

# CHAPTER 16

## INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 16

**Ver. 1.** *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came*, etc] Not from Jerusalem, as in (<sup><483></sup>Matthew 15:1) but from the neighbouring places: these were Galilean Sadducees and Pharisees, of whom mention is made in the Misna <sup>f914</sup>;

“says *yl yl g yqwdx*, “a Galilean Sadducee”, (i.e. one that was of the land of Galilee, as Bartenora on the place observes,) I complain of you Pharisees, because ye write the name of a ruler with the name of Moses, in a divorce; say the Pharisees, we complain of you Galilean Sadducees, that you write the name of a ruler with the name of God, in the same leaf:”

but though these two sects could not agree in this, and in many other things, yet they could unite against Christ, to whom they bore an implacable hatred.

*And tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven:* they came with no sincere view to be taught by him, or learn anything from him; but if they could, to ensnare him, and get an opportunity of exposing him to the people; and therefore pretending dissatisfaction with the miracles he wrought on the earth, they ask of him to produce a sign from heaven, of his coming from thence, of his being the Son of God, and the true Messiah. They wanted some such sign, as the standing still of the sun and moon, in the times of Joshua; and as raining manna, in the times of Moses; or some such appearances of thunder and lightning, as at the giving of the law. The appearance of the rainbow, in a very extraordinary manner, is looked upon by the Jews as a sign of the Messiah’s coming <sup>f915</sup>.

“Says a certain Jew, when my father departed out of the world, he said thus to me; do not look for the Messiah until thou seest the bow in the world, adorned with light colours, and the world enlightened by it; then look for the Messiah, as it is written, (<sup><009></sup>Genesis 9:16).”

Some very unusual and uncommon sight in the heavens, was what these men asked of Christ in proof of his mission from God.

**Ver. 2.** *He answered and said unto them*, etc.] Knowing full well their views, and having wrought sufficient miracles to confirm his Messiahship, he thought fit to give them no other answer than this:

*when it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather, for the sky is red*; when the sun is setting, it is a common thing for you to say, looking up to the heavens, and observing the face and colour of them, that it is like to be fair weather; no rain, that night, nor perhaps the next day, for the sky is red like fire, through the rays of the sun; which show the clouds to be very thin, and so will soon waste away, and consequently fine weather must follow.

**Ver. 3.** *And in the morning, it will be foul weather today*, etc.] When you rise in the morning, and take a survey of the heavens, it is a very usual thing with you to say, it is like to be windy or rainy weather today,

*for the sky is red and lowring*; which shows, that the clouds are so thick that the sun cannot pierce through them, and its face is not seen; so that it may be reasonably concluded they will issue in rain, or wind, or both.

*O ye hypocrites*. The Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel, leave out this appellation; but all other versions, as well as copies, have it: and it is an usual epithet, bestowed very justly by Christ, on these men; who pretended to be the guides of the people, took upon them to teach and instruct them in divine things, and set up themselves as men of great holiness, piety and knowledge; and yet, instead of searching the Scriptures, and comparing the characters of the times of the Messiah therein fixed, with the present ones, spent their time in making such low and useless observations, and which fall within the compass of everyone's knowledge and reach.

*Ye can discern the face of the sky*; very distinctly, and make some very probable guesses, if not certain conclusions, what will follow, good weather or bad:

*but can ye not discern the signs of the times?* or, as the Syriac reads it, "the time", the present time: if they had not been blind, they might easily have discerned, that the signs of the time of the Messiah's coming were upon them, and that Jesus was the Messiah; as the departure of the sceptre from Judah, the ending of Daniel's weeks, the various miracles wrought by

Christ, the wickedness of the age in which they lived, the ministry of John the Baptist, and of Christ, the great flockings of the people, both to one and to the other, with divers other things which were easy to be observed by them: but they pretend this to be a very great secret.

“The secret of the day of death, they say <sup>f916</sup>, and the secret of the day when the king Messiah comes, who by his wisdom can find out?”

**Ver. 4.** *A wicked and adulterous generation*, etc.] He says the same things here, as he did to the Pharisees on a like occasion, in (~~4129~~ Matthew 12:39).

*And he left them*; as persons hardened, perverse, and incurable, and as unworthy to be conversed with:

*and departed*: to the ship which brought him thither, and went in it to the other side of the sea of Galilee; (see ~~4183~~ Mark 8:13).

**Ver. 5.** *When his disciples were come to the other side*, etc.] Of the sea, as Munster’s Hebrew Gospel adds, to Bethsaida, (~~4182~~ Mark 8:22) as they were either in the ship, or going from the shore to the said place, they recollected themselves,

*that they had forgotten to take bread*: having but one loaf, as Mark says, in the ship; the seven baskets of fragments being either expended, or given away to the poor, of their own accord, or by Christ’s orders. It seems, it was usual with the disciples to buy food at places most proper, and carry with them; since Christ often went into deserts and mountainous places, where provisions could not be had. This their forgetfulness to act according to their wonted method, might arise either from their being intent upon Christ’s conversation with the Pharisees, and Sadducees, or from the suddenness of Christ’s departure.

**Ver. 6.** *Then Jesus said unto them*, etc.] Either taking occasion from the disciples observing that they had forgot to take bread with them, or on account of what passed between him and the Pharisees and Sadducees, he gave the following advice to his disciples;

*take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*. Mark, instead “of the leaven of the Sadducees”, says, “the leaven of Herod”; either because Christ might caution against all three; or because the Sadducees were generally Herodians, taking Herod to be the Messiah;

or were on his party, or for his government, which the Pharisees disliked; and the Herodians were generally Sadducees. By “the leaven” of these is meant their doctrine, as appears from (<sup>4162</sup>Matthew 16:12). The doctrines the Pharisees taught were the commandments and inventions of men, the traditions of the elders, free will, and justification by the works of the law: the doctrine of the Sadducees was, that there was no resurrection of the dead, nor angels, nor spirits: now because they sought secretly and artfully to infuse their notions into the minds of men; and which, when imbibed, spread their infection, and made men sour, morose, rigid, and ill natured, and swelled and puffed them up with pride and vanity, Christ compares them to leaven; and advises his disciples to look about them, to watch, and be on their guard, lest they should be infected with them.

**Ver. 7.** *And they reasoned among themselves*, etc.] Either what should be the meaning of this caution of Christ’s, and upon what account he should say this to them; or they were anxiously concerned what they should do for provision:

*saying, because we have taken no bread*; for the phrase, “it is”, is a supplement, and is not in the original text, which confines the sense to the first way of interpretation; the words may be read without it, and confirms the other sense, and which receives strength from what follows.

