

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 6

**Ver. 1.** *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men*, etc.] Some copies read, “take heed that ye do not your righteousness”, etc. which is a very good reading: but then, by “righteousness”, is not meant righteousness, as comprehending all other righteous acts, as particularly alms, prayer, and fasting, hereafter mentioned; but alms only; nothing being more common with the Jews than to call alms **hqdx**, “righteousness”: and whatever word Matthew made use of, there is no doubt to be made of it, but this was the word Christ used. Now alms was so called, because it is a righteous action, which ought to be performed; and to withhold from the poor what is meet, is to deal unrighteously: hence we read of the “mammon of unrighteousness”; by which is meant, not money unrighteously got, but that which is unrighteously kept from the poor: also it might be so called, because the Jews very much placed their justifying righteousness before God in the performance of it: let us first see how, according to them, it was to be done, and then what confidence they placed in it, and how much they made use of it. The account Maimonides<sup>f371</sup> gives is as follows, who observes: that

“we are bound to take heed to the commandment of alms more than all the affirmative commands; because alms is a sign of a “righteous” man, the seed of Abraham our father; as it is said, in (<sup>-01819-</sup>Genesis 18:19). Nor is the throne of Israel established, nor can the law of truth stand, but by alms; as it is said, (<sup>-21619-</sup>Proverbs 16:19). Nor shall Israel be redeemed, but by alms, according to (<sup>-23027-</sup>Isaiah 1:27). There are (says he) eight degrees in giving alms, the one above another; the highest, than which there is none higher, is this; when one relieves an Israelite, and gives him a gift, or lends to him, or takes him into partnership, or finds him work, so that he strengthens his hands before he stands in need of asking; and of this it is said, and “thou shalt relieve him, a stranger and a sojourner, that he may live with thee”: which is as much as to say, relieve him before he falls, and is brought to necessity. The next to this is, when

a man gives alms to the poor, and he knows not to whom he gives; nor does the poor man know of whom he receives; for, behold, this is doing it for the sake of it; as the chamber of secrets, which was in the sanctuary, into which righteous men privately put, and the poor children of good men were privately supported: and the next to this is, when a man puts into the alms chest: and a man does not put into the alms chest except he knows that the governor is faithful and wise, and knows how to manage as should be; such an one as R. Chananiah ben Tradion. The next to this is, when the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor man does not know from whom he receives; as the great ones of the wise men, who used to go secretly, and cast their money at the doors of the poor; and this is right to do, and a good method it is when the governors of alms do not dispose aright. The next to this is, when the poor man knows of whom he takes, but does not know the giver; as the great men among the wise men, who used to bind up their money in linen cloths, and put them behind them, and the poor came and took them, that they might not be ashamed. The next to this is, when a man puts it into his hands before he asks. The next to this is, when he gives to him after he has asked. The next to this is, when he gives to him less than is proper, with a pleasant countenance. The next to this is, when he gives with grief.”

Now this work, or duty, they magnify at a very great rate: not content to say <sup>f372</sup>, that

“he that does alms, does that which is more excellent than all offerings;”

they further affirm <sup>f373</sup>, that

“giving of alms and beneficence *hl wk hrwth dgnk*, “are equal to the whole law”;

or, it is all one as if a man performed the whole law. Moreover, they give <sup>f374</sup> out,

“that whoever takes of his goods, and does alms with them, he shall be delivered from the “damnation of hell”.”

Yea, they reckon that this gives a right and title to eternal life <sup>f375</sup>.

“He that says, let this “sela”, or “shekel”, be for alms, that his children may live, and that he may be worthy of the life of the world to come, lo! this is **rwmg qydx**, “a perfect righteous man”.”

Or, as elsewhere <sup>f376</sup> expressed,

“let this sela be for alms, that my son may live, and that he may be a son of the world to come; lo! this is a perfect righteous man.”

Thus, you see, they looked upon it as their righteousness; and what made them heirs of heaven, and gave them a title to eternal glory. Now our Lord advises them to take heed, as what would be of bad consequence, and very detrimental to them, that they did not their alms before men,

*to be seen of them*; not but alms may be lawfully done before, or in the sight of men, and a good end may be answered by it; namely, to stir up others to acts of liberality; but then this must not be done with this view, to be seen of men, in order to gain their applause, and a good name among them,

*otherwise, ye have no reward of your Father, which is in heaven*. You expect a reward, and a very great one, for your alms; but if you do them only to raise your credit, and gain esteem among men, you have your reward already with men: nor must you expect any from God, since you seek not his glory, but your own. When a man’s self, and not the glory of God, is the chief end of any action, that cannot be called a good work, nor will it have any reward; whereas a good work, which springs from a principle of grace, and is directed to the glory of God, will have a reward, not of debt, but of grace, from whence it arises.

**Ver. 2.** *Wherefore, when thou dost thine alms*, etc.] Christ proceeds to give some directions and cautions about giving of alms, that they might be done aright, and answer some valuable purposes for the glory of God, the good of others, and their own:

*do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men*. The persons Christ has reference to were the Scribes and Pharisees, who did all they did to be seen of men; whom he calls “hypocrites”; as he often does, because they put on an appearance of religion and holiness, but inwardly, and otherwise, were very wicked men. It does not appear that any such practice was literally performed, as blowing a trumpet before them, when

they gave their alms; though the collectors of alms did, by some means, publicly notify to the people when they were about that service: for one of their rules is <sup>f377</sup>,

“the collectors of alms do not proclaim on a feast, as they proclaim on a common day; but they collected h[nyxb, “privately”, and put it into their bosom, and distributed it to everyone by himself.”

Wherefore this must be understood proverbially; and the sense is, that when they did their alms, they chose public places for it, such as the “synagogues”, where was a large concourse of people met together for religious worship; or the open “streets” of the city, where people were continually walking to and fro, so that nothing could be done in this way, but what must be seen and observed: and moreover, they took care, either by themselves, or others, to proclaim their good actions, that they might “have glory of men”; not only of the poor, or the collectors for them, but of the spectators. R. Aben Ezra <sup>f378</sup> says, that

“a man that gives alms to the poor, must not give it because of the glory of the collector, i.e. that he may have glory of him; nor that the children of men may praise him.”

But his ancestors were of another mind: but what did they get by it?

*verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; and a poor one it is, the applause of men: however, it is what they seek after, and is all their empty performances deserve, and all they will have.

“He that glories in anything done by himself, wrkç ta l j wn awh, “he takes”, or receives “his reward” <sup>f379</sup>; for as for any reward from God, they will have none;”

in this sense, as the Ethiopic version reads it, “they have lost their reward”: and, as a learned critic has thought, is the sense of the Greek word, “they forbid”, or “hinder their reward”. By seeking the glory of men, they lay impediments in the way of receiving honour from God.

**Ver. 3.** *But when thou dost alms*, etc.] Do it so privately, and with so much secrecy, that, if it was possible, thou mightest not know it thyself, much less make it known to others:

*let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth*; acquaint not thy nearest and dearest friend with it; let not one that sits at thy left hand know

what thou art doing with thy right hand; it is a proverbial and hyperbolic phrase, expressing the secrecy of the action. It is a Jewish canon<sup>f380</sup>, that

“he that gives a gift to his friend out of love, may make it known, **hqdx b al l ba**, “but not if it be by way of alms.”

**Ver. 4.** *That thine alms may be in secret*, etc.] May be done in secret, and be kept a secret. The allusion seems to be to the secret chamber, where money was brought privately for the relief of the poor.

“There were two chambers in the sanctuary, the one was **μyαc j tkçl**, “the chamber of secrets”, and the other the chamber of vessels: the chamber of secrets was that into which pious persons put **yaçj b**, “in secret”, and the poor children of good men were maintained out of it privately<sup>f381</sup>.”

The Jews say many things in favour of doing alms privately.

“Greater, (say they<sup>f382</sup>), is he that gives alms **r t s b**, in secret, than Moses our master.”

They tell us<sup>f383</sup>, that

“R. Jannai seeing a certain man give Zuz (a piece of money) to a poor man publicly, said unto him, it would have been better, if thou hadst not have given him anything, than to have given him in this manner.”

