

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 19

Ver. 1. *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man,* etc.] That is, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, may fitly be represented by a man

that is an householder, or master of a family, as Christ is; *See Gill* “~~40125~~ *Matthew 10:25*” He is master of the whole family of God, in heaven, and in earth, of all the children of God, and household of faith; his house they are, he is Father and master, son and firstborn, priest and prophet there.

Which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard: by “the vineyard” may be meant the church, which, like a vineyard, is separated by electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and by the order and ordinances of the Gospel, from the rest of the world; is set with various vines, with trees of righteousness, with pleasant plants, both fruitful and profitable; and which are dear and valuable to Christ; and about which much care is used to preserve, keep, and improve them. This may be called “his”, Christ’s, being what he has chosen for himself, his Father has given him, and he is heir of; which he has purchased with his blood, and which he plants, waters, takes care of, and enjoys. The “labourers” design either the ministers of the Gospel, who labour in the word and doctrine, who are, or at least ought to be, labourers in Christ’s vineyard, and not loiterers; whose work in study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and in performing other services they are called unto, is very laborious; and made more so, through the wickedness of some, and weakness of others: the employment of these labourers in the vineyard is various; the business of some is to plant; they are chiefly made use of in conversion: the work of others is to water; these are instruments in edification, and means of the growth of grace: others have a good hand at pruning, giving reproofs and corrections, in a suitable manner, with success, to the checking of sin, and bringing forth more fruit: others are useful in propping and supporting the vines, comforting and strengthening weak believers; and others in protecting and defending the outworks of the

church, the doctrines and ordinances of it: or else private Christians in general may be intended, who all are, or should be labourers, both in the exercise of grace; for there is the work of faith, and the labour of love, to God, Christ, and his people, in which they should be continually employed; and in the discharge of duty, with regard to themselves; and in the care of their own vineyard, with respect to their families, which are their charge, and also to the church of Christ, of which they are members. These labourers are said to be “hired” by the householder, or owner of the vineyard, Christ, not strictly and properly speaking; nor does it mean that he had no prior right to their obedience, or that there is any merit in their labour, or that that is the condition of their salvation; but it signifies the influence of his grace, in making them willing to serve him cheerfully, and labour in his vineyard freely; to encourage them in which, he makes them many gracious, and exceeding great and precious promises, and particularly that of eternal life: for which purpose, it is said, that he “went out”, either from his Father as mediator, being sent by him; or from heaven into this world, by the assumption of human nature; or by his Spirit, and the influence of his grace, in the calls of his people, to their several services, in his church; and that “early in the morning”: some of them being very early called to labour there; meaning either in the morning of the world, as Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and others; or in the morning of the Jewish church state, as Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and the like; or in the morning of the Gospel dispensation, as the apostles of Christ, which seems most likely; or in the morning of youth, as Timothy and others. Several things, in this first part of the parable, might be illustrated from the Jewish writings. They have a parable indeed, which, in the several parts of it, greatly resembles this, and begins thus ^{f1047};

“to what is R. Bon like? to a king that hath a vineyard, **μϣλ [ϰϣ**
wyl [rkçw, “and hires labourers into it”, etc.”

Out of which some other things will be remarked, in the following parts of this parable: of a son’s being sent, and going out to hire labourers into the vineyard, take the following instance ^{f1048}:

“it happened to R. Jochanan ben Matthia, that said to his son,
rkçw ax, “go out, and hire labourers” for us: “he went out”, and agreed with them for their food.”

The time of hiring labourers, here mentioned, exactly agrees with the Jewish accounts^{f1049}.

“Says R. Juda ben Bethira, when the face of all the east is light unto Hebron, all the people go out, every man to his work; and when it is so light, it is good “to hire labourers we say”.”

Upon which the gloss says,

“every man goes out to his work, not for labourers, but the “householder”, who *rtwy μykçm*, “rises earlier to find labourers to hire”.”

Perhaps it may not be worth while to observe, how large a spot of ground, set with vines, was, by them, called a vineyard: it is frequently said by them^{f1050},

“that a vineyard planted by less than four cubits, is no vineyard; but R. Simeon, and the wise men, say it is a vineyard.”