**Ver. 8.** *Which when Jesus perceived*, etc.] Without hearing any of their debates, but by his omniscience; for he knew the doubts and unbelief, and anxious solicitude of their minds, as well as their private reasonings one with another:

*he said unto them, O ye of little faith*; a phrase used upon a like occasion, when he would dissuade his disciples from an anxious distressing care about a livelihood, (<sup>4163</sup>Matthew 6:30 See Gill “<sup>4163</sup>Matthew 6:30”):

*why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?* blaming one another for your negligence and forgetfulness in this matter; distressing your minds, as if you should be famished and starved, because ye have not brought a quantity of bread, as you used to do with you.

**Ver. 9.** *Do ye not understand*, etc.] Meaning either the sense of the advice he had now given; or rather his almighty power displayed in the two miracles of feeding five thousand at one time, and four thousand at another, with a very small quantity of provision; for to this the word “understand” refers, as well as the following:

*neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?* Have you forgot what was so lately done, namely, the feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, when ye took up, after all were filled and satisfied, no less than twelve baskets of fragments? And can you, after this, distrust my power in the care of you? Have I fed so many with so small a quantity of food? and am I not able to feed twelve of you, though you have but one loaf? Why all these anxious thoughts and carnal reasonings?

**Ver. 10.** *Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand,* etc.] Have you forgot the other miracle done but a very little while ago, when I fed four thousand men, beside women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes;

*and how many baskets ye took up?* no less than seven large baskets; and am I not able to provide for you? distress not yourselves about this matter; give not way to unbelief, which must argue great stupidity and insensibility.

**Ver. 11.** *How is it that ye do not understand,* etc.] That you should be so senseless and void of thought, after such instances, as to imagine, that I concerned myself about what bread you brought with you; one would think you could not but know,

*that I spake it not to you concerning bread,* taken in a literal sense; but must be thought to speak figuratively and mystically, and to have an higher sense and meaning, when I said to you,

*that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the Sadducees;* how could you think that I had any regard to the leaven taken in a literal sense, the Pharisees and Sadducees approve or disapprove of?

**Ver. 12.** *Then understood they,* etc.] Without any further explication of his sense and meaning,

*how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread:* which sense they first took him in; imagining, because the Pharisees were very particular and precise what sort of leaven they made use of<sup>f917</sup>, that Christ forbade them buying bread that was made with leaven according to their directions: and since their rules in everything prevailed much in all places, they were concerned what bread they must, or could buy; but now they perceived that he did not speak of this, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. It was very common with the Jews<sup>f918</sup> to call the

corruption and vitiosity of nature by the name of *hsy[ bç rwaç*, “leaven in the lump”: hence our Lord calls their doctrine so, because it proceeded from thence, and was agreeable thereunto; and uses the phrase on purpose to expose it, and bring it into neglect and contempt.

**Ver. 13.** *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi*, etc.] The towns that were in the neighbourhood of this city; which city went by several names before, as Leshem, (<sup><1694></sup>Joshua 19:47) which being taken by the Danites, they called it Dan; hence we read of *ˆwyr syqd ˆd*, “Dan, which is Caesarea” <sup>f919</sup>. It was also called Paneas, from the name of the fountain of Jordan, by which it was situated; and which Pliny says <sup>f920</sup> gave the surname to Caesarea; and hence it is called by Ptolomy <sup>f921</sup> Caesarea Paniae; and by the name of Paneas it went, when Philip the <sup>f922</sup> tetrarch rebuilt it, and called it Caesarea, in honour of Tiberius Caesar; and from his own name, Philippi, to distinguish it from another Caesarea, of which mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, built by his father Herod, and so called in honour of Augustus Caesar; which before bore the name of Strato’s tower. The Misnic doctors speak of two Caesareas <sup>f923</sup>, the one they call the eastern, the other the western Caesarea. Now, as Mark says, whilst Christ and his disciples were in the way to these parts; and, as Luke, when he had been praying alone with them,

*he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* He calls himself “the son of man”, because he was truly and really man; and because of his low estate, and the infirmities of human nature, with which he was encompassed: he may have some respect to the first intimation of him, as the seed of woman, and the rather make use of this phrase, because the Messiah was sometimes designed by it in the Old Testament, (<sup><1807></sup>Psalms 80:17 <sup><2073></sup>Daniel 7:13) or Christ speaks here of himself, according to his outward appearance, and the prevailing opinion of men concerning him; that he looked to be only a mere man, born as other men were; was properly a son of man, and no more: and therefore the question is, not what sort of man he was, whether a holy, good man, or not, or whether the Messiah, or not; but the question is, what men in general, whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, under the notion they had of him as a mere man, said of him; or since they took him to be but a man, what man they thought he was; and to this the answer is very appropriate. This question Christ put to his disciples, they being more conversant with the people than he, and heard the different opinions men

had of him, and who were more free to speak their minds of him to them, than to himself; not that he was ignorant of what passed among men, and the different sentiments they had of him, but he was willing to hear the account from his disciples; and his view in putting this question to them, was to make way for another, in order to bring them to an ingenuous confession of their faith in him.

**Ver. 14.** *And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist*, etc.] It was the opinion of some of the Jews, that he was John the Baptist risen from the dead. This notion was spread, and prevailed in Herod's court, and he himself, at last, gave into it.

*Some Elias*; the Tishbite, because an extraordinary person was prophesied of by Malachi, under the name of Elias; and who was to come in his power and spirit before the great day of the Lord; and it being a prevailing notion with the Jews, that Elias was to come before the Messiah; *See Gill* "~~40114~~*Matthew 11:14*" they concluded that he was now come:

*and others Jeremias*; this is omitted both by Mark and Luke; the reason why he is mentioned, is not because of what is said of him, in (~~2406~~Jeremiah 1:5,10,18) but because the Jews thought he was that prophet spoken of, in (~~61815~~Deuteronomy 18:15) that should be raised up from among them, like unto Moses: and this is the sense of some of their writers<sup>f924</sup>: and in their very ancient writings a parallel is run between Moses and Jeremy<sup>f925</sup>.

"R. Judah, the son of R. Simon, opened (~~61815~~Deuteronomy 18:18, 34:10) thus: "as thee", this is Jeremiah, who was, as he, in reproofs; you will find all that is written of the one, is written of the other; one prophesied forty years, and the other prophesied forty years; the one prophesied concerning Judah and Israel, and the other prophesied concerning Judah and Israel; against the one those of his own tribe stood up, and against the other those of his own tribe stood up; the one was cast into a river, and the other into a dungeon; the one was delivered by means of an handmaid, and the other by the means of a servant; the one came with words of reproof, and the other came with words of reproof."

Now they fancied, either that the soul of Jeremy was transmigrated into another body, or that he was risen from the dead.