This was the practice of the ancient religious Jews, to give their alms privately; but the Scribes and Pharisees had brought that practice into disuse, and which our Lord labours to restore; adding, for encouragement,

*and thy Father, which seeth in secret*; beholds all secret actions, and knows the secret springs of actions,

*himself shall reward thee openly*; in the great day of account, before angels and men, when all secret things shall be brought to light, and every good man have praise of God. This duty, of giving alms to the poor, is mentioned by Christ before prayer to God; it may be for this reason, because it was usual to give alms before prayer.

“The great, or famous men, among the wise men, used to give a Prutah (a small piece of money) to a poor man before every prayer,

and after that they prayed; as it is said, “I shall behold thy face in righteousness”<sup>f384</sup>.”

**Ver. 5.** *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites, etc.]* As the Scribes and Pharisees; whose posture in prayer, the places they chose to pray in, and the view they had therein, are particularly taken notice of:

*for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.* It was their usual custom to pray “standing”; nay, it is established by their canons.

“There are eight things, (says Maimonides<sup>f385</sup>), that a man that prays ought to take heed to do; and the first he mentions is “standing”; for, says he, no man may pray **dmy[m al a**, “but standing”; if he is sitting in a ship, or in a cart, if he can stand, he must stand; if not, he may sit in his place and pray.”

Several hints of this custom there are in the Misna<sup>f386</sup>.

“On their fast days they used to bring out the ark into the streets — **hl ptb wdm[**, “and they stood in prayer”, or praying; and caused an old man to go down before the ark, who was used to recite prayers, and he said them.”

Again<sup>f387</sup>,

“whoever **hl ptb dmw[**, “stood praying”, and remembered that any uncleanness attended him, he might not break off, but he might shorten.”

Yea, standing itself is interpreted of praying; for it is said<sup>f388</sup>,

“and Abraham rose up early in the morning to the place, where he stood, **hdym[b al a hl pt ^yaw**, “and there is no prayer but standing”;

though sometimes they prayed sitting, as David did, (<sup><1078></sup>2 Samuel 7:18) so it is said of R. Jose, and R. Eleazar, that **yl xw wbtv**, “they sat and prayed”, and afterwards rose up and went on their way<sup>f389</sup>. So it was likewise customary to go to the synagogues, and there pray; and indeed they were places built and appointed for this purpose.

“Wherever there were ten Israelites, a house ought to be provided, in which they may go to prayer at every time of prayer; and this place is called a synagogue<sup>f390</sup>.”

Hence some have thought, that not such places are here designed, but any assembly, or concourse of people gathered together upon any occasion; but such an interpretation will find no place, when the following things are observed.

“For ever let a man go, morning and evening, to the synagogue; for no prayer is heard at any time, but in the synagogue; and everyone that hath a synagogue in his city, and does not pray in it with the congregation, is called a bad neighbour<sup>f391</sup>.”

Again<sup>f392</sup>,

“he that prays in the house of the Lord, is as if he offered up a pure offering.”

Now, partly on account of the publicness of the place, and partly because they thought their prayers were only heard there, therefore they chose to pray in the synagogues; and also in

*the corners of the streets*, where two streets met, and they might be the more easily seen. This was also a common thing to pray in the streets:

“says R. Jochanan, I saw R. Jannai stand and pray in the streets of Tzipore<sup>f393</sup>.”

And a little after, it is said of another, that he stood and prayed *ayj rsab*, “in the streets”; though such places were not reckoned holy, as the synagogues were.

“The street of a city, (says Maimonides<sup>f394</sup>), although the people pray in it at fasts and stations, because that there is a great collection of people, and the synagogues cannot hold them, has no holiness in it, because it is accidental, and not appointed for prayer.”

Wherefore streets were only used in case of necessity, or by such of the Pharisees, who chose to be seen of men. A reason is given for this practice in another place<sup>f395</sup>, where it is asked,

“why do they go out to the streets, i.e. on their fast days? to show that we are reckoned as if we were carried captive before thee: says Joshua ben Levi, because they prayed in “secret”, and were not answered; therefore they went without, *wmsrptyw*, “that they might be made public”.

Now let it be observed, that neither the posture, nor places of prayer, are condemned by our Lord, but their view in all to

*be seen of men*; and a considerable emphasis lies upon the word “love”; they loved “standing” in prayer, rather than any other posture, because they could be better seen; and they loved to be in the synagogues and streets, rather than in their closets; they liked public better than private prayer, because it gained them applause among men.

*Verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; they gain their point; they have what they seek for; and this is all they will have.

**Ver. 6.** *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet*, etc.] Or “chamber”, a secret place, fit for private retirement, meditation, and prayer.

*And when thou hast shut thy door*; see some such like phrases in (<sup>2330</sup>Isaiah 26:20) where they are used to express security, here secrecy. Our Lord does not mean to exclude and condemn public prayer, in joining with few, or more persons, in such service; for he himself directs to it, and approves of it, (<sup>4189</sup>Matthew 18:19,20) but his view is to instruct persons that they should not only pray in public, but in private also; and especially the latter, which is more suitable and fitting for their particular cases, and less liable to pride, hypocrisy, and vanity.

*Pray to thy Father, which is in secret*; who is invisible; not to be seen with the eyes of the body, but to be approached with a true heart, in faith and fear, through his Son Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man; and who is the image of the invisible God, and in whom he is pleased to manifest himself to his people, so as he does not unto the world:

*and thy Father, which seeth in secret*, observes and takes notice of the secret breathings, pantings, desires, and requests of thy heart and lips,

*shall reward thee openly*, both here and hereafter; by pouring into thy bosom all the good things thou hast been praying for, both for time and eternity. This is agreeable to what the Jews sometimes say,



“that a man ought not to cause his voice to be heard in prayer; but should pray **çj l b**, “silently”, with a voice that is not heard; and this is the prayer which is daily accepted <sup>f396</sup>.”

**Ver. 7.** *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions*, etc.] Saying the same things over and over again,

*as the Heathens do*, as the worshippers of Baal, from morning till noon, (~~<11826>~~ 1 Kings 18:26). This our Lord observes, to dissuade from such practices, because the Gentiles, who were odious to the Jews, used them, and the Jews were guilty of the same; had they not, there would not have been any need of such advice:

*for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking*; as did the Jews, who, under pretence of “long prayers”, devoured widows’ houses; and with whom it is an axiom, that “everyone **hn[n hl yptb hbrmh**, that multiplies prayer is heard” <sup>f397</sup>; and whoever prolongs his prayer, his prayer does not return empty; and he that is long in prayer, his days are prolonged <sup>f398</sup>: and, according to their canons, every day a man ought to pray eighteen prayers. Moreover, their prayer books abound in tautologies, and in expressing the same things in different words, and by a multiplicity of them.

**Ver. 8.** *Be not ye therefore like unto them*, etc.]. Do not be imitators of them, and follow their ways, who have only the dim light of nature to guide them; it would be shameful in you to do as they do, when you have a divine revelation for your direction; and especially, because

*your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*; and therefore have no need to make use of many words, or much speaking, or long prayers. The omniscience of God is a considerable argument, and a great encouragement to prayer; he knows our persons and our wants before hand; and as he is able to help us, we have reason to believe he will; especially since he stands in the relation of a Father to us.

**Ver. 9.** *After this manner therefore pray ye*, etc.]. That is, in such a concise and short way, without much speaking and vain repetitions; making use of such like words and expressions as the following: not that Christ meant to pin down his disciples to these express words, and no other; for this prayer is not a strict form, but a pattern of prayer, and a directory to it, both as to brevity, order, and matter; for we do not find the disciples ever making use

of it in form; and when it is recited by another Evangelist, it is not in the selfsame words as here; which it would have been, had it been designed as an exact form. Besides, Christ does not bid them pray in these very words, but “after this manner”; somewhat like this: not but that it is very lawful to use the very express words of this prayer in any of the petitions here directed to; and which indeed were no other than what good people among the Jews did frequently make use of; and which were collected and singled out by Christ, as what he approved of, in distinction from, and opposition to, other impertinent expressions, and vain repetitions, which some used; as will appear by a particular consideration of them.