Ver. 2. *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day,* etc.] These labourers were of that sort that were called *μwy rykçç*, “hired for a day”; concerning whom is the following rule^{f1051}:

“he that is hired for a day, may demand it all the night; and he that is hired for a night may demand it all the day: he that is hired for hours, may demand it all the night, and all the day; he that is hired for a week, he that is hired for a month, he that is hired for a year, he that is hired for seven, if he goes out in the day, may demand all the day; and if he goes out in the night, he may demand it all the night, and all the day.”

And the wages of a day were usually *rnyd* “a penny”; which, if understood of a Roman penny, was seven pence halfpenny of our money. One of their canons runs thus^{f1052}:

“he that hires a labourer in the winter, to work with him in the summer, *μwy l kb*, “for a penny every day”, and he gives him his hire; and, lo! his hire is alike to that in the winter, a “sela” every day, this is forbidden; because it looks as if he chose that time to lessen his wages; but if he says to him, work with me from this day,

to such a time, “for a penny every day”, though his hire is the same, a “sela” every day, this is lawful.”

By the penny a day agreed for with the labourers, may be meant external privileges; or the free promise made, whether to ministers, or private believers, of a sufficient supply of grace daily, that as their day is, their strength shall be; together with that of eternal life and happiness at last.

He sent them into his vineyard; to labour there: for none have any business there, but such who are called and sent by the owner of it; and where sons are sent, and work, as well as servants; (see ~~4123~~ Matthew 21:28,29).

Ver. 3. *And he went out about the third hour,* etc.] About nine o’clock in the morning,

and saw others standing idle in the market place: the place where labourers used to be hired: and may design the world, because a place full of people, and of great wickedness, for the whole world lies in it; a place of trade and traffic in worldly things, and likewise of worldly and carnal pleasure, and also of idleness. Now God’s elect before calling, are in this place: they are natives of it, have their conversation according to it: here Christ came in person, and here he sends his ministers, his Gospel, to find them out, and by his Spirit and grace he calls them from hence; so that afterwards they are no more of it, though they are in it: but before conversion they belong to it, and their posture then is standing idle; being sluggish, and slothful in business, unwilling to work, and afraid of a little danger and trouble, sauntering away their time in carnal pleasures, and so clothed with rags, and in a starving, famishing condition: but Christ’s eye is upon them; he observes, and takes notice of them in this disagreeable position and situation, and speaks of them in the following manner.

Ver. 4. *And said unto them, go ye also into the vineyard,* etc.] Expressive of a call of divine grace out of the world, into the church; and which arises from mere grace, and good will, without any merit in, or motive from man, as the case here shows: for the householder went out to these men, not they to him; he puts the question to them, and calls them, and bids them go into his vineyard; they do not ask him to hire them, nor desire to be in his service. Moreover, the persons called were a parcel of idle, mean, vulgar people, as market folks commonly are; the weak, base, and foolish things of the world. The encouragement given them follows,

and whatsoever is right I will give you which is to be understood, not of strict justice; for in this sense nothing could be given to sinful mortals, for their services; but of grace, for what is had on this score, whether in this, or in the other world, is in a way of giving and receiving, which are the phrases used here, and in the context. It properly signifies what is meet and convenient, and will be satisfying; and since it is not expressed what he would give them, and they should receive, it calls for faith and dependence on divine goodness: for it does not yet appear, what the faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard will want, and shall receive in this life, nor what will be their happiness in the world to come: the glories and joys of heaven are unseen things; and eternal life is a hidden one at present, and must be trusted for:

and they went their way: into the vineyard, the church, to labour there; which shows, that the call was powerful and efficacious; they were powerfully wrought upon by it; were at once inclined, and made willing to, and did go cheerfully, without standing to dispute about their work or wages.

Ver. 5. *Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour,* etc.] About twelve o'clock, or at noon, and three o'clock in the afternoon. These three last mentioned seasons of the day, were the hours of prayer; (see ^{<4125>}Acts 2:15, 3:1, 10:9) and did likewise: seeing others in the same place, and posture, he called them, and sent them into his vineyard, to labour there, giving them the same promise he did to others.