*Or one of the prophets*; one of the ancient ones, as Hosea, or Isaiah, or some other: they could not fix upon the particular person who they thought

was risen from the dead, and did these wondrous works among them. From the whole it appears, that these persons, whose different sentiments of Christ are here delivered, were not his sworn enemies, as the Scribes and Pharisees, who could never speak respectfully of him; saying, that he was a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a very wicked man, and far from being one, or like one of the prophets: they sometimes represent him as beside himself, and mad, yea, as being a Samaritan, and having a devil, as familiar with the devil, and doing his miracles by his assistance; but these were the common people, the multitude that followed Christ from place to place, and had a great opinion of him on account of his ministry, and miracles: wherefore, though they could not agree in their notions concerning him, yet each of them fix upon some person of note and worth, whom they took him for; they all looked upon him as a great and good man, and as a prophet, as John the Baptist was accounted by all the people, and as one of the chief of the prophets, as Elias and Jeremiah; and they that could not fix on any particular person, yet put him into the class of the prophets: but still they came short of the true knowledge of him; they did not know him to be a divine person, which his works and miracles proved him to be: nor to be that prophet Moses had spoken of, who was alone to be hearkened unto, though his ministry was a demonstration of it: nor that he was the Messiah, so much spoken of in prophecy, and so long expected by the Jewish nation, though he had all the characters of the Messiah meeting in him. The chief reason why they could not entertain such a thought of him, seems to be the mean figure he made in the world, being of a low extract, in strait circumstances of life, regarded only by the poorer sort; and there appearing nothing in him promising, that he should deliver them from the Roman yoke, and set up a temporal kingdom, which should be prosperous and flourishing, which was the notion of the Messiah that then generally obtained: and since they could not, by any means, allow of this character as belonging to Jesus, though otherwise they had an high opinion of him; hence they could not agree about him, but formed different sentiments of him; which is usually the case in everything, where the truth is not hit upon and received.

**Ver. 15.** *He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?*] Without taking any further notice, or making any reflections on the different sentiments of men concerning him, he put this question to his disciples, and which is what he had chiefly in view, that he might have their sense of him; and which he puts in a different form, and leaves out the phrase, the son of



man, because they knew he was more than a man: nor was his mean appearance an offence to them; they had believed in him, became his disciples, and were followers of him: but it was not enough to believe in him, they must confess him; both are necessary: therefore he does not say, whom believe ye, but whom say ye that I am? You who have been with me so long from the beginning; you who have heard so many discourses from me, and have seen so many miracles wrought by me; and who are to be the teachers of others, to preach my Gospel, and publish my salvation to Jews and Gentiles, what have you to say of me? Whom do you say I am? as for those men, it is no great matter who they say I am; but of great moment and consequence are your sense and confession of me. Such who have long sat under a Gospel ministry, or who have been long in the church and school of Christ, it is expected of them, that they should know more of Christ than others; and should be come to a point about his person and office, and be ready to make a confession of their faith, and give a reason of their hope in him; and especially such who are, or are to be preachers of Christ to others: these ought to be well acquainted with him, who, and what he is; they should have no doubt, nor hesitation in their minds, about him, but be fully satisfied concerning him; and be free, and open, and ready to declare what they know and believe of him.

**Ver. 16.** *And Simon Peter answered and said,* etc.] Either of his own accord, and for himself, being a warm, zealous, and forward man; one that dearly loved Christ, truly believed in him, and was ready to make a confession of him; or, as the mouth of the rest, in their name, and with their consent; or, at least, as full well knowing the sentiments of their minds. Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God: a short, but a very full confession of faith, containing the following articles: as that there is a God, that there is but one God; that he is the living God, has life in himself, is the fountain of life to others, and by this is distinguishable from the idols of the Gentiles: that Jesus is the Christ, the Christ of God, the true Messiah, that was promised by God, prophesied of by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world, and expected by the people of God: a character that includes all his offices, of prophet, priest, and king, to which he is anointed by God; and that this Messiah was not a mere man, but a divine person, the Son of God; not by creation, as angels and men are, nor by adoption, as saints, nor by office, as magistrates, but by nature, being his own Son, his proper Son, the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, being one with him, and equal to him. This confession, as

it is uniform, and all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and is what all the disciples of Christ agreed in, so it greatly exceeds the most that can be made of the different sentiments of the people put together. They took him, one and all, to be but a mere man; their most exalted thoughts of him rose no higher: but in this he is acknowledged to be the Son of God, a phrase expressive of his divine nature, and distinct personality: they thought him to be a dead man brought to life; but here he is called the Son of the living God, as having the same life in him the Father has: they indeed judged him to be a prophet, but not that prophet that was to come, superior to all prophets; but here he is owned to be the Christ, which not only takes in his prophetic office in a higher sense than they understood it, but all his other offices, and declares him to be the promised Messiah; which they who thought, and spoke the most honourably of him, could not allow of.

**Ver. 17.** *And Jesus answered and said unto him,* etc.] Not waiting for any other declaration from them; but taking this to be the sense of them all, he said,

*blessed art thou Simon Bar Jona*, or son of Jona, or Jonas, as in (~~4012~~ John 1:42, 21:15). His father's name was Jonah, whence he was so called: so we read <sup>f926</sup> of R. Bo bar Jonah, and of a Rabbi of this very name <sup>f927</sup>, *anwy rb w[mç r*, Rabbi Simeon bar Jona; for Simon and Simeon are one, and the same name. Some read it Bar Joanna, the same with John; but the common reading is best; Bar Jona signifies "the son of a dove", and Bar Joanna signifies "the son of one that is gracious". Our Lord, by this appellation, puts Peter in mind of his birth and parentage, but does not pronounce him blessed on that account: no true blessedness comes by natural descent; men are by nature children of wrath, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity: though he was Bar Jona, the son of a dove, and his father might be a good man, and answer to his name, and be of a dove like spirit; yet such a spirit was not conveyed from him to Peter by natural generation: and though he might be, according to the other reading, Bar Joanna, or the son of a gracious man, yet grace was not communicated to him thereby; for he was not "born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", (~~4013~~ John 1:13). He was a blessed man, not by his first, but by his second birth; and the reason why our Lord makes mention of his father, is to observe to him, that he was the son of a mean man, and had had, but a mean education, and therefore his blessedness in general was not of nature, but of grace, and this branch of it in particular; the knowledge he

had of the Messiah, was not owing to his earthly father, or to the advantage of an education, but to the revelation he had from Christ's Father which is in heaven, as is hereafter affirmed. He is pronounced "blessed", as having a true knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal; and all such as he are so, appear to be the favourites of God, to have an interest in Christ and in all the blessings of his grace; are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, are accepted in him, have communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, and shall live eternally with them hereafter.