*Our Father which art in heaven.* This may be looked upon as the preface and introduction to the prayer, and regards the object of it, and his character, which is an epithet of God, often to be met with in Jewish writings, and particularly in their prayers; for thus they <sup>f399</sup> say,

“**μῦμϙβϙ ῥνῑβα**, “our Father which art in heaven”, show mercy  
“to us, because thy great name is called upon us.”

Again <sup>f400</sup>, let the prayers and the requests of all Israel be received by **αῦμϙβ ῑδ ᾠῥῡβα**, “their Father, which is in heaven”. They seem to have a regard to this prayer, when they apply that passage in (~~2085~~ Proverbs 3:35) “shame shall be the promotion of fools”, to the nations of the earth, who, they say <sup>f401</sup>,

“do not consider the glory of the law; and how, say they, “our Father which art in heaven”, hear our voice, have mercy on us, and receive our prayer?”

So in confessions, thanksgivings, and sacrifices of praise, they required, and looked upon it, as the main thing, for a man to direct his heart **μῦμϙβϙ ῡῑβαλ**, “to his Father which is in heaven” <sup>f402</sup>. By “father”, our Lord means the first person in the Trinity, who is the Father of all men by creation, and of the saints by adoption; who are to address him in prayer under the character of “our Father”, partly to command a reverential fear of him, and partly to secure boldness and liberty of speech before him; and also to express fiducial confidence in him, faith of interest in him, and relation to him; which arises from some experience of his paternal love, and requires the witnessings of the Spirit of adoption; and inasmuch as the direction is not to say “my Father”, but “our Father”; it shows that we

should pray for others as well as for ourselves, even for all the dear children of God. It is a rule<sup>f403</sup> with the Jews,

“that a man ought always to join himself in prayer with the church;”  
upon which the gloss says,

“let him not pray the short prayer  $\mu y b r \hat{w} \zeta l b a l a d j y \hat{w} \zeta l b$ , “in the singular, but in the plural number”, that so his prayer may be heard.”

The object of prayer is further described by the place of his residence, “in heaven”; not that he is included in any place, but that the heaven of heavens is the place where he most eminently displays his glory: and this may teach us to look upwards in prayer, and seek those things which are above; and also, that this earth, on which we dwell, is not our native country, but heaven is, where our Father dwells. Next follows the first petition,

*hallowed, or sanctified be thy name*; so the Jews<sup>f404</sup> in their prayers,

“ $\text{\AA} m \zeta \zeta d q t y$ , “let thy name be hallowed”, or “sanctified by us”, O Lord our God, before the eyes of all living.”

And very often<sup>f405</sup>,

“let his great name be magnified and sanctified in the world, which he hath created according to his will.”

And again<sup>f406</sup>,

“let us sanctify thy name in the world, as they sanctify it in the highest heavens.”

By the “name” of God is meant he himself, the perfections of his nature, and the several names by which he is known, and which we are to think and speak of with holy reverence. By sanctifying his name, is not meant a making him holy, but acknowledging, and declaring him to be holy, and a glorifying him, and all his perfections. He is sanctified by himself, by declaring himself to be holy; by glorifying his perfections in his works; by implanting grace and holiness in the hearts of his people; by restoring the purity of his worship; by diffusing the knowledge of himself in the world; and by taking vengeance on the wicked: and he is sanctified by others,

when they fear him, believe in him, call upon his name, use it reverently, submit to his will, acknowledge his mercies, regard his commands and ordinances, and live a holy life and conversation; all which is earnestly desired by truly gracious souls.

**Ver. 10.** *Thy kingdom come*, etc.] The form of expression used by the ancient Jews, relating to this article, before the coming of Christ, doubtless was, as it now stands in their prayers <sup>f407</sup>, *aby Æj yçm twkl m*, “the kingdom of thy Messiah come”. Christ alters the expression, leaves out the word “Messiah”, and puts it thus, “thy kingdom come”, to let them know that the Messiah was come; and that it was the kingdom of the Father, in the power of his grace, upon the souls of men, they must pray for and expect: however, he conformed to a rule of their’s in this, as well as in the former petition <sup>f408</sup>; that

“every blessing, or prayer, in which there is no *µçh trbz*, “mention made of the name”, i.e. of God, is no prayer; and that every prayer, in which there is not *twkl m*, “the kingdom”, is no prayer.”

In this petition the disciples were taught to pray for the success of the Gospel, both among Jews and Gentiles; for the conversion of God’s elect, in which the kingdom of God would greatly appear, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the abolition of the kingdom of the beast, in the latter day; which will usher in the kingdom, of the mediator, he will receive from his Father, and this will terminate in the kingdom of glory: in a word, not the kingdom of nature and providence is meant, which always was; but the kingdom of heaven, which was at hand, nay had taken place, though as yet was not very visible, and which is spiritual in the hearts of God’s people, Jews and Gentiles; and which will appear exceeding glorious in the latter day, and at last be swallowed up in the ultimate glory; all which must be very desirable by the sincere lovers of Jesus Christ.

*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* There is some appearance of this petition still remaining, in what the <sup>f409</sup> Jews call the short prayer:

“what is the short prayer? R. Eliezer says, *µymçb Ænwçr hç* [ , “do thy will in heaven”; and give quietness of spirit, or acquiescence of spirit in thy will, to them that fear thee below.”

Christ says “thy will”; not the will of wicked men, nor the will of Satan, nor a man’s own will, but the will of God: by which is meant either his secret will, which is the rule of all his proceedings both in providence and grace; is unknown to us, till facts make it appear; is always fulfilled in heaven and in earth; and sometimes is fulfilled by those who have no regard to his revealed will; and is what ought to be submitted to patiently, and without murmuring: or rather his revealed will, which consists partly in the declarations of his grace and mercy; as that salvation is by Christ, whoever believes in him shall be saved, that all the redeemed be sanctified, persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the commands enjoined his people, which will of his is good, perfect, and acceptable. The will of God may be said to be done by us, when our wills are resigned to his; when we patiently submit to every adverse dispensation of providence; when our hearts and actions are, in some measure, conformed to his law; when what is done, is done in faith, with a view to his glory, and without dependence upon it; of which such only are capable who have a spiritual understanding of the will of God, believe in Christ, receive grace and strength from him, and are assisted by his Spirit. These desire to do the will of God, as it is done in heaven; meaning not so much by the inanimate creatures, the sun, and moon, and stars, as glorified saints and holy angels, who do it voluntarily and cheerfully; speedily, and without delay; constantly, and without any interruption; and perfectly and completely.

**Ver. 11.** *Give us this day our daily bread.*] The Arabic version reads it, “our bread for tomorrow”; and Jerom says, that in the Hebrew Gospel, used by the Nazarenes, he found the word **r j m**, which signifies “tomorrow”: but this reading and sense seem to be contradicted by Christ, (<sup>406</sup>Matthew 6:34) were it not that it may be observed, that this signifies the whole subsequent time of life, and so furnishes us with a very commodious sense of this petition; which is, that God would give us, “day by day”, as Luke expresses it, (<sup>410</sup>Luke 11:3) that is, every day of our lives, to the end thereof, a proper supply of food: or the meaning of it is, that God would give us, for the present time, such food as we stand in need of; is suitable to us, to our nature and constitution, state and condition, and is sufficient and convenient for us: to which agrees the petition of the <sup>f410</sup> Jews:

“The necessities of thy people are great, and their knowledge short; let it be thy good will and pleasure, O Lord, our God, that thou

wouldst give to everyone **wtsnrp ydk**, “what is sufficient for his sustenance”, and to every one’s body what it wants.”

“Says R. Jose <sup>f411</sup>, all the children of faith seek “every day” **whynwzm al aql**, “to ask their food” of the Lord, and to pray a prayer for it.”

By “bread” is meant all the necessaries of life, and for the support of it: it is called “our’s”; not that we have a right unto it, much less deserve it, but to distinguish it from that of beasts; and because it is what we need, and cannot do without; what is appointed for us by providence, is our’s by gift, and possessed by labour. It is said to be “daily” bread, and to be asked for “day by day”; which suggests the uncertainty of life; strikes at all anxious and immoderate cares for the morrow; is designed to restrain from covetousness, and to keep up the duty of prayer, and constant dependence on God; whom we must every day ask to “give” us our daily bread: for he is the sole author of all our mercies; which are all his free gifts; we deserve nothing at his hands: wherefore we ought to be thankful for what we have, without murmuring at his providences, or envying at what he bestows on others. All kind of food, everything that is eatable, is with the Jews called **μj l**, “bread” <sup>f412</sup>.