Ver. 6. *And about the eleventh hour he went out,* etc.] About five o'clock in the afternoon. The Persic version reads it, "the twelfth hour", which was six o'clock in the afternoon, the last hour of the day. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, (^{<4110>}John 11:9) and these twelve hours into four parts; (^{<4008>}Nehemiah 9:3) each part containing three hours, to which division there is a manifest respect in this parable. These different seasons of the husbandman's going out to hire labourers, may have regard either to the several periods of time, and ages of the world, as before the law, under the law, the times of the Messiah, and the last days; or the various dispensations of the Gospel, first by Christ, and John the Baptist to the Jews, then by the apostles to the same in their first mission, afterwards when their commission was renewed, first to the Jews in Judea, and then to the same among the nations of the world, and last of all to the Gentiles; or to the several stages of human life, and may regard Christ's call of persons

in childhood, youth, manhood, and old age; which last may be signified by the eleventh hour, as also the Gentiles, and the remainder of God's elect in the last day:

and found others standing idle; in the same place and position as before: for the state and condition of God's elect, by nature, as it is the same with others, it is the same with them all. The word "idle" is omitted here by the Vulgate Latin, the Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; but is retained in the Syriac and Persic versions; and stands in the Greek copies:

and saith unto them, why stand ye here all the day idle? for being about the eleventh hour, the day was far spent, it was almost gone, a small portion of it remained, but one hour, as appears from (~~400~~ Matthew 20:12).

Ver. 7. *They say unto him, because no man hath hired us*, etc.] This may be fitly applied to the Gentiles, who hundreds of years were neglected by God; he overlooked the times of their ignorance, took no notice of them in their state of stupidity, blindness, and irreligion; but suffered them to walk in their own ways, sent no prophets to instruct them, nor messages, nor messengers to them; till at length the Jews, having rejected and crucified the Messiah, and persecuted his apostles, and contradicted, and blasphemed the Gospel, they were ordered to go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them:

he saith unto them, go ye also into the vineyard: the Gospel was made the power of God unto salvation to them; they were called by grace, became of the same body the church, were fellow heirs with the believing Jews, partakers of the same promises and privileges, in a Gospel church state, and were equally labourers in the Lord's vineyard:

and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive; with the rest of the labourers in it. This clause is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and in Munster's Hebrew Gospel; nor is it in Beza's most ancient Greek copy, though in all the rest; nor is it in the Persic version, which has added, "and they went", as they were bidden, into the vineyard, the call being effectual; but is retained in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 8. *So when even was come*, etc.] At six o'clock, or when the sun was set, which was the time of paying labourers their wages: thus in the parable of the Jews, before referred to, which bears some resemblance to this, it is said,

“br[t[| , ^{f1053} that “at evening time” the labourers came to take their wages.”

Sooner than this, one that was hired for a day, could not demand it; nor was the master of the vineyard, who hired him, obliged to pay him till the sun was set ^{f1054}, which was the time of his going forth from his labour ^{f1055}. This even may be understood, either of the evening of the Jewish state, upon the calling of the Gentiles; or of the end of the world, the close of the Gospel dispensation; when the work of it will be over, when all the elect of God, Jews and Gentiles, shall be called and gathered in, and all brought to repentance towards God, and faith in Christ.

The lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward: by the lord of the vineyard may be meant God the Father, who has chosen and separated the vineyard of the church for himself; and has made it the care and charge of his Son Jesus Christ; who, as mediator, may be designed by “his steward”; who has not only all the stores of grace in his hand, to distribute to his people, in this life, as their cases require; but has also eternal life and happiness in his possession for them; not only the promise of it, but that itself; and has a power of giving it to as many as the Father hath given him; and which he, the righteous judge, and faithful steward, will give at the day of judgment, to all that love his appearing.

Call the labourers, and give them their hire; the proper time being come: for the Jews say ^{f1056}

“it is an affirmative precept to give the wages of an hired person in its time; as it is said, (^{f1055}Deuteronomy 24:15) at “his day thou shalt give him his hire”; and if it is prolonged after its time, it is transgressing a negative precept, as it is said, (in the same place,) “neither shall the sun go down upon it.””