*For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee:* nothing is more frequent to be met with in Jewish writings, than the phrase of "flesh and blood", as designing men in distinction from God: so the first man is said <sup>f928</sup> to be

"the workmanship of the blessed God, and not the workmanship  
 μδw rçbd, "of flesh and blood"."

Again <sup>f929</sup>, μδw rçb, "flesh and blood", who knows not the times and seasons, etc. but the holy, blessed God, who knows the times and seasons, etc. Instances of this way of speaking are almost without number: accordingly, the sense here is, that this excellent confession of faith, which Peter had delivered, was not revealed unto him, nor taught him by any mere man; he had not it from his immediate parents, nor from any of his relations, or countrymen; nor did he attain to the knowledge of what is expressed in it, by the dint of nature, by the strength of carnal reason, or the force of his own capacity and abilities:

*but my Father which is in heaven;* from whom both the external and internal revelation of such truths come; though not to the exclusion of the Son, by whose revelation the Gospel is taught, and received; nor of the Holy Ghost, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, but in opposition to, and distinction from any mere creature whatever. Neither the Gospel, nor any part of it, is an human device or discovery; it is not after man, nor according to the carnal reason of man; it is above the most exalted and refined reason of men; it has in it what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of: its truths are the deep things of God, which the Spirit of God searches and reveals: and which men, left to the light of nature, and force of reason, must have been for ever ignorant of, and could never have discovered. The Gospel is a

revelation, it consists of revealed truths; and which are to be received and believed upon the testimony and credit of the revealer, without entering into carnal reasonings, and disputes about them; and it is the highest reason, and the most noble use of reason, to embrace it at once, as coming from God; for this revelation is from heaven, and from Christ's Father; particularly the deity, sonship, and Messiahship of Christ, are doctrines of pure revelation: that there is a God, is discoverable by the light of nature; and that he is the living God, and gives being, and life, and breath, and all things, to his creatures; but that he has a Son of the same nature with him, and equal to him, who is the Messiah, and the Saviour of lost sinners, this could never have been found out by flesh and blood: no man knows the Son, but the Father, and he to whom he reveals him; he bears witness of him, and declares him to be his Son, in whom he is well pleased; and happy are those who are blessed with the outward revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospel, but more especially such to whom the Father reveals Christ in them the hope of glory!

**Ver. 18.** *And I say also unto thee,* etc.] Either besides what he had already said concerning his happiness; or, as the father had revealed something great and valuable, so likewise would he; or inasmuch as he had freely said and declared who, and what he was, in like manner he also would say what Peter was, thou art Peter: intimating, that he was rightly called Peter, or Cephas, by him, when he first became a follower of him, (~~CHRIS~~ Matthew 4:18 ~~CHRIS~~ John 1:42), which words signify the same thing, a rock, or stone; because of his firmness and solidity, and because he was laid upon the sure foundation, and built on the rock Christ, and was a very fit stone to be laid in the spiritual building. The aptness of this name to him is easy to be seen in his full assurance of faith, as to the person of Christ, and his free, open, and undaunted confession of him.

*And upon this rock will I build my church:* by the church, is meant, not an edifice of wood, stones, etc. but an assembly, and congregation of men; and that not of any sort; not a disorderly, tumultuous assembly, in which sense this word is sometimes taken; nor does it design the faithful of a family, which is sometimes the import of it; nor a particular congregated church, but the elect of God, the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven; and especially such of them as were to be gathered in, and built on Christ, from among the Jews and Gentiles. The materials of this building are such, as are by nature no better, or more fit for it, than others: these stones originally lie in the same quarry

with others; they are singled out, and separated from the rest, according to the sovereign will of God, by powerful and efficacious grace; and are broken and hewn by the Spirit of God, generally speaking, under the ministry of the word, and are, by him, made living stones; and being holy and spiritual persons, are built up a spiritual house: and these are the only persons which make up the true and invisible church of Christ in the issue, and are only fit to be members of the visible church; and all such ought to be in a Gospel church state, and partake of the privileges of it: these materials are of different sorts, and have a different place, and have a different usefulness in this building; some are only as common stones, and timber; others are as pillars, beams, and rafters; and all are useful and serviceable; and being put, and knit together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord: and are called, by Christ, “my” church, because given him by the Father; and he has purchased them with his own blood; are built by him, and on him; inhabited by him, and of whom he is the head, king, and governor; though not to the exclusion of the Father, whose house they also are; nor of the Spirit, who dwells in them, as in his temple. This church Christ promises to “build”. Though his ministers are builders, they are but under builders; they are qualified, employed, directed, encouraged, and succeeded by him; he is the wise, able, and chief master builder. This act of building seems to have a special regard to the conversion of God’s elect, both among Jews and Gentiles, particularly the latter; and to the daily conversions of them in all ages; and to the building up of saints in faith and holiness; each of which will more manifestly appear in the latter day; and are both generally effected through the word, and ordinances, as means, the Spirit of Christ blessing them. By the rock on which Christ builds his church, is meant, not the person of Peter; for Christ does not say, upon thee Peter, but upon this rock, referring to something distinct from him: for though his name signifies a rock, or stone, and there may be some allusion to it; and he is so called because of his trust and confidence in the Lord, on whom he was built; but not because he was the foundation on which any others, and especially the whole church, were built: it is true, he may be called the foundation, as the rest of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:20, ~~6214~~Revelation 21:14) without any distinction from them, and preference to them; they and he agreeing in laying doctrinally and ministerially Christ Jesus as the foundation of faith and hope, but not in such sense as he is; neither he, nor they, are the foundation on which the church is built, which is Christ, and him only. Moreover, what is said to Peter in these, and the following words, is not said to him personally and

separately from the rest of the apostles, but is designed for them, as well as him, as appears by comparing them with (~~CHRIS~~ Matthew 18:18). As he spoke in the name of them all, to Christ; so Christ spake to him, including them all. Peter had no preeminence over the rest of the apostles, which he neither assumed, nor was it granted; nor would it ever have been connived at by Christ, who often showed his resentment at such a spirit and conduct, whenever there was any appearance of it in any of them; (see ~~CHRIS~~ Matthew 18:1-3, 20:25-28) and though Peter, with James, and John, had some particular favours bestowed on him by Christ; as to be at the raising of Jairus's daughter, and at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, and with him in the garden; and he appeared to him alone after his resurrection, and before he was seen by the rest of the disciples; yet in some things he was inferior to them, being left to deny his Lord and master, they did not; and upon another account is called Satan by Christ, which they never were; not to mention other infirmities of his, which show he is not the rock: and, after all, what is this to the pope of Rome, who is no successor of Peter's? Peter, as an apostle, had no successor in his office; nor was he bishop of Rome; nor has the pope of Rome either his office, or his doctrine: but here, by the rock, is meant, either the confession of faith made by Peter; not the act, nor form, but the matter of it, it containing the prime articles of Christianity, and which are as immoveable as a rock; or rather Christ himself, who points, as it were, with his finger to himself, and whom Peter had made such a glorious confession of; and who was prefigured by the rock the Israelites drank water out of in the wilderness; and is comparable to any rock for height, shelter, strength, firmness, and duration; and is the one and only foundation of his church and people, and on whom their security, salvation, and happiness entirely depend. Christ is a rock that is higher than they, where they find safety in times of distress, and the shadow of which is refreshing to them; and therefore betake themselves to him for shelter, and where they are secure from the wrath of God, and rage of men: he is the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength; and is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation on which the church, and all true believers, are laid: he is the foundation of their faith, and hope, and everlasting happiness, and will ever continue; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The Jews speak of the gates of hell: sometimes of the gate of hell, in the singular number<sup>f930</sup>; and sometimes of the gates of hell, in the plural number. They say<sup>f931</sup>, that