**Ver. 12.** *And forgive us our debts*, etc.] Nothing is more frequent in the Jewish writings than to call sins **ybwj**, “debts”; and the phrase, of forgiving, is used both of God and men. Thus the prayer of Solomon is paraphrased <sup>f413</sup> by the Targumist:

“and hear thou the petition of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make before this place; and do thou receive it from the place of the house of thy Shekinah, from heaven; and do thou accept their prayer **whybwj l qbctw**, “and forgive their debts”.”

So Joseph’s brethren signify to him, that it was their father’s orders to say unto him, “forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin”; which is rendered by the Chaldee paraphrasts <sup>f414</sup> **ybwj l qwbq**, “forgive the debts” of thy brethren, and their sins. Accordingly, by “debts” are meant sins here, as appears from (<sup><210></sup>Luke 11:4) where it is read, “and forgive us our sin”. These are called “debts”; not because they are so in themselves, for then it would be right to do them; debts should be paid; they are not debts we owe to God, but are so called, because on account of

them we owe satisfaction to the law and justice of God: the proper debts we owe to God are love, obedience, and gratitude; and in default of these, we owe the debt of punishment. Now these debts are numerous, and we are incapable of paying, nor can any mere creature pay them for us; wherefore, we are directed to pray, that God would forgive them, or remit the obligation to punishment we lie under, on account of sin. This petition supposes a sense, acknowledgment, and confession of sin, and of inability to make satisfaction for it; and that God only can forgive it, who does, for Christ's sake, and on account of his blood, sacrifice, and satisfaction: what is here requested is a manifestation and application of pardon to the conscience of a sensible sinner; which, as it is daily needed, is daily to be asked for. The argument, or reason used, is,

*as we forgive our debtors*; which is to be understood not so much of pecuniary debtors, though they are to be forgiven, when poor and unable to pay; but of such who have offended, or done real injuries to others, either by word or deed: the injuries of enemies, the unkindness of friends, all sorts of offences, are to be forgiven by us; and not only so, but we are to pray to God to forgive them also. Now this is mentioned, not as if our forgiving others is the cause of God's forgiving us, or the model of it, or as setting him an example, or as if his and our forgiving were to be compared together, since these will admit of no comparison; but this is an argument founded upon God's own promise and grace, to forgive such who have compassion on their fellow creatures.

**Ver. 13.** *And lead us not into temptation*, etc.] Such a petition as this is often to be observed in the prayers of the Jews <sup>f415</sup>,

“*y*naybt l a, “do not lead me” neither into sin, nor into transgression and iniquity, *ˆwysn ydy l al w*, “nor into temptation”, or “into the hands of temptation”;

that is, into the power of it, so as to be overcome by it, and sink under it; in which sense the phrase is to be understood here. We are not here taught to pray against temptations at all, or in any sense, for they are sometimes needful and useful; but that they may not have the power over us, and destroy us. There are various sorts of temptations. There are the temptations of God; who may be said to tempt, not by infusing anything that is sinful, or by soliciting to it; but by enjoining things hard and disagreeable to nature, as in the case of Abraham; by afflicting, either in

body or estate, of which Job is an instance; by permitting and letting loose the reins to Satan, and a man's own corruptions; by withdrawing his presence, and withholding the communications of his grace; and sometimes by suffering false prophets to arise among his people: his ends in them are on his own account, the display of his power; grace, wisdom, and faithfulness; on account of his Son, that his saints might be like him, and he might have an opportunity of exercising his power and pity: and on his people's account, that they might be humbled; their faith and patience tried; might see their weakness, and need of Christ, and be excited to prayer and watchfulness. There are also the temptations of Satan; which lie in soliciting to evil, suggesting hard and blasphemous thoughts of God, and filling with doubts and fears; which are cunningly formed by him, and are very afflictive. There are moreover the temptations of the world, which arise from poverty and riches, from the men of the world, the lusts of it, and from both its frowns and flatteries: add to all this, that there are temptations arising from a man's own heart. Now, in this petition, the children of God pray, that they may be kept from every occasion and object of sinning; from those sins they are most inclined to; that God would not leave them to Satan, and their own corrupt hearts; nor suffer them to sink under the weight of temptations of any sort; but that, in the issue, they might have a way to escape, and be victorious over all.

*But deliver us from evil.* This petition, with the Jews, is in this <sup>f416</sup> form:

“[ r [gpm ynl yxtw, “but deliver me from an evil accident”, and diseases; and do not trouble me with evil dreams, and evil imaginations.”

R. Juda, after his prayer, or at the close of it, as is this petition, used <sup>f417</sup> to say;

“let it be thy good pleasure, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, wnl yxtç, “that thou wouldst deliver us” from impudent men, and impudence; from an “evil” man, and from an “evil” accident; from the “evil” imagination, i.e. the corruption of nature; from an “evil” companion; from an “evil” neighbour; and from Satan the destroyer; and from hard judgment; and from an hard adversary, whether he is the son of the covenant, or is not the son of the covenant.”



And most, if not all of these things, may be very well thought to be comprised in the word “evil” here: particularly Satan may be meant, by “evil”, or “the evil one”, as the word may be rendered; who is eminently, originally, and immutably evil; his whole work and employment is nothing else but evil: and to be delivered from him, is to be rescued out of his hands, preserved from his snares, and delivered from his temptations. Evil men may also be intended: all men are naturally evil, and unalterably so, without the grace of God; and some are notoriously wicked; from whose company, sinful lusts, and pleasures, to which they are addicted, as well as from their rage and persecution, good men cannot but desire deliverance; as also from the evil of afflictions, and especially from the evil of sin; as that they may be kept from the commission of it; have the guilt of it removed; be preserved from its power and dominion; and, at last, be freed from the very being of it.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.*

This conclusion is left out in the Arabic and Vulgate Latin versions, as it is in (ⲁⲓⲟⲩⲗ Luke 11:4). It stands thus in the Jewish prayers<sup>f418</sup>,

“ayh Æl ç twkl mh yk, “for the kingdom is thine”, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and ever.”

The usual response at the close of prayers, and reading the Shema, instead of “Amen”, was<sup>f419</sup> this:

“Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever.”

Which bears some resemblance to this concluding expression, which ascribes everlasting kingdom, power, and glory, to God: which may be considered either as a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, which is his due; and ought be given him in all our prayers to him; or as so many reasons strengthening our faith in prayer; or as many arguments with God, with respect to the petitions made; since the kingdom of nature, providence, grace, and glory, is his: he is omnipotent, he has power to give us our daily bread; to forgive our sins; to preserve from, support under, and deliver out of temptation; to keep from all evil, and preserve from a total and final falling away: whose glory is concerned in all, to whom the glory of all is, and to whom it must, and shall be given; and all this for ever: and the whole is concluded with the word “Amen”; which is a note of asseveration, of the truth herein contained; is added by way of assent to

every petition made; is expressive of an hearty wish, and desire to have all fulfilled; and also of faith and confidence, that they will be answered. And this word being retained, and kept the same in all languages, signifies the unity of the spirit, and faith in prayer, in all the saints, in all ages. I leave this prayer with one observation, and that is, whereas it has been so long, and so often said, that this is the Lord's prayer, it can never be proved that he ever made use of it; and it is certain that he did not make it, as appears from what has been cited out of the Jewish records: the several petitions in it were in being and use before he directed to them; and not only the petitions, but even the very preface and conclusion, are manifestly of Jewish original: what our Lord did was, he took the most proper and pertinent petitions, that had been used by good men among that people; which, with some alterations much for the better, he put together in this order, and gave his approbation of; and that with this view, to point out to his disciples some of the best and most suitable petitions to be made; and to give them a pattern of brevity and conciseness in prayer; and teach them to pray after such a manner, or in some such like words and expressions. This I observe, not to lessen the usefulness of this excellent pattern of sound words; the whole, and every part of it, being exceedingly instructive, and worthy of imitation; but to rectify a vulgar mistake, and to abate the formal and superstitious observance of it.

