper"; because made in the end of the world, in the last days: and a "great" one, because of the maker of it, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and the matter of it, a variety of rich provisions, a feast of fat things, an entertainment consisting of the greatest dainties, and most delightful food; and on account of the number of the guests invited, all people, every creature, to whom the outward ministration of the Gospel comes; and those who are properly guests that come, are a great number which no man can number; as well as because of the cost and charges of it to the maker, though it is all free to the guests; and likewise because of the circumstances of exceeding great joy and pleasure that attend it; to which may be added, the long duration of it, even from the first to the second coming of Christ.

And bade many. This first bidding more especially respects the Jews, who are said to be "many", in reference to the promise made to Abraham, that

his seed should be as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand of the sea; and to set off the magnificence of the feast; and in distinction from all the world, and every creature, which were afterwards put into the Gospel commission: a foundation was laid for this supper in eternity, in the purposes, counsel, and covenant of God; and many prophecies concerning it were given out from the beginning; and sacrifices and ordinances were instituted, as emblematical of it, and to lead on to it, and give notice of it.

Ver. 17. *And sent his servant at supper time*, etc.] Either John the Baptist, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, who declared that the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, was at hand; and exhorted the people to believe in Christ that should come after him; or Christ himself, who is God's servant as man, of his choosing and appointing, and whom he sent in the fulness of time in the form of a servant, as the minister of the circumcision, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to call sinners to repentance; or servant may be put for servants, since in (^{421B} Matthew 22:3,4) mention is made of more; and so the Persic version here; which parable bears some likeness to this, if it is not the same; and may design the apostles of Christ, who were the servants of the most high God, and the ministers of Christ, who were first sent by him to preach the Gospel to the Jews, and to them only for a while:

to say to them that were bidden, come: this call, or invitation, was not the internal call, which is a fruit of love, and by grace, and of mighty power; to special blessings, grace, and glory; and is irresistible, effectual, and unchangeable: but external, to outward ordinances: and is often slighted and neglected; and is sometimes of persons who are neither chosen, nor sanctified, nor saved:

for all things are now ready; the Syriac version adds, “for you”: righteousness, pardon of sin, peace, and reconciliation, sin put away by the sacrifice of Christ, redemption obtained, and life and salvation secured; which shows the perfection of the present dispensation, and the large provisions of the Gospel, to which nothing is, or can be brought to be added to them, or qualify for them.

Ver. 18. *And they all with one consent began to make excuse*, etc.] Or, “they all together”, as the Vulgate Latin version, **tj ab**, “in one”, or “at once”: in (^{240B} Jeremiah 10:8) rendered “altogether”; and so the Ethiopic version, which adds, “with one voice”: but their words and language were

not the same: their excuses are differently expressed. Some render *απομιας*, “from one hour”: or the selfsame hour; immediately, directly, as soon as ever they were bidden, they began to frame excuses; they at once agreed, as by common consent, to excuse themselves from coming.

The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, or a field, and I must needs go and see it: he ought to have seen it before he bought it; and however, it was a very improper time, at evening, at supper time, as this was, to go and see a piece of ground; and at least it might have been put off till next morning; so that it was a mere excuse indeed.

I pray thee have me excused: coming to the supper: these were the principal men among the Jews, the Pharisees and rulers among the people; who were rich and covetous, worldly men; seeking their own worldly advantage more than their spiritual and eternal welfare, or the interest of God and religion.

Ver. 19. *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen,* etc.] To plough the field with,

and I go to prove them: this also being at, or near evening, was an unsuitable time to go into the field with yokes of oxen to try them, how they would draw the plough, and work in the field; the morning would have been a much more proper time:

I pray thee have me excused; to the master of the feast: this man represents also the carnal and worldly Jews, who preferred temporal things before spiritual.

Ver. 20. *And another said, I have married a wife,* etc.] And his pretence might be, that he had his own marriage feast, and friends to attend, nor could he leave his wife directly; but his circumstances were such as made an invitation to a feast the more agreeable, and he might have brought his wife and friends along with him, who would have been as welcome as himself:

and therefore I cannot come. The Arabic version renders it, “therefore I will not go”: this man is more rustic and rude than the former; he does not so much as desire to be excused; and represents such who are fond of their sensual lusts and pleasures, and are resolved to indulge them, and will not be taken off from them by any means whatever.

Ver. 21. *So that servant came and showed his Lord these things*, etc.] The several excuses which those that were bidden to the supper made. So the ministers of the Gospel come to God and Christ, and give an account of the success of their ministry, which is often with grief, and not with joy:

then the master of the house being angry; as well he might, at their ingratitude to him, their slighting of his kindness, and the contempt they poured upon his entertainment. Christ resented the impenitence and unbelief of the Jews, who were favoured with his ministry and miracles; and looked upon them with anger, and was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts; and threatened them with a sorer punishment, more aggravated condemnation, and more intolerable torments, than other men.