“**μnhygl ̇cy μyj tp ḣl ̇**, “hell has three gates”, one in the wilderness, one in the sea, and one in Jerusalem.”

They talk <sup>f932</sup> of

“an angel that is appointed **μnhygd y[r t l ]**, “over the gates of hell”, whose name is Samriel; who has three keys in his hands, and opens three doors.”

And elsewhere <sup>f933</sup> they say, that

“he that is appointed over hell his name is Dumah, and many myriads of destroying angels are with him, and he stands **μnhygd aj tp l ]**, “at the gate of hell”; and all those that keep the holy covenant in this world, he has no power to bring them in.”

Our Lord may allude to these notions of the Jews, and his sense be, that all the infernal principalities and powers, with all their united cunning and strength, will never be able to extirpate his Gospel, to destroy his interest, to demolish his church in general, or ruin anyone particular soul that is built upon him. Again, the gates of “Hades”, or hell, sometimes seem to design no other than the gates of death, and the grave, and persons going into the state of death; (see <sup><48817></sup> Job 38:17 <sup><23810></sup> Isaiah 38:10) where the Septuagint use the same phrase as here; and then the sense is, that neither death, nor the grave, shall finally, and totally prevail over the people of God, and members of Christ; but they shall be raised out of such a state, and live gloriously with him for ever. By it here is not meant Peter himself; though it is true of him, that Satan, and his posse of devils that beset him, did not prevail against him, so as to destroy his grace, hurt his estate, and hinder his salvation: nor could death, in all its frightful appearances, deter him from holding, and preaching, and maintaining the doctrine of Christ; and though death, and the grave, have now power over him, yet they shall not always detain him: but rather, it designs the doctrine Peter made a confession of; which, though it may be opposed by hell and earth, by Satan, and his emissaries, by the open force of persecutors, and the secret fraud of heretics, it may be brought into contempt by the scandalous lives of professors; and though the true professors of it may die off, yet truth itself always lives, and defies the power of death, and the grave: or else the church in general is meant, and every true believer. These words do not ascertain the continuance of anyone particular congregated church, but

secures the church universal, which will continue as long as the sun and moon endure, and the perseverance of everyone of God's elect; and assure that death, and the grave, shall not always have the dominion over the saints, but that they shall be rescued from them. Once more, this "it" may refer to Christ the rock, who, though he was brought to the dust of death, by the means of Satan, and the powers of darkness, yet to the ruin of him that had the power of death; and though death, and the grave, had power over him for a while, yet could not hold him; he rose victorious over them, and ever lives, having the keys of hell and death, to open the gates thereof, and let his people out when he thinks fit.

**Ver. 19.** *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,* etc.] By the kingdom of heaven is meant the Gospel, which comes from heaven, declares the king Messiah to be come, speaks of things concerning his kingdom, is the means of setting it up, and enlarging it, displays the riches of his grace, and gives an account of the kingdom of heaven, and of persons' right unto it, and meetness for it. "The keys" of it are abilities to open and explain the Gospel truths, and a mission and commission from Christ to make use of them; and being said to be given to Peter particularly, denotes his after qualifications, commission, work, and usefulness in opening the door of faith, or preaching the Gospel first to the Jews, (~~400~~ Acts 2:1-47) and then to the Gentiles, (~~400~~ Acts 10:1-48 15:7,14) and who was the first that made use of the keys of evangelical knowledge with respect to both, after he, with the rest of the apostles, had received an enlarged commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Otherwise these keys belonged to them all alike; for to the same persons the keys, and the use of them, appertained, on whom the power of binding and loosing was bestowed; and this latter all the disciples had, as is manifest from (~~408~~ Matthew 18:18) wherefore this does not serve to establish the primacy and power of Peter over the rest of the apostles; nor do keys design any lordly domination or authority; nor did Christ allow of any such among his apostles; nor is it his will that the ministers of his word should lord it over his heritage: he only is king of saints, and head of his church; he has the key of David, with which he opens, and no man shuts, and shuts, and no man opens; and this he keeps in his own hand, and gives it to none. Peter is not the door-keeper of heaven to let in, nor keep out, whom he pleases; nor has his pretended successor the keys of hell and death; these also are only in Christ's hands: though it has been said of the pope of Rome, that if he sends millions of men to hell, none should say to



him, what dost thou? but the keys here mentioned are the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or of the Gospel, which was shut up in the Jewish nation, through the ignorance, malice, and calumnies of the Scribes and Pharisees, who would neither embrace it, or enter into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer others that were going to enter into it; and through their taking away the key of knowledge, or the right interpretation of the word of God; and through a judicial blindness, which that nation in general was given up to: and this was shut up to the Gentiles through the natural darkness that was spread over them, and through want of a divine revelation, and persons sent of God to instruct them: but now Christ was about, and in a little time he would (for these words, with what follow, are in the future tense) give his apostles both a commission and gifts, qualifying them to open the sealed book of the Gospel, and unlock the mysteries of it, both to Jews and Gentiles, especially the latter. Keys are the ensigns of treasurers, and of stewards, and such the ministers of the Gospel are; they have the rich treasure of the word under their care, put into their earthen vessels to open and lay before others; and they are stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God, and of these things they have the keys. So that these words have nothing to do with church power and government in Peter, nor in the pope, nor in any other man, or set of men whatever; nor to be understood of church censures, excommunications, admissions, or exclusions of members: nor indeed are keys of any such similar use; they serve for locking and unlocking doors, and so for keeping out those that are without, and retaining those that are within, but not for the expulsion of any: but here they are used in a figurative sense, for the opening and explaining the truths of the Gospel, for which Peter had excellent gifts and abilities.