**Ver. 14.** *For if ye forgive men their trespasses,* etc.] Christ here refers to the petition in (<sup>4062</sup>Matthew 6:12) which is enforced with this reason and argument, “as”, or “for”, so (<sup>4104</sup>Luke 11:4) “we forgive our debtors”; which he repeats and explains: and the reason why he singles out this particularly is, because he knew the Jews were a people very subject to revenge; and were very hardly brought to forgive any injuries done them: wherefore Christ presses it upon them closely to “forgive men their trespasses”; all sorts of injuries done them, or offences given them, whether by word or deed; and that fully, freely, from the heart; forgetting, as well as forgiving; not upbraiding them with former offences; and even without asking pardon, and though there might be no appearance of repentance. Now to this he encourages by saying,

*your heavenly Father will also forgive you;* will hear your prayers, and manifest his forgiving love to you: not that the forgiveness of others is the procuring cause of forgiveness with God, which is the blood of Christ; or of the manifestation and application of it, that is, the advocacy of Christ; nor the moving cause of it, that is, the free grace of God: but this enters

into the character, and is descriptive of the persons, to whom God is pleased to make a comfortable discovery, and give a delightful sense of his pardoning grace; such persons, so disposed and assisted by his grace, may expect it of him.

**Ver. 15.** *But if you forgive not men their trespasses*, etc.] On the other hand, where men are not of a forgiving temper to their fellow creatures and fellow Christians, how can they expect forgiveness at the hands of God? or what sense of pardoning grace can there be upon their minds? Had they any right apprehensions of the grace and goodness of God, in the forgiveness of their sins, this would influence their minds, and engage their hearts to forgive such who have offended them: wherefore, where this is wanting, it may be concluded of, and said to such persons,

*neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* It is a plain case, that your Father has not given you a true sense of the pardon of your sins, nor can you be certain that he will; nor have you any reason to expect it, when you are so cruel and revengeful to others. There is a considerable emphasis lies upon the word “men”, to which “heavenly Father” is opposed, and the sense, according to it, is, that if men, who are upon an equal foot with each other, should not forgive one another, how should it be expected that our Father which is in heaven, who is so much above, and no ways obliged to us, should forgive us?

**Ver. 16.** *Moreover when ye fast*, etc.] This is to be understood, not so much of their public stated fasts, and which were by divine appointment, as of their private fasts; which, with the Jews, were very frequent and numerous, and particularly every Monday and Thursday; (see CHRIST Luke 18:12) in which they affected great severity, and is here condemned by Christ:

*be not as the hypocrites*, the Scribes and Pharisees,

*of a sad countenance*; who put on very mournful airs, and dismal looks; made wry faces, and distorted countenances; banished all pleasantry and cheerfulness from them, so that they looked quite like other men than they really were;

*for they disfigure their faces*; not by covering them out of sight, by putting a veil over them, as some have thought; but they neglected to wash their faces, and make them clean, as at other times; and not only so, but put ashes upon their heads, and other methods they used: they discoloured

their faces, or “made” them “black”, as the Arabic version reads it; that they might look as if they became so through fasting: and such persons were in great esteem, and thought to be very religious. It is said <sup>f420</sup>, in commendation of R. Joshua ben Chanamah, that all his days **wynp wrj çwh**, “his face was black”, through fastings; and this is said <sup>f421</sup> to be the reason of Ashur’s name, in (<sup><134B></sup>1 Chronicles 4:5) because “his face was black” with fasting: yea, they looked upon such a disfiguring of the face to be meritorious, and what would be rewarded hereafter.

“Whoever (say they <sup>f422</sup>) **wynp ryj çmh**, “makes his face black”, on account of the law in this world, God will make his brightness to shine in the world to come.”

Now these practices they used,

*that they might appear unto men to fast*: so that either they did not really fast, when they pretended to it; only put on these outward appearances, that men might think they did; or, not content with real fasting, which they must be conscious of themselves, and God knew, they took such methods, that it might appear to men that they fasted, and that they might be taken notice of, and applauded by them: for their view in fasting was not to satisfy their own consciences, or please God, but that they might have glory of men. Hence, says Christ,

*verily I say unto you, they have their reward*; they obtain what they seek for, honour from men, and that is all they will have.

**Ver. 17.** *But thou, when thou fastest*, etc.] Christ allows of fasting, but what is of a quite different kind from that of the Jews; which lay not in an outward abstinence from food, and other conveniences of life, and refreshments of nature; but in an abstinence from sin, in acknowledgment and confession of it; and in the exercise of faith and hope in God, as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin; wherefore cheerfulness, and a free use of the creatures, without an abuse of them, best became such persons.

*Anoint thine head, and wash thy face*; directly contrary to the Jewish canons, which forbid these things, with others, on fast days:

“On the day of atonement, (say <sup>f423</sup> they,) a man is forbidden eating and drinking, **hkysbwhxyj rbw** “and washing and anointing”, and putting on of shoes, and the use of the bed.”

And the same were forbidden on other fasts: in anointings, the head was anointed first, and this rule and reason are given for it:

“he that would anoint his whole body, **hl yj t wçar Æs**, “let him anoint his head first”, because it is king over all its members <sup>f424</sup>.”

Anointing and washing were signs of cheerfulness and joy; (see <sup><ORR></sup>Ruth 3:3 <sup><OZD></sup>2 Samuel 12:20).

**Ver. 18.** *That thou appear not unto men to fast*, etc.] Which is just the reverse of the hypocrites, the Scribes and Pharisees; and quite contrary to the customs of the Jews, who when they fasted, particularly on their noted fasts <sup>f425</sup>,

“brought out the ark into the street of the city, and put burnt ashes upon it, and upon the head of the prince, and upon the head of the president of the sanhedrim, and every man upon his own head.”

All which was done, to be seen of men to fast; but Christ directs to such sorts of fasting, and which is to be done in such a manner, as only to be seen by God:

*but unto thy Father which is in secret*; who is invisible, and who sees what is done in secret, and takes notice of the internal exercise of grace; which he approves of, and prefers to outward fastings; and

*thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly*: and to have honour from God, is infinitely more than to have the applause of men; for as God delights in, so he will reward his own grace with glory.

**Ver. 19.** *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth*, etc.] Meaning either treasures that are of an earthly nature and kind, the more valuable and excellent things of the earth, worldly wealth and riches; or the things and places, in which these are laid up, as bags, chests, or coffers, barns and other treasuries, private or public. Christ here dissuades from covetousness, and worldly mindedness; an anxious care and concern, to hoard up plenty of worldly things for themselves, for time to come, making no use of them at present for the good of others: and this he does, from the

nature of the things themselves; the places where they are laid up; the difficulty of keeping them; and their liableness to be corrupted or lost.

*Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal.*

Garments, formerly, were a considerable part of the treasures of great men, as well as gold and silver; (see <sup><182716></sup>Job 27:16). So according to the <sup>f426</sup>Targumist, Haman is bid to go *akl md yzng tybl* , “to the king’s treasury”, and take from thence one of the purple garments, the best, and raiment of the best silk, etc. and these were liable to be eaten with the moth, (<sup><51812></sup>James 5:2). The word translated rust, does not here signify the rust of metals, as gold and silver; by which there is not so much damage done, so as to destroy them, and make them useless; but whatever corrupts and consumes things eatable, as blasting and mildew in corn, or any sort of vermin in granaries: for gold and silver, or money, with jewels and precious stones, which make a very great part of worldly treasure, seem to be more particularly designed, by what thieves break through into houses for, and carry away. So that here are three sorts of earthly treasures pointed at, which are liable to be corrupted, or taken away: garments, which may be destroyed, and rendered useless for wearing; provisions of things eatable, as all sorts of corn and grain, which may be so corrupted by smut and vermin, as not to be fit for use; and money and jewels, which may be stolen by thieves: so that no sort of worldly riches and treasure is safe, and to be depended on; and therefore it is a great folly and vanity to lay it up, and trust in it.