So Jews and Gentiles were called to partake of the same Gospel privileges; and so will all the faithful labourers in the Lord’s vineyard be called together, and have the reward of eternal life bestowed upon them, and be bid to enter into the joy of their Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for them, as they before were ordered to go into the vineyard, and work. And though eternal life may be called hire or reward, because as hire is given to labourers, so is eternal life; and as that is given at the even and close of the day, and when the labourer has done his work, so everlasting glory will be given to the saints at the end of life, and when they have done the will and

work of God: yet it will not be bestowed by way of merit, or, as if there was a just proportion between the work, labour, and services of the saints, and the glory that shall be revealed in them. Their purest services, even their sufferings for Christ, are not worthy to be compared with that; nor are there any that are done by them, but what are due to God, what he has a right unto, and are their duty to perform; so that when they are done by them in the best and most perfect manner, they are but unprofitable servants: nor can they, by anything they do, be profitable to God, or give anything to him, which can be obligatory upon him, to do anything for them, or be a valuable consideration for anything they should receive from him; and therefore they cannot merit anything at his hand, and much less eternal life: besides, their services are impure and imperfect, and whenever anything is well done by them, it is done not by their own strength and might, but by the assistance and grace of God; and therefore they can have no demand upon him for what they do: eternal life, though a reward, is not a reward of debt, but of grace; it is the free gift of God through Christ; God has graciously promised it in the covenant of his grace, before the world began; he has given it into the hands of his Son for his people, with whom it is sure; and he gives it freely to all the sheep the Father has given him.

Beginning from the last unto the first; beginning with the last that was called and sent into the vineyard, and so proceeding on to the next to them; giving them their wages as he went along, till he came to the first, who were early in the morning hired into this service; intimating, that some such method will be taken in the introducing of the saints into the kingdom of the Messiah here, and into his everlasting kingdom hereafter; whereby that saying of our Lord's which occasioned this parable, will be also fulfilled, "the first shall be last, and last first".

Ver. 9. *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour*, etc.] Who were the last that were hired; and signify either such, as are called in their last days, in old age; or Gentile sinners; or the last of God's elect, that will be called by grace, in the end of the world:

they received every man a penny: the same they first agreed for, that were hired early into the vineyard; and all, and every man alike, not one more and another less. So the same church privileges and immunities are common to all believers, Jews or Gentiles, sooner or later called; and equal title give to the same eternal life and happiness, which will be enjoyed alike,

by one saint as another: they are all loved with the same everlasting love by God; they are chosen alike by him in his Son, at the same time, in the same way and manner, and to the same grace and glory; they are interested in the same covenant, in all the promises and blessings of it; they are bought with the same price of a Redeemer's blood, are justified by the same righteousness, and are called in one hope of their calling; they are equally the sons of God, and their glory and happiness are always expressed by the same thing, as a kingdom, a crown, and inheritance, etc. They are all equally heirs of the same kingdom and glory, and are born again to the same incorruptible inheritance, of which they will all be partakers; they will all be called to inherit the same kingdom, they will sit on the same throne of glory, and wear the same crown of righteousness, and enjoy the same uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. Now, indeed, they have not the same measures of grace; some have more, others less; but in heaven, it will be alike, complete and perfect in all; and even now, they have the same grace for nature and kind, only it is not in all in the same exercise; now the saints are distinguished by the several stations and places in which they are; though they are members of the same body, they have not the same office, and have gifts differing from one another; but in the other state, all such offices and gifts will cease, and all will be upon an equal foot; be where Christ is, and behold his glory, and will stand in no need of each other's instruction and help. Now the capacities of man are different, according to the different temperament of their bodies, their different education, opportunities, advantages, and stations in life, but in the other world, where this difference will be no more, every vessel of mercy being prepared for glory, will be equally capable of receiving it: and though there will be degrees of punishment in hell, proportionate to the sins of men, which the justice of God requires, yet it follows not, that there will be degrees in glory; since that is not proportioned to the works of men, but springs from the grace of God, and yet in a way of justice too, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: and since the saints have an equal interest in these things, it seems that upon the foot of justice, they should equally enjoy all that happiness which these entitle them to.