And said to his servants; the apostle, when their commission was enlarged to preach to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem:

go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city; to the Jews, who lived under a civil government, under the law of Moses; though the meaner sort of them, the poor, and such as knew not the law in such sort as the Scribes and Pharisees did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves; and so are comparable to persons that lie about the streets, and live in lanes and alleys: and, it may also regard the Jews that were scattered abroad in other places, and the proselytes to their religion among the Gentiles; to whom the Gospel was first preached, after it was rejected by the Jews at Jerusalem and in Judea:

and bring in hither the poor; not in a literal, but in a mystical and spiritual sense; such as have no spiritual food to eat, but ashes, gravel, wind, and husks of carnal lusts and sins; nor any spiritual clothing, no righteousness, but what may be justly called filthy rags; nor money to buy either, but are in debt, owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay; of which spiritual poverty some are sensible, and others are not.

And the maimed; who are debilitated and enfeebled by sin; and so weak and strengthless, that they are not able to keep the law of God; to atone for sin; to redeem themselves, or others, from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; to begin and carry on a work of grace and holiness in them; or to do any thing that is spiritually good:

and the halt; which is sometimes a character of persons that are in suspense about matters in religion, and know not which side to take; or

who halt in religion, and falter and fail in the exercise of it: but here, of such who are in an incapacity of going or walking in a spiritual sense; as unto Christ, for life and salvation, without the drawings and influences of the Father's grace:

the blind: who are so, as to any saving knowledge of God in Christ; of Christ, and the way of righteousness, life, and salvation by him; of the plague of their own hearts, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the need of a Saviour; of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, and the necessity of it; and of the truths of the Gospel, in a spiritual and experimental way. In short, under these characters are represented natural and unconverted men, and the most vile, profligate, and abandoned of them; which are sometimes under the power of divine grace accompanying the ministration of the Gospel brought to Christ, and into his church. So the “blind and the lame”, in (~~1086~~2 Samuel 5:6,8) are by the Targum on the place, explained of, *ayybyj w ayyaj j* , “sinners and wicked persons”.

Ver. 22. *And the servant said*, etc.] After he had been and brought in a large number of such as are before described, and he was directed to, and succeeded to the gathering of them in:

Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded; the apostles exactly observed the orders of their Lord and master; they began to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem; and being drove from thence, they went and preached to the Jews of the dispersion, and to the proselytes among the Gentiles:

and yet there is room; that is, for the Gentiles, after God's elect, among the Jews, for that time were gathered in: there was room provided for them in the heart and love of God from everlasting, and in electing grace; in the suretyship engagements of Christ, in the covenant of his grace; and they had a place in the redeeming grace of Christ, in time; and in the last commission he gave to his disciples; and there was now room for them in the church of God; and will be in the new Jerusalem, and in the heavenly glory.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto the servant*, etc.] A second time; that since the Jews put away the word of eternal life from them, and judged themselves unworthy of it by their contradicting and blaspheming it, he commanded his apostles to turn from them to the Gentiles; (see ~~4135~~Acts 13:45-47),

go out into the highways and hedges: the Persic version adds, “of the vineyards”; (see ^{<3302>}1 Chronicles 4:23) and may in general design the mean, base, vile, and sinful state of the Gentiles; who might be said to be “in the highways”, because they were without the commonwealth and church of the Jews; were not admitted to civil conversation, nor to religious worship with them; and were left to walk on in their own ways, of their own devising and choosing, in which they delighted: they were not in God's highway, which is a way of holiness, (^{<2388>}Isaiah 35:8) but in their own highways; either following the various sects of the philosophers, which were vain and foolish; or going into different practices of idolatry, and walking in very sinful and vicious courses; and so were in the broad road and highway to destruction: and their being in, and under “the hedges”, may denote their state of separation from God; being without him, alienated from the life of him, and afar off from him; being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, (^{<4022>}Ephesians 2:12) they were not in the gardens and enclosures, but under the hedges:

and compel them to come in; to the house of God, and church of Christ; to come and hear the word, and quit their former course of living, and attend the word and worship of God; and upon an evidence of the truth of grace upon their souls, to come into a Gospel church state, and partake of all privileges and ordinances in it; to which they are to be compelled, not by outward force, but by forcible words, by powerful arguments, and by the strength of persuasion; which expresses the nature of the Gospel ministry, which is to persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem; and the power that attends it by the divine Spirit; the case and condition of souls, who are generally bashful and backward, judging themselves unworthy; as also the earnest desire, and great liberality of Christ, the master of the feast, whose end in it is as follows:

that my house may be filled; with men, like a flock, and these with gifts and grace; with such as shall be saved, as with elect Jews, so with the fulness of the Gentiles.