**Ver. 20.** *But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven*, etc.] That is, either be concerned for, and seek after heavenly treasure, the riches of glory, the joys and glories of another world, which infinitely excel everything that is valuable on earth; and which can never be corrupted, or taken away: or rather, lay up your earthly treasures in heaven; that is, put them into the hands of God in heaven; and this is done, by liberally communicating to the poor; by which means men “provide themselves bags which wax not old, and a treasure in heaven that faileth not”, (<sup><41233></sup>Luke 12:33). They shall never want any good thing here, and they “lay up in store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come”, (<sup><54168></sup>1 Timothy 6:18, 19). This is the way to have worldly treasure secured from moth, rust, and thieves; for to lay it up in heaven with God, to give it to him, to his poor, to make use of it for his glory, is to lay it up in a place,

*where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.* Treasures are safer here than in our own hands, and will turn to better account, and more to our own advantage, both in this life, and that which is to come: (see <sup><10921></sup>Matthew 19:21). In this way, though not for it, men come to have treasure in heaven, even the treasure of eternal life, glory, and happiness. Heaven is often represented by the Jewish writers as a treasury; and the treasures which are in it are said <sup>f427</sup> to be

“**μyyj yzng**, “treasures of life”, and treasures of peace, and treasures of blessing; and the souls of the righteous, and the spirits and souls that shall be created, and the dew with which God will quicken the dead.”

Those words in (<sup><6316></sup>Deuteronomy 31:16). “And the Lord said unto Moses, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers”, are thus <sup>f428</sup> paraphrased.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, lo! thou shalt sleep in the dust with thy fathers, and thy soul shall be treasured up **aml [ yyj yzngb**, “in the treasury of eternal life”, with thy fathers.”

They tell us <sup>f429</sup> of a story of Monbaz the king, who was son to queen Helena; in which are many things agreeable to these words of Christ, and which may serve to illustrate them.

“Monbaz the king stood and gave all his goods to the poor: his relations sent to him, and said, thy fathers added to that which was their’s, and to that which was their fathers; but thou hast given away that which was thine, and that which was thy father’s: he replied to them all thus: my fathers **μymçb ytzn y naw ðab wzng**, “laid up treasure on earth, but I have laid up treasure in heaven”, according to (<sup><10911></sup>Psalm 85:11). My fathers laid up treasures, which do not bring forth fruit; but I have laid up treasures, which bring forth fruit, according to (<sup><2180></sup>Isaiah 3:10). My fathers gathered in a place, where the hand, i.e. of man rules, (where thieves break through and steal,) but I have gathered in a place where the hand of man does not rule, according to (<sup><10972></sup>Psalm 97:2). My fathers gathered mammon, money, but I have gathered souls, according to (<sup><11130></sup>Proverbs 11:30). My fathers gathered for others, but I have gathered **ymx [ l** , for myself, according to (<sup><16113></sup>Deuteronomy

24:13). My fathers gathered in this world, but I have gathered “for the world to come”.”

One of their commentators <sup>f430</sup> on the phrase, “my fathers laid up treasures below”, as it is in the Babylonish Talmud <sup>f431</sup>, has this remark:

“for lo! all that they treasured up was for the necessaries of this world; which is **h[| wt hmr rp[ μwqm**, “a place of dust and vermin”, which corrupt and destroy everything; “but I have laid up treasures above”, a place secure and firm, and which preserves everything that is put into it.”

**Ver. 21.** *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*] This seems to be a proverbial expression, and contains in it another reason, dissuading from worldly mindedness; because of the danger the heart is in of being ensnared and ruined thereby: and the sense of it is, if your treasure is on earth, and lies in earthly things, your hearts will be set upon them, and be in them, in your bags, your coffers and storehouses; and so your souls will be in danger of being lost; which loss will be an irreparable one, though you should gain the whole world. But if your treasure is put into the hands of God, your hearts will be with him, and be settled on him; your desires will be after heavenly things; your affections will be set on things above; your conversation will be in heaven, whilst you are on earth; and that will be the place and seat of your happiness, to all eternity.

**Ver. 22.** *The light of the body is the eye,* etc.] Or, the “candle of the body is the eye”; for the eye is that in the body, as a candle is in the house; by the light of it, the several members of the body perform their office; and what is said of the eye of the body, is transferred to the eye of the mind:

*if therefore thine eye be single:* that is, if thy mind be liberal, generous, and bountiful: for Christ is still upon the same subject of liberality, and against covetousness; and here speaks entirely in the language of the Jews, who could easily understand him; in whose writings we read of three sorts of eyes; a good eye, a middling one, and an evil one; so in the offerings of the first fruits <sup>f432</sup>,

“**hpy ^y[**, “a good eye” gave the fortieth, the house Shammai say, the thirtieth part; a middling one, the fiftieth; and an evil one, the sixtieth part.”



Upon which the commentators say <sup>f433</sup>, a “good eye” means one that is liberal, and an “evil eye” the contrary: hence you often read <sup>f434</sup> of “trading, dedicating”, and “giving with a good” or “an evil eye”; that is, either generously, liberally, or in a niggardly and grudging manner; which may help us to the sense of our Lord in these words; whose meaning is, that if a man is not covetous, but his mind is disposed to generosity and liberality; if this be the case, as if he should say,

*thy whole body shall be full of light*: all thy actions will be influenced by this noble principle; thy whole life will be illuminated, guided and governed by it; thy mind will be cheerful and pleasant, and thy estate and condition will be prosperous and successful.

**Ver. 23.** *But if thine eye be evil*, etc.] If thou art of a sordid disposition, of an avaricious temper, if the sin of covetousness prevails over thee,

*thy whole body will be full of darkness*: thy judgment will be so influenced by that sordid principle, that thou wilt not be able to discern what is agreeable to the law of God, or human reason; what is fitting to be done for thyself, for God, or for thy fellow creatures; all the powers and faculties of thy soul will be enslaved by it, and all be intent upon, and employed in the gratification of it: thy mind will be always sad and sorrowful, harassed and distressed; and thy estate, and condition, will be most miserable and uncomfortable:

*if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* as it is in the body, so it is with the mind; as when the eye, the light of the body, is put out by any means, all the members of the body are in entire darkness; so when the light of reason in the mind is so far extinguished by any prevailing iniquity, particularly the sin of covetousness, so that it is wholly influenced and governed by it, what irregular actions is it led into! What deeds of darkness does it perform! and what will be the consequence of it, but utter and eternal darkness, if grace prevent not!

**Ver. 24.** *No man can serve two masters*, etc.] Whose orders are directly contrary to one another: otherwise, if they were the same, or agreed, both might be served; but this is rarely the case, and seldom done. This is a proverbial expression, and is elsewhere used by Christ, (<sup><263></sup>Luke 16:13). The Jews have sayings pretty much like it, and of the same sense as when they say <sup>f435</sup>,

“we have not found that **twnj l wç ytçl hkwx µda l k**, “any man is fit for two tables.””

And again <sup>f436</sup>,

“that it is not proper for one man to have two governments:”

their meaning is, that two things cannot be done together:

*for, either he will hate the one, and love the other*; he will have less affection and regard to the one, than to the other; as the service or orders of the one, are less agreeable to him than the others;

*or else he will hold to the one*; hearken to his commands, obey his orders, and abide in his service;

*and despise the other*; show disrespect to his person, neglect his orders, and desert his service:

*ye cannot serve God and mammon*. The word “mammon” is a Syriac word, and signifies money, wealth, riches, substance, and everything that comes under the name of worldly goods. Jerom says, that riches, in the Syriac language, are called “mammon”; and so the word is often used in the above senses, in the Chaldee paraphrases <sup>f437</sup>, and in the Talmudic writings; where <sup>f438</sup> **twnwmm nyd**, “pecuniary judgments”, or causes relating to money affairs, in which were pecuniary mulcts, are opposed to **twçpn nyd**, “judgment of souls”, or causes relating to life and death. The account and interpretation Irenaeus <sup>f439</sup> gives of the word, is very wide and foreign; who says, that

“Mammon, according to the Jewish way of speaking, which the Samaritans used, is one that is greedy, and would have more than he ought; but, according to the Hebrew language, it is called adjectively Mam, and signifies one that is gluttonous; that is, who cannot refrain himself from gluttony.”