*And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* This also is not to be understood of binding, or loosing men's sins, by laying on, or taking off censures, and excommunications; but only of doctrines, or declarations of what is lawful and unlawful, free, or prohibited to be received, or practised; in which sense the words, *rtwmw rwsa*, "bound and loosed", are used in the Talmudic writings, times without number, for that which is forbidden and declared to be unlawful, and for that which is free of use, and pronounced to be so: in multitudes of places we read of one Rabbi *rswa*, "binding", and of another *rytm*, "loosing"; thousands, and ten thousands of instances of this kind might be produced; a whole

volume of extracts on this head might be compiled. Dr. Lightfoot has transcribed a great many, sufficient to satisfy any man, and give him the true sense of these phrases; and after him to mention any other is needless; yet give me leave to produce one, as it is short, and full, and explains these phrases, and points at the persons that had this power, explaining (<sup><2121></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:11) and that clause in it, “masters of the assemblies”.

“these (say they <sup>f9,34</sup>) are the disciples of the wise men, who sit in different collections, and study in the law; these pronounce things or persons defiled, and these pronounce things or persons clean, <sup>^yrytm ^l l hw ^yrswa w l l h</sup>, “these bind, and these loose”; these reject, or pronounce persons or things profane, and these declare them right.”

And a little after,

“get thyself an heart to hear the words of them that pronounce unclean, and the words of them that pronounce clean; the words of them <sup>^yrswa</sup>, that “bind”, and the words of them <sup>^yrytm</sup>, that “loose”; the words of them that reject, and the words of them that declare it right”

But Christ gave a greater power of binding and loosing, to his disciples, than these men had, and which they used to better purpose. The sense of the words is this, that Peter, and so the rest of the apostles, should be empowered with authority from him, and so directed by his Holy Spirit, that whatever they bound, that is, declared to be forbidden, and unlawful, should be so: and that whatever they loosed, that is, declared to be lawful, and free of use, should be so; and accordingly they bound some things which before were loosed, and loosed some things which before were bound; for instance, they bound, that is, prohibited, or declared unlawful, the use of circumcision, which before, and until the death of Christ, was enjoined the natural seed of Abraham; but that, and all ceremonies, being abolished by the death of Christ, they declared it to be nothing, and of no avail, yea, hurtful and pernicious; that whoever was circumcised, Christ profited him nothing, and that he was a debtor to do the whole law: they affirmed, that the believing Gentiles were not to be troubled with it; that it was a yoke not fit to be put upon their necks, which they, and their fathers, were not able to bear, (<sup><401></sup>Galatians 5:1,3,6 <sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:10,19). They bound, or forbid the observance of days, months, times, and years; the

keeping holy days, new moons, and sabbaths, which had been used in the Jewish church for ages past; such as the first day of the new year, and of every month, the day of atonement, the feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, the jubilee year, the sabbatical year, and seventh day sabbath, (~~400~~ Galatians 4:9,10 ~~5126~~ Colossians 2:16,17). They loosed, or declared lawful and free, both civil and religious conversation between Jews and Gentiles; whereas, before, the Jews had no dealings with the Gentiles, nor would not enter into their houses, nor keep company with them, would have no conversation with them; neither eat, nor drink with them; but now it was determined and declared, that no man should be called common, or unclean; and that in Christ Jesus, and in his church, there is no distinction of Jew and Gentile, (~~4108~~ Acts 10:28 11:2,3,18 ~~4878~~ Galatians 3:28). They also loosed, or pronounced lawful, the eating of any sort of food, without distinction, even that which was before counted common and unclean, being persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, by the words he said, (~~4515~~ Matthew 15:11). They asserted, that there is nothing unclean of itself; and that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; or that true religion does not lie in the observance of those things; that every creature of God is good, and fit for food, and nothing to be refused, or abstained from, on a religious account, provided it be received with thanksgiving, (~~5144~~ Romans 14:14,17 ~~5006~~ 1 Timothy 4:4). And these things now being by them bound or loosed, pronounced unlawful or lawful, are confirmed as such by the authority of God, and are so to be considered by us.

**Ver. 20.** *Then charged he his disciples*, etc.] When Peter had so freely and fully confessed him to be the Messiah, and which was the sense of all the disciples; and when Christ had expressed his approbation of his confession, and had promised such great and excellent things upon it, he gave a strict charge unto his disciples,

*that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.* The word Jesus is not in some copies; and is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions; nor does it seem absolutely necessary; it was enough to charge them to tell no man that he was the Messiah: his reasons for it might be, lest his enemies, the Scribes and Pharisees, should be the more provoked and incensed against him, and seek his death before his time; and lest the jealousy of the Romans should be stirred up, who might fear he would set up himself against Caesar, as king of the Jews, which might lead them to take measures obstructive of his further designs; and lest some persons,

hearing of this, should rise and proclaim him king of the Jews, who were big with the notion of the Messiah being a temporal prince: and moreover, because the disciples were to attest the truth of this after his resurrection; and he chose, for the present, that the people should collect this from his own ministry and miracles, which were sufficient to lead them into the knowledge of it, without any declarations of their's: and though they were possessed of true faith in him, as such, for themselves, as yet they had not the gifts and abilities to defend those doctrines respecting his person, and his offices, they had after the Spirit was poured down upon them.

**Ver. 21.** *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples,* etc.]

From the time that Peter made the confession concerning Jesus, as that he was the Messiah, and Son of God, and which things were clear to all the apostles, he began to teach them more expressly, and to point out to them more clearly, and plainly, his sufferings and death, than he had done before: and this he chose to do now, partly because that their faith in him was well grounded and established, so that they were the better able to bear these things he told them, which before might have been more staggering and discouraging to them; and partly, that being forewarned of them, they would not be so shocking when they came to pass: as also to destroy all their expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they might now be big with, he having so fully and freely owned himself to be the Messiah: and this also furnishes out some reasons why Jesus would not have his disciples, for the present, declare him to be the Messiah, that his death might not, by any means, be prevented, which was so necessary; since, should the princes of the world know him, they would not crucify him: and besides, seeing he was to suffer, and die, and rise again for the salvation of his people, it was proper that all this should be over before he was so publicly declared to be the Messiah, the Saviour, and Redeemer.