Ver. 24. *For I say unto you*, etc.] Most solemnly affirm it, and even swear to it, nothing is more certain, or will be found more true:

that none of those men that were bidden: the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and the greater part of the nation; who

first had the Gospel published to them, who are the many that were called, though few were chosen, and therefore came not; nor did, nor

shall taste of my supper: nor had they so much as a superficial knowledge of the Gospel, of the truths, blessings, promises, and ordinances of it; being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and from whom, in a little while, the Gospel was wholly taken; and is not yet afforded to them as a body; nor will till the latter day, when the veil shall be taken away, and they shall turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; but as for the first disbelievers and rejecters of Christ among the Jews, they died in their sins, and perished eternally.

Ver. 25. *And there went great multitudes with him*, etc.] From Galilee, as he journeyed from thence to Jerusalem; some for one thing, and some another, and all perhaps were in expectation of his setting up a temporal kingdom when he came there; and hoped they should share, more or less, the worldly advantages of it; for the whole nation was big with such carnal notions of the Messiah. Jesus therefore, to draw off their minds from such views, and that they might not be disappointed, acquaints them, that if they would be his disciples, they must part with all that was near and dear to them; and prepare to suffer great hardships and difficulties for his name's sake: for it follows,

and he turned; himself to the company that was behind: and said unto them; with a grave and stern countenance, looking wistly at them, and in the most solemn manner delivered what is hereafter related.

Ver. 26. *If any man come to me*, etc.] Not in a corporeal, but in a spiritual way; nor barely to hear him preach; but so come, as that he believes in him, applies to him for grace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; professes to be his, submits to his ordinances, and desires to be a disciple of his;

and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple: not that proper hatred of any, or all of these, is enjoined by Christ; for this would be contrary to the laws of God, to the first principles of nature, to all humanity, to the light of nature, to reason and divine revelation: but that these are not to be preferred to Christ, or loved more than he, as it is explained in (⁴⁰⁰⁷Matthew 10:37) yea, these are to be neglected and forsaken, and turned from with indignation and resentment, when they

stand in the way of the honour and interest of Christ, and dissuade from his service: such who would be accounted the disciples of Christ, should be ready to part with their dearest relations and friends, with the greatest enjoyment of life, and with life itself, when Christ calls for it; or otherwise they are not worthy to be called his disciples. The Ethiopic version inserts, “his house”, into the account.

Ver. 27. *Whosoever doth not bear his cross*, etc.] All reproach, afflictions, persecutions, and death itself, cheerfully and patiently; the Ethiopic version renders it, “of his death the cross”; it signifies whatever is trying and disagreeable to flesh and blood:

and come after me; bearing his cross; as Christ himself was about to do, and which doubtless he had in view;

cannot be my disciple; he is not so in reality, nor does he deserve the name.

Ver. 28. *For which of you intending to build a tower*, etc.] Taking up a profession of Christ and his Gospel, is like building a tower; which, as a tower, must be laid on a good foundation; not on carnal descent and parentage; nor on a sober and religious education; nor on a civil, moral life and conversation; nor on a bare knowledge of Gospel truths and a flash of affection for them, and the people of God; but upon Christ the sure foundation; and on principles of grace formed by his Spirit, in their hearts: and this, like a tower, is carried very high; not by professing high things, but by living on high amidst a profession; by having the affections set on things above; and by looking down with contempt on things below; and by looking to, and pressing after, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ: the profession of some persons is very low; it arises from low principles, and proceeds on low views, aims, and ends; but where it is right, and well founded, it is like a tower, firm and steady, and is a fortress and bulwark against apostacy. Now what person acting deliberately in such a case as this, and proceeding with intention and design,

sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? as every wise man would, who has any thoughts of building a tower, or any other edifice: and so such that have an intention to take up a profession of religion, should sit down and well consider of it; which does not imply, that persons should delay making a profession, on whom it is incumbent; but that this should be done with thoughtfulness, care, and

prudence: it should be considered on what foundation a man is going to build: whether the work of grace is truly wrought upon his soul; what be the nature and use of Gospel ordinances; with what views he takes up a profession, and submits to ordinances; what the church and minister are, he intends to walk with; and what the charge and cost of a profession; for such a work is chargeable and costly, and should be thought of and considered, whether he is able to bear it: for he will be called to self-denial; and must expect to suffer the loss of the favour of carnal relations and friends; and to be exposed to the scorn and rage of the world; a cross must be took up and bore; and great grace and strength are requisite to all this.