Whereas it is not an Hebrew word, nor an adjective, but a substantive, and signifies riches; which are opposed to God, being by some men loved, admired, trusted in, and worshipped, as if they were God; and which is incompatible with the service of the true God: for such persons, whose hearts go after their covetousness, and are set upon earthly riches, who give up themselves to them, are eagerly and anxiously pursuing after them,

and place their confidence in them; whatever pretensions they may make to the service of God, as did the Scribes and Pharisees, who are particularly struck at by this expression, both here and elsewhere, they cannot truly and heartily serve the Lord. “Mammon” is the god they serve; which word may well be thought to answer to Pluto, the god of riches, among the Heathens. The Jews, in Christ’s time, were notorious for the love of “mammon”; and they themselves own, that this was the cause of the destruction of the second temple: the character they give of those, who lived under the second temple, is this:

“we know that they laboured in the law, and took care of the commandments, and of the tithes, and that their whole conversation was good; only that they *ˆwmmh ta ˆybhwa*, “loved the mammon”, and hated one another without a cause <sup>f440</sup>.”

**Ver. 25.** *Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life,* etc.]

Since ye cannot serve both God and “mammon”, obey one, and neglect the other. Christ does not forbid labour to maintain, support, and preserve, this animal life; nor does he forbid all thought and care about it, but all anxious, immoderate, perplexing, and distressing thoughts and cares; such as arise from diffidence and unbelief, and tend to despair; which are dishonourable to God, as the God of nature and providence, and uncomfortable to men:

*what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.* The several and the only things, which are necessary for the support and comfort of human life, are mentioned; as meat, drink, and clothing; Eating and drinking are necessary to preserve life; and raiment, to cover and defend the body, from the injuries of the heavens: and having these, men have everything necessary, and ought herewith to be content; nor should they be anxiously thoughtful about these: for

*is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* And yet, God has given these without man’s thought: and since these are better, and much more excellent, than food and raiment, as all must and will acknowledge; and God has given these the greater gifts, it may be depended upon, that he will give the lesser; that he will give meat and drink; to uphold that valuable life, which he is the author of; and raiment to clothe that body, which he, with so much wisdom and power, has accurately and wonderfully made.

**Ver. 26.** *Behold the fowls of the air*, etc.] Not such as are brought up in houses, but which fly abroad in the air, wild; and are not supported by their own, or any human care, but by the care of God: (<sup><4024></sup>Luke 12:24) particularly mentions the “ravens”, referring probably to (<sup><4070></sup>Psalm 147:9), and because they are very voracious creatures: and there it is said, “consider the ravens”; look attentively upon them, and with observation,

*for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.* This is not said, that men should not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns: but to reprove their diffidence and unbelief: who, though they have the opportunity of sowing, reaping, and gathering in, year by year, yet distrust the providence of God; when the fowls of the air do none of these,

*yet your heavenly Father feedeth them;* (see <sup><4055></sup>Psalm 145:15,16 147:9). The Jews acknowledge this, that the least and meanest of creatures are fed by God.

“Mar says <sup>f441</sup>, the holy blessed God sits <sup>^ZW</sup>, “and feeds”, i.e. all creatures, and takes care of them.”

*Are ye not much better than they?* Do not you differ from them? are ye not much more excellent than they? And if God feeds and provides for inferior creatures, such as are very mean and contemptible, how much more will he not provide for you? There is a passage in the Talmud, which has great affinity to this of Christ’s, and appears to have in it pretty much of the like kind of reasoning. In the Misna <sup>f442</sup> it is said, that R. Simeon ben Eleazer should say,

“Did you ever see a beast, or a fowl, that had a trade? but they are fed without trouble.”

In the Gemara <sup>f443</sup> is added,

“Did you ever see a lion bearing burdens, an hart gathering summer fruits, a fox a money changer, or a wolf selling pots? And yet <sup>r [ x al b ^ysnrptm</sup>, “they are nourished without labour”, and wherefore are they created? To serve me, and I am created to serve my Maker: and lo! these things have in them an argument, “from the less to the greater”; for if these, which are created to serve me after this manner, are supported without trouble; I, who am created to serve my Maker, is it not fit that I should be supplied without

trouble? And what is the reason that I am sustained with trouble? My sins.”

**Ver. 27.** *Which of you by taking thought*, etc.] As Christ argued before, from the unnecessariness of anxious thoughts and cares, about the provisions of life; so here, from the unprofitableness of them; it being impossible for a man, with all his care and thought, to

*add one cubit unto his stature*, or “to his age”; so the word is rendered, (<sup><402></sup>John 9:21-23; <sup><8111></sup>Hebrews 11:11) to the days of his life, he is so solicitous about; for a cubit may as well be applied to a man’s age, as an “hand’s breadth” is to his days, (<sup><1395></sup>Psalm 39:5). Nor is it so reasonable to think, that Christ should be speaking of making such an addition to a man’s height; though that, to be sure, is an impossible thing: since the far greater part of Christ’s hearers must be come to their full growth, and could not hope to have any addition made to their height; though they might hope to add to their days; much less such a monstrous one as that of a cubit, and which is a strong reason against the other sense of the word, and for this: for our Lord is speaking of something very small, which men cannot do; as appears from what Luke says, (<sup><1226></sup>Luke 12:26) “If ye then be not able to do that which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?” Whereas, to add a cubit to a man’s height, is a great deal:

“the stature of a middling man (says <sup>f444</sup> Bartenora) is three cubits.”

And to add one more, makes a large addition to his stature; but to apply this to a man’s age, is a small matter, and yet is what men cannot do: the sense of the words is this, that no man, by all the care and thought he can make use of, is ever able to add one cubit, or the least measure to his days; he cannot lengthen out his life one year, one month, one day, one hour; no, not one moment.

**Ver. 28.** *And why take ye thought for raiment*, etc.] Having exposed the folly of an anxious and immoderate care and thought, for food to support and prolong life, our Lord proceeds to show the vanity of an over concern for raiment:

*consider the lilies of the field* or “the flowers of the field”, as the Arabic version reads it, the lilies being put for all sorts of flowers. The Persic version mentions both rose and lily; the one being beautifully clothed in red, the other in white. Christ does not direct his hearers to the lilies, or flowers which grow in the garden which receive some advantage from the

management and care of the gardener; but to those of the field, where the art and care of men were not so exercised: and besides, he was now preaching on the mount, in an open place; and as he could point to the fowls of the air, flying in their sight, so to the flowers, in the adjacent fields and valleys: which he would have them look upon, with their eyes, consider and contemplate in their minds,

*how they grow*; in what variety of garbs they appear, of what different beautiful colours, and fragrant odours, they were; and yet

*they toil not*, or do not labour as husbandmen do, in tilling their land, ploughing their fields, and sowing them with flax, out of which linen garments are made:

*neither do they spin*; the flax, when plucked and dressed, as women do, in order for clothing; nor do they weave it into cloth, or make it up into garments, as other artificers do.

**Ver. 29.** *And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory*, etc.] This is a certain truth, to be affirmed in the strongest manner, and to be believed, that not only men and kings too in general; but even particularly Solomon, the richest and most magnificent of all the kings of Israel, whose grandeur, and glory, exceeded all the princes of the earth; that even he, not in his common dress, but when “in his glory”, and in “all” his glory, when arrayed with his royal and richest robes, with his crown on his head, and when seated on his throne,

*was not arrayed like one of these lilies*, or flowers of the field: for the glory and beauty of his garments were purely from art, but their’s by nature; which can never be equalled by art. This phrase, “Solomon in all his glory”, is the same which the Jewish doctors, in their writings, express by **wt [çb hml ç**, “Solomon in his hour”<sup>f445</sup>: that is as their commentators explain it<sup>f446</sup>, **wtwkl m t [b**, “in the time of his reign”; for they say he was first a king, and then a private person. Now, not whilst he was a private person, but when a king, in the height of his grandeur and magnificence, and when dressed out in the most splendid manner, he was exceeded in array by a single lily: or the sense is, in his royal apparel. For as the same doctors say,

“what is a man’s “glory?” It is his clothing that is his outward glory; and again, garments are the glory of a man<sup>f447</sup>.”