*How that he must go to Jerusalem:* the metropolis of the nation, where the great sanhedrim sat, who only could take cognizance of him, under the imputation of a false prophet, and condemn him to death, and which therefore would be in the most public manner; and though it would add to his reproach, would leave no room to be doubted of. The word "must", not only belongs to his going to Jerusalem, but to his sufferings, death, and resurrection; all which must be because of the immutable decree of God, the council, and covenant of grace, and peace, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the redemption and salvation of God's elect; these required them, and made them absolutely necessary:

*and suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and Scribes:* who would lie in wait for him, send persons to apprehend him, insult, reproach, and despitely use him; load him with false charges, accusations, and calumnies, and deliver him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified: and this is aggravated as what would be done to him, not by the common people, or the dregs of them, but by the principal men of the city, by the sanhedrim, which consisted of the “elders” of the people, their senators; for this is not a name of age, but of office and dignity; and of the “chief priests”, the principal of them, those of the greatest note among them, who were chosen members of the grand council; and of “the Scribes”, a set of men in high esteem for their learning and wisdom:

*and be killed;* signifying, that he should not die a natural death, but that his life should be taken from him in a cruel and violent manner, without any regard to law or justice; indeed, that he should be properly murdered; but for the comfort of his disciples, and that they might not be overmuch pressed and cast down, at the hearing of these things, he adds,

*and be raised again the third day* according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the type of Jonas.

**Ver. 22.** *Then Peter took him,* etc.] The Arabic version reads it, “called to him”: the Ethiopic, “answered him”; and the Syriac, “led him”; he took him aside, by himself; and as the Persic version, “privately said to him”, or he took him by the hand in a familiar way, to expostulate with him, and dissuade him from thinking and talking of any such things;

*and began to rebuke him:* reprove and chide him, forgetting himself and his distance; though he did it not out of passion and ill will, but out of tenderness and respect; looking upon what Christ had said, unworthy of him, and as what was scarce probable or possible should ever befall him, who was the Son of the living God, and overlooking his resurrection from the dead, and being ignorant at present of the end of Christ’s coming into the world, and redemption and salvation by his sufferings and death:

*saying, far be it from thee, Lord,* or “Lord, be propitious to thyself”, or “spare thyself”: the phrase answers to **dl sj**, often used by the Targumists<sup>1935</sup> and stands in the Syriac version here. The Septuagint use it in a like sense, in (<sup>10423</sup>Genesis 43:23 <sup>10237-2</sup>2 Samuel 23:17) (<sup>13119</sup>1 Chronicles 11:19). Some think the word “God” is to be understood, and the words to be considered, either as a wish, “God be propitious to thee”: or “spare

thee”, that no such thing may ever befall thee; or as an affirmation, “God is propitious to thee”, he is not angry and displeased with thee, as ever to suffer any such thing to be done to thee: but it may very well be rendered, by “God forbid”; or as we do, “far be it from thee”, as a note of aversion, and abhorrence of the thing spoken of:

*this shall not be done unto thee*: expressing his full assurance of it, and his resolution to do all that in him lay to hinder it: he could not see how such an innocent person could be so used by the chief men of the nation; and that the Messiah, from whom so much happiness was expected, could be treated in such a manner, and especially that the Son of the living God should be killed.

**Ver. 23.** *But he turned*, etc.] Either to Peter, changing his countenance, and looking sternly upon him, or rather to the disciples; for Mark says, “when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter”: Peter had took him aside, and was arguing the case privately with him; but what he said was so offensive to him, that he chose to reprove him publicly before the disciples; and therefore turned himself from him to them, in a way of resentment,

*and said unto Peter*; in their hearing, and before them all,

*get thee behind me, Satan*. The Persic version renders it, O infidel! as he was at present, with respect to the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ: some take the word Satan, to be a general name for an adversary, or enemy, as it is used in (~~1092~~2 Samuel 19:22 ~~1114~~1 Kings 11:14) and think that Christ calls Peter by this name, because he was against him, and opposed him in this point; which sense abates the harshness of this expression. But it seems rather to mean the devil, who took the advantage of Peter’s weakness and ignorance; and put him upon dissuading Christ from suffering, for the salvation of his people: though it should be known, that the word Satan, is used by the Jews <sup>f936</sup>, to signify the vitiosity and corruption of nature; of which they say, *awh`jç*, this is Satan; so the messenger, or angel Satan, (~~4717~~2 Corinthians 12:7) may be thought to be the same; (See Gill on “~~4717~~2 Corinthians 12:7”) And then our Lord’s sense is, be gone from me, I cannot bear the sight of thee; thou art under the influence of the corruption of thy heart, and nature; thou talkest like a carnal, and not like a spiritual man; and therefore Christ denominates him from his carnality, Satan, one of the names of the vitiosity of nature, whom

a little before he had pronounced blessed; being then under the influence of another spirit, as appeared from the noble confession of his faith in Christ: this change shows the weakness of human nature, the strength of corruption, the inconstancy and fickleness of frames, and the imperfection of grace in the best of saints.

*Thou art an offence unto me*; or a stumbling block to me, a cause of stumbling and failing; not that he really was, but he endeavoured to be, and was as much as in him lay; and had he given heed unto him, would have been so. It may be observed, that nothing was more offensive to Christ, than to endeavour to divert him from the work his farther called him to; he had agreed to do; what he came into this world for, and his heart was so much set upon; namely, to suffer and die in the room of his people, in order to obtain salvation for them: never were such words uttered by him, and such resentment shown to any, but to the devil himself, when he tempted him to worship him.

*For thou savourest not the things that be of God*; meaning his sufferings and death, which were the appointment of God, the counsel of his will, the provision of his covenant; what he foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and what he had an hand in, and in which the glory of his grace, power, and justice, was concerned, and were the end of the mission of his Son into this world; which things were out of sight and mind, and were not regarded by the apostle at this time;

*but those that be of men*: he thought of nothing but worldly grandeur in the kingdom of the Messiah, as a temporal prince and Saviour; and of the continuance of Christ's natural life, for his own carnal and worldly advantage; which showed him to be, at this time, greatly under the influence of corrupt nature. So, though the blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and death of Christ, are savoury things, things to be savoured, minded, and regarded by believers, and accounted precious; and they do mind them, so the word signifies, ( Ⓜ Romans 8:5) when being blessed with a spiritual and experimental knowledge, and application of them to themselves, they exercise faith, hope, and love upon Christ, with respect unto them; when they remember them aright in the ordinance of the supper, the love from whence they spring, and the benefits that come hereby; and when they discern the Lord's body in it, a crucified Jesus, and the blessings of grace which come by him, and ascribe their whole salvation to his sufferings and death, and taste the sweetness there is in these things, eating his flesh and

drinking his blood by faith; yet being left to themselves, they do not savour, mind, and regard these things, but carnal things, and human schemes; as when they are dilatory to profess a crucified Christ, and submit to those ordinances of his, which set forth his sufferings and death; or are negligent in their attendance on them, their place being often empty at supper time; or if they do attend, their hearts go after other things.