Ver. 10. *But when the first came*, etc.] Who were early hired into the vineyard; and design either the first saints that were in the world; or the Jews that first believed in Christ, either really or nominally; or such, who were called by grace in their early days:

they supposed, or "hoped", as the Syriac version renders it,

that they should have received more; than a penny, a greater reward: not that they could expect it on the foot of their agreement, or on account of their work; but because they observed, that they that came last into the vineyard, had as much as they agreed for; and therefore hoped, from the goodness of their Lord to them, that they should receive more:

and they likewise received every man a penny; the selfsame privileges of the Gospel, and a title to the selfsame reward of free grace, the selfsame glory and happiness.

Ver. 11. *And when they had received it*, etc.] The external privileges of the Gospel dispensation, an inheritance among them that are sanctified, and a right unto it, on the foot of free grace,

they murmured against the good man of the house; who had been so kind and liberal, to those who came last into the vineyard, and had done no injury to them, but gave them a full reward. So the Jews that first believed in Christ, were at first uneasy at the Gospel being preached to the Gentiles, at the calling of them, and their partaking of the same privileges in a Gospel church state with them, without submitting to the ceremonies of the law, as they had done; just as the Pharisees, in Christ's time, murmured against him; for receiving sinners, and eating with them: though in the latter day, the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and in the ultimate glory there will be no murmuring at each other's happiness.

Ver. 12. *Saying, these last have wrought but one hour*, etc.] Thinking it hard, that they should have the same reward for the service of one hour, others had for the service of many. This is grudged by the Jews ^{f1057};

““Bath Kol”, a voice from heaven, went out and said, “Ketiah bar Shallum”, is prepared for the life of the world to come; Rabbi wept, and said, there is that obtains his world (or the world to come for himself) *tj a h[çb*, “in one hour”; and there is that obtains it in many years.”

The same observation is also made by the same person, on account of R. Eleazar ben Durdia ^{f1058}. So in the parable of the Jews above mentioned, which is the broken remains of a common proverb among them like ^{f1059} this; it is observed, that there being one labourer among those that were hired, who did his work better than all the rest, and who was taken notice of by the king; that when

“at even the labourers came to take their wages, this labourer also came to take his; and the king gave him his wages equal with them, (or, as in another place, a perfect one,) the labourers began to press him with difficulty, (or as elsewhere ^{f1060} ~ym[rtm, “they murmured”,) and said, Oh! our Lord, the king, “we have laboured all the day”; but this man has not laboured but two or three hours in the day, and he takes his wages, even as ours, or a perfect reward.”

And so it follows here,

and thou hast made them equal to us, who have borne the burden and heat of the day; of all the Jewish rites and ceremonies, which were burdensome and intolerable. The ceremonial law was a burden to the Jewish people; the multitude of sacrifices enjoined them, and the frequent repetition of them, together with the great number of other ordinances and institutions, produced a weariness in them; especially in the carnal part of them, who saw not the things typified by them, the use and end of them, and so did not enjoy spiritual pleasure in them, (³⁰¹³Malachi 1:13). It was a yoke, and a yoke of bondage to them, which brought on them a spirit of bondage, through the fear of death, which was the penalty annexed to it; and it was an insupportable one, which neither they, nor their forefathers, were able to bear, because it made them debtors to keep the whole law: and this was made still more burdensome, by the traditions of the elders, which were added to it, and which the Scribes and Pharisees obliged to the observance of; to which they themselves still added, and bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men’s shoulders. The law was a fiery law, and the dispensation of it was a hot and scorching one; it was uncomfortable working under the flashes of a mount, that burned with fire: the law worked wrath, and possessed the minds of men with a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation. This may also be applied to such Christians, who are called to more severe service or sufferings for Christ, than others are; who are almost pressed down without measure, and endure fiery trials, are scorched, and made black, with the sun of persecution beating upon them; as the saints under the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors, and as the confessors and martyrs in the times of papal power and cruelty; and who, it might be thought, will have a greater degree of glory and happiness hereafter; and so some have been of opinion, that these are they that shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, (⁶¹¹⁴Revelation 20:4-6) But it rather seems, that others will be made equal with them, who have not endured what they have done; for all the dead in

Christ, all that have part in the first resurrection, when Christ comes, as all the saints will then rise, will share in that glory; even the innumerable company, chosen, redeemed, and called, out of every nation, tongue, and people, and will be admitted to the same honour and happiness, (~~660~~ Revelation 7:9,13,15-17) And this character will also agree with many other servants of Christ, who are called to harder and more laborious service than others are, and labour more abundantly in the Lord's vineyard than others do, and are longer employed in it; as for instance, the Apostle Paul; and yet the same crown of righteousness that is laid up for him, and given to him, will be given to all that love the appearance of Christ, though they have not laboured for his name's sake, as he has done.