**Ver. 30.** *Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field.* etc.] These words are a conclusion from the former, and contain an argument from the lesser to the greater; that if God, for this is solely his work, so clothes the lilies, the flowers of the field, and whatever grows up out of the earth, in such a beautiful and splendid manner, as even to outdo Solomon, in his richest apparel; there's no doubt to be made of it, or at least ought not, but that he will much more provide clothing for men. The argument is illustrated, by the short continuance of the grass of the field, which is so clothed; and the use it is put to, when cut down;

*which today is* in being, but abides not long, as it were but for a day: it flourishes in the morning, continues for the day in its glory and verdure, is cut down at evening, and withers and dies,

*and tomorrow is cast into the oven*, to heat it with, or as the Syriac version reads **arwntb**, “in the furnace”. And so Munster’s Hebrew edition of this Gospel. For furnaces used to be heated with straw and stubble, and such like things, as were gathered out of the fields; so, we read in the Misna<sup>f448</sup>, that pots and furnaces were heated;

“a pot which they heat “with straw and stubble”, they put into it that which is to be boiled — a furnace which they heat “with straw and stubble”, they put nothing into it, nor upon it (i.e. till they have removed the coals or ashes): a little furnace, which they heat **abbgbw çqb**, “with straw and stubble”, is as the pots.”

The last word, **abbg**, Bartenora says, signifies wood, or sticks, small as stubble, which they gather out of the field; that is, the stalks of some sort of herbs and plants, that grow in the field: now if God clothes these plants, which are so short lived, and at last used for such mean purposes;

*shall he not much more clothe you* men, his people, who are of a much longer life, and designed for greater ends and purposes; for the worship and service of God, for his honour and glory here, and for eternal life and happiness hereafter,

*O ye of little faith?* As such persons are, who distrust the providence of God, with respect to food and raiment, The phrase, **hnma ynj q**, “men of little faith”, is often to be met with in the Rabbinical writings: so Noah is represented by them, as one of “little faith”, who believed, and did not believe the flood; and therefore did not go into the ark, till the waters

drove him <sup>f449</sup>: and though he is said to be perfect, this was not by his works, but by the grace of God <sup>f450</sup>. So the Israelites at the Red Sea, who thought that when they came out on one side, the Egyptians would come out on the <sup>f451</sup> other. So the little children that mocked Elisha, are said to be so called, because they were men “of little <sup>f452</sup> faith”. So everyone that exalts his voice in prayer, is reckoned such an one <sup>f453</sup>. But what comes nearest to the case before us, is the following <sup>f454</sup> passage;

“Says R. Eliezer the Great, whoever has a morsel in his basket, and says, what shall I eat tomorrow? is no other than **hnma ynmqm**, “one of those of little faith”.”

**Ver. 31.** *Therefore take no thought*, etc.] That is, for the morrow, as it is explained, (<sup><0163></sup>Luke 6:34) for it is lawful to take proper care and thought for present food, drink, and raiment; but not to be anxiously concerned for futurity;

*saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?* These are a repetition of the several things instanced in, and are the very language and expressions of men of little faith; as in the above citation, **rj ml l kwa hm**, “what shall I eat tomorrow?”

**Ver. 32.** *For after all these things do the Gentiles seek*, etc.] Or “the nations of the world”, as in (<sup><0120></sup>Luke 12:30). The Syriac reads it so here: the phrase, **pl w[h twmwa** “the nations of the world”, is used of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Israelites, thousands of times in the Jewish writings; it would be endless to give instances. These knew not God, nor acknowledged his providence; the greater part of them thought, that the soul perished with the body; few of them thought, that anything remained after death; and they that did, spoke very doubtfully of it: wherefore it is no wonder, that such persons should greedily seek after, and be anxiously concerned for all these things, food, raiment, and riches, and a great plenty of them; since this is all the happiness they expect; and imagine, that this is to be acquired by their care, thought, diligence, and industry; having no regard to a superior being, and his all wise providence: but for the Jews, and so Christians, who have a divine revelation, the knowledge of God, and his providence, and of a future state after this life, to act the same part the Heathens do, is exceedingly unbecoming, absurd, and wicked: and besides, such greedy desires, immoderate care, and anxious solicitude, are altogether unnecessary;



*for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

Every word almost, carries in it an argument, to strengthen the faith of God's children, to encourage them to believe, that he will bestow upon them, whatever is needful, for meat, drink, and clothing: he is a "father", and will take care of his children; "their father"; they have interest in him, being related to him, and need not doubt of his paternal care, and affectionate regard to them: their "heavenly" Father, or their Father in heaven; who has all things at his command, who sits there, and does whatever he pleaseth on earth: "he knoweth that they have need"; he knows all things, all their straits, difficulties, wants and necessities; he knows they need every day, "all these things", food and raiment, and cannot do without them: and therefore they may depend upon it, that as it is in his power to relieve them, and their persons and cases are not unknown to him; he who stands in the relation of a father to them, will supply them with whatever is proper and convenient for them.

**Ver. 33.** *But seek first the kingdom of God,* etc.] Meaning either the Gospel, and the ministration of it; in which sense this phrase is often used, (see <sup><124B></sup>Matthew 21:43 <sup><1014></sup>Mark 1:14 <sup><104B></sup>Luke 4:43,9:2-60,16:16) and which is diligently to be sought after, and into; to be constantly attended on, and to be preferred to our necessary food, to raiment, or riches, or any enjoyment of life: or else the kingdom of glory, which is prepared by God, and is his gift; for which he makes his people meet here, and will introduce them into it hereafter.

*And his righteousness;* the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is what gives a right and title to the kingdom of heaven. This is not the righteousness of man, but of God; and is no other than the righteousness of Christ; so called, because he is God who has wrought it; it is what God approves of, accepts, and imputes, and which only can justify in his sight, and give an abundant entrance into his kingdom and glory. Heaven is to be sought for in the first place, as the perfection of the saints' happiness; and Christ's righteousness is to be sought for, and laid hold on by faith, as the way and means of enjoying that happiness; without which, there will be no entering into the kingdom of heaven.

*And all these things shall be added unto you:* of the free bounty, goodness, and liberality of God, without your thought and care, and much less merit; even "all these things", meat, drink, clothing, or whatsoever worldly sustenance else is necessary for you: which are not parts of the happiness

of saints, only appendages thereunto; which they have over and above what they are, or should be chiefly seeking after. The Hebrews<sup>f455</sup> say,

“that no good sign will be shown to Israel, until they return and “seek” three things: “afterwards the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord”; **ןימנ תוכל מנז**, “this is the kingdom of heaven”; and “David their king”, according to its literal sense; “and shall fear the Lord and his goodness”; this is the house of the sanctuary, as it is said, “this goodly mountain”, and Lebanon.”

**Ver. 34.** *Take therefore no thought for the morrow*, etc.] Reference is had to (<sup>אזול</sup> Proverbs 27:1). “Boast not of thyself tomorrow”: a man cannot promise or assure himself, that he shall have a morrow, and therefore it is great weakness and folly to be anxiously thoughtful about it. This is expressed in the Talmud<sup>f456</sup>, nearer the sense of Christ’s words, after this manner:

“**רן מן תרן רתן לא**, “do not distress thyself with tomorrow’s affliction, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth”; perhaps tomorrow may not be, and thou wilt be found distressing thyself, for the time which is nothing to thee.”

And should it come, it is unnecessary to be thoughtful of it in a distressing manner before hand;

*for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.* The morrow is here introduced by a “prosopopeia”, as if it was a person sufficiently thoughtful and careful for the necessaries of it: every day brings along with it fresh care and thought, being attended with fresh wants and troubles; and therefore, it is very unadvisable, to bring the cares and troubles of two days upon one; as he does, who is anxiously concerned today, for the things of tomorrow;

*sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* This proverb is thus expressed in the Talmud<sup>f457</sup>, **הת[עב הרן] הוד**, “sufficient for distress”, or “vexation, is the present time”; which the gloss explains thus,

“sufficient for the vexation it is, that men should grieve for it, at the time that it comes upon them.”

It is very wrong to anticipate trouble, or meet it before hand; if it was for no other reason but this, that every day’s trouble is enough, and should not

be needlessly added to, by an over concern what shall be done for tomorrow; or how shall the necessities of it be answered, or the trials of it be endured.