**Ver. 24.** *Then said Jesus unto his disciples*, etc.] Knowing that they had all imbibed the same notion of a temporal kingdom, and were in expectation of worldly riches, honour, and pleasure; he took this opportunity of preaching the doctrine of the cross to them, and of letting them know, that they must prepare for persecutions, sufferings, and death; which they must expect to endure, as well as he, if they would be his disciples:

*if any man will come after me*: that is, be a disciple and follower of him, it being usual for the master to go before, and the disciple to follow after him: now let it be who it will, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, young or old, male or female, that have any inclination and desire, or have took up a resolution in the strength of grace, to be a disciple of Christ,

*let him deny himself*: let him deny sinful self, ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and part with them, and his former sinful companions, which were as a part of himself: let him deny righteous self, and renounce all his own works of righteousness, in the business of justification and salvation; let him deny himself the pleasures and profits of this world, when in competition with Christ; let him drop and banish all his notions and expectations of an earthly kingdom, and worldly grandeur, and think of nothing but reproach, persecution, and death, for the sake of his Lord and Master: and

*take up his cross*; cheerfully receive, and patiently bear, every affliction and evil, however shameful and painful it may be, which is appointed for him, and he is called unto; which is his peculiar cross, as every Christian has his own; to which he should quietly submit, and carry, with an entire resignation to the will of God, in imitation of his Lord:

*and follow me*; in the exercise of grace, as humility, zeal, patience, and self-denial; and in the discharge of every duty, moral, or evangelical; and through sufferings and death, to his kingdom and glory. The allusion is, to Christ's bearing his own cross, and Simeon's carrying it after him, which afterwards came to pass.



**Ver. 25.** *For whosoever will save his life*, etc.] Whoever is desirous of preserving himself from troubles, reproaches, persecutions, and death; and takes such a method to do it, as by forsaking Christ, denying his Gospel, and dropping his profession of it; and by so doing, curries favour with men, in order to procure to himself worldly emoluments, honour, peace, pleasure, and life,

*shall lose it*; he will expose himself to the wrath of God, to everlasting punishment, the destruction of soul and body in hell, which is the second death, and will be his portion:

*and whosoever will lose his life for my sake*: that is, is willing to forego all the pleasures and comforts of life, and be subject to poverty and distress, and to lay down life itself, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel, rather than deny him, and part with truth,

*shall find it*; in the other world, to great advantage; he shall enjoy an immortal and eternal life, free from all uneasiness and affliction, and full of endless joys and pleasures.

**Ver. 26.** *For what is a man profited*, etc.] Such persons, though they are only seeking their own profit, will find themselves most sadly mistaken; for of what advantage will it be to such a man,

*if he shall gain the whole world*; all that is precious and valuable in it; all the power, pleasures, and riches of it; if with Alexander, he had the government of the whole world, and with Solomon, all the delights of it; and was possessed with the wealth of Croesus, and Crassus,

*and lose his own soul*? If that should be consigned to everlasting torment and misery, be banished the divine presence, and continually feel the gnawings of the worm of conscience that never dies, and the fierceness of the fire of God's wrath, that shall never be quenched, he will have a miserable bargain of it.

*Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul*? Or, "for the redemption" of it, as the Ethiopic version renders it: (see <sup>498B</sup>Psalm 49:8). If he had the whole world to give, and would give it, it would not be a sufficient ransom for it; the redemption of an immortal soul requires a greater price than gold and silver, or any corruptible thing; nothing short of the blood and life of Christ, is a proper exchange, or ransom price for it. But in the other world there will be no redemption; the loss of a soul is

irrecoverable: a soul once lost and damned, can never be retrieved. This passage is thought to be proverbial; what comes nearest to it, is the following <sup>f937</sup>.

“If a scholar dies, we never find an exchange for him; there are four things which are the ministry or service of the world, ḡpyl j ʕy wdba ma, if they are lost, they may be changed; and they are these, gold, silver, iron, and brass, (<del>xxx</del> Job 28:1,2) but if a scholar dies, wtrwmt wnl aybm ym, who will bring us his exchange? or an exchange for him: we lost R. Simon, “who will bring us his exchange?”.”

**Ver. 27.** *For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father*, etc.] This is a reason, proving the truth of what is before asserted, that men’s lives may be lost by saving them, and be found by losing them, whatever paradoxes they may seem to be; and that the loss of a soul is irrecoverable, and no compensation can be made for it; and points out the time, when all this will appear: for nothing is more certain, and to be depended upon, than that Christ, who, though he was then a mean and contemptible man, and attended with the sinless infirmities of human nature, wherefore he calls himself, “the son of man”, should come; either a second time to judgment at the last day, in the same glory as his Father, as his Son, equal with him, and clothed, with power and authority from him, and as mediator, to execute judgment: with his angels; the Holy Ones, so the Syriac and Persic versions read, and so some copies; who will add to the glory of his appearance; and will be employed in gathering all nations before him, and in executing his will: or, in his power, to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; on those that crucified him, or did not believe in him, or deserted and apostatised from him. And then he shall reward every man according to his works, or work; either that particular action of putting him to death, or their unbelief in him, or desertion of him; or any, or all of their evil works, they had been guilty of: for though good works are not the cause of salvation, nor for which men will be rewarded; though they may be brought into judgment, as proofs and evidences of true faith, in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, by which good men will be acquitted and discharged; yet evil works will be the cause of condemnation, and the rule of judgment; and the reason of adjudging to temporal punishment here, and eternal destruction hereafter.

**Ver. 28.** *Verily I say unto you.* etc.] This is a strong asseveration, Christ puts his “Amen” to it; declaring it to be a certain truth, which may firmly be believed:

*there be some standing here*; meaning either his disciples, or some of the audience; for it is clear from (<sup>410834</sup>Mark 8:34) that the people were called unto him with his disciples, when he said these words:

*which shall not taste of death*: that is, shall not die; a phrase frequently used by the Jewish doctors: they say <sup>f938</sup>,

“All the children of the world, *atwmd am[j ʿym[j* , “taste the taste of death”.”

That is, die:

*till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom*; which is not to be understood of his personal coming in his kingdom in the last day, when he will judge quick and dead; for it cannot be thought, that any then present should live to that time, but all tasted of death long before, as they have done; for the story of John’s being alive, and to live till then, is fabulous, and grounded on a mistake which John himself has rectified at the close of his Gospel: nor of the glorious transfiguration of Christ, the account of which immediately follows; when he was seen by Peter, James, and John, persons now present; for that, at most, was but an emblem and a pledge of his future glory: rather, of the appearance of his kingdom, in greater glory and power, upon his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven; when the Spirit was poured down in an extraordinary manner, and the Gospel was preached all over the world; was confirmed by signs and wonders, and made effectual to the conversion and salvation of many souls; which many then present lived to see, and were concerned in: though it seems chiefly to have regard to his coming, to show his regal power and authority in the destruction of the Jews; when those his enemies that would not he should reign over them, were ordered to be brought and slain before him; and this the Apostle John, for one, lived to be a witness of.