Ver. 29. *Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation*, etc.] Has begun to build, has taken up a profession, has submitted to ordinances, and got into a church state:

and is not able to finish it; a foundation may be laid, and the building may never be finished, because the foundation is not laid right; was it, it would continue, and the building go on, and at last be finished; though no man is able to finish it of himself, yet those hands which have laid the foundation, will raise up the superstructure, and complete the whole building, through the power and efficacy of divine grace: but where there is a beginning, and which at first looks well, and there is no progress, but the work is dropped and left unfinished,

all that behold it, begin to mock; as follows;

Ver. 30. *Saying, this man began to build*, etc.] He set out well, he promised great things, and made a considerable bluster and stir, as if he would carry things at once to a very high pitch:

and was not able to finish; it was all noise and talk, and nothing else: falling off from a profession of religion, exposes men to contempt and scorn; such are not only cast out of churches with disgrace, but are despised by men, by wicked men; and are a reproach, a proverb, and a taunt in all places; and even are mocked by devils too.

Ver. 31. *Or what king going to make war against another king*, etc.] Our Lord illustrates the same thing, the business of a profession, by another similitude, or parable; taking up a profession of religion, is like to two kings engaging in a war. The king on the one side, is the Christian professor; true believers are kings, they have the apparel of kings, the royal robe of Christ's righteousness; they live like kings, at the table of the King

of kings; have the attendance of kings, angels ministering unto them; have crowns and thrones as kings have, and greater than theirs; and have a kingdom of grace now, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory. The king on the other side, is the devil; who is the king and prince of the rest of the devils, and over the men of the world; a kingdom is ascribed to him, which is a kingdom of darkness; and he is said to be a great king, and is represented as proud, cruel, and tyrannical: now the Christian professor's life is a warfare; he is engaged with many enemies; the corruptions of his own heart within, and the world without; and especially Satan, who is to be resisted, and by no means to be yielded to, though there is a great inequality between them: and therefore what man that engages in such a warfare,

sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? and such a difference there is between the Christian professor and the devil; the one is flesh and blood, the other a spirit; the one is raw and undisciplined, the other a veteran soldier; the one a stripling, and the other the strong man armed: their numbers are unequal; the people of Christ are few, and their force and strength in themselves small; and they have a large number of devils, and of the men of the world, and of the lusts of their own hearts, to grapple with; wherefore it is necessary to sit down and consult, not with flesh and blood, but with other Christians; and chiefly, and above all, with God himself; what will be the charges of this warfare; the hardships to be endured; in whose name and strength they are to engage; what weapons to take, and how to use them; and how to get knowledge of the designs, methods, and strength of the enemy, and take every advantage of him.

Ver. 32. *Or else, while the other is a great way off,* etc.] Upon his march, with resolution to come up and give battle, though as yet at a distance:

he sendeth an ambassage; or men, with an embassy to him:

and desireth conditions of peace; greatly to his disadvantage and reproach: so to give out, and leave off fighting with sin, Satan, and the world, and make peace with them, is shameful and scandalous; but on the other hand, such who have engaged in this war, should pursue it with rigour and courage; considering that God is on their side; that Christ is the captain of their salvation; that the Spirit of God that is in them, is greater than he that is in the world; that angels encamp around them; that it is a good cause they are engaged in; that they have good weapons, the whole armour of

God provided for them; are sure of victory, and shall at last enjoy the crown of life, righteousness and glory.

Ver. 33. *So likewise whosoever he be of you*, etc.] Let him be ever so forward to follow me, to make a profession of me and of my Gospel, and to become a disciple of mine:

that forsaketh not all that he hath; when called to it, relations, friends, possessions, estates, and what not, which is an explanation of (^{<4146>}Luke 14:26)

he cannot be my disciple; he is not in fact one, and is not worthy to be called one.

Ver. 34. *Salt is good*, etc.] (See Gill on "^{<4153>}Matthew 5:13"), (see Gill on "^{<4110>}Mark 10:50").

Ver. 35. *It is neither fit for the land*, etc.] For the manuring of it, when it has lost its savour and spirit; otherwise it makes land fruitful, if too much is not used, and especially fixed salts have this use; though Pliny says ^{f446},

“every place in which salt is found, it is barren and brings forth nothing.”

Nor yet for the dunghill; to mix with dung, and help it, that it may be the more serviceable for the earth; and just such useless things, are a mere external profession of religion, and professors of it, and ministers of the word, without the grace of God; they are of no use, but hurtful to the church, and to the world; these phrases are left out in the Persic and Ethiopic versions:

but men cast it out; into the streets, as entirely useless: and so such graceless professors and ministers, are to be cast out of the churches of Christ now, and will be excluded the kingdom of heaven hereafter:

he that hath ears to hear, let him hear; this being a point of great importance and consequence; (see Gill on "^{<4115>}Matthew 11:15").