Ver. 13. *But he answered one of them,* etc.] Who was the forwardest and loudest in his complaints, and represented the rest;

and said, friend, I do thee no wrong; by giving all alike, the same privileges and blessings to the last, as to the first, since nothing was withheld from him. And indeed the Lord does no wrong to any, by the distinction which he makes among his creatures: he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: he does no injury to the evil angels, by choosing the good angels, and confirming them in the estate in which they were created; when the others are reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day; or by choosing fallen men, in Christ, and making provisions of grace for them, and not devils: and so there is no unrighteousness in him, nor does he do any wrong to any, when, like the potter, out of the same clay, he makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; any more than when, in a providential way, he gives riches and wealth to some, and withholds them from others; or sends his Gospel, the means of grace to one, and not to another: and still less can he be thought to do wrong to the sons of men, by giving to them alike the same grace and privileges here, and the same happiness and glory hereafter; since neither have any right to what they have, or shall enjoy, and no one has the less for what is given to the other.

Didst thou not agree with me for a penny? That is, to labour in the vineyard all the day for a penny; yea, this agreement was made personally with him, not with a servant, or messenger of his; though if it had, it ought, according to the Jewish canons, to have been abode by, which run thus

“A man says to his messenger, or servant, go and hire workmen for me for three pence; he goes and hires them for four pence: if the messenger says to them, your wages be upon me, he gives them four pence, and takes three pence of the master of the house; he looses one out of his own purse: if he says to them, your hire be upon the master of the house, the master of the house gives them according to the custom of the province: if there are one in the province that hired for three pence, and others that are hired for four pence, he gives them but three pence, “and the murmuring” is against the messenger; in what things? When the work is not known, but when the work is known, and it is worth four pence, the master of the house gives them four pence; but if his messenger does not say to them four pence, they do not labour and do what deserves four pence. The householder says to him, hire me for four pence, and the messenger goes and hires for three pence, though the work deserves four pence, they have but three pence; because that $\hat{m}x[I [w] bq$, “they took it upon themselves”, (i.e. they agreed for so much,) and their murmuring is against the messenger.”

Thus the argument in the parable proceeds upon the agreement, which ought to be abode by.

Ver. 14. *Take that thine is*, etc.] By agreement, and go thy way; out of my sight, give me no more trouble on this head; which looks like a dismissal from his service, and after privileges; and was true of many among the Jews, who were only nominal professors, and from whom the Gospel and ordinances of it were taken:

I will give unto this last man that was called, and sent into the vineyard, *even as unto thee*; the same outward privileges, besides special grace, and eternal glory, which it looks as if the other had not.

Ver. 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* etc.] External gifts and outward privileges, such as enjoying the word and ordinances, are God’s own; and he may, as he does, bestow them on whom he will, and when and where he pleases; as he gave them to the Jews, and continued them many hundred years, when the Gentiles were utterly with them destitute of them; and as he has bestowed them in a more abundant manner for a long time on the Gentiles, whilst the Jews despise and reject

them. Special grace is his own, which he gives to whom he pleases; it is by his own grace, and not the merits of men, that any are chosen, adopted, justified, pardoned, regenerated, and called; that they have faith, hope, love, repentance, or perform new obedience from a new heart, and new principles. Heaven and glory is his own, of his own preparing and giving; and both grace and glory are disposed of, and that very rightly and lawfully, according to his sovereign good will and pleasure: he chooses, adopts, justifies, pardons, regenerates, calls, and sanctifies whom he pleases; and brings what sons to glory he thinks fit, and bestows it equally upon them: and in so doing, does no wrong, or any injustice to any of his creatures; not to the fallen angels, by choosing some of their species, and confirming them in their original constitution; and by leaving them, the fallen angels, in their apostasy; nor by making provision for fallen man, and not them, nor by punishing them with everlasting destruction; nor do they ever complain of any wrong being done them: nor to non-elect men; for none of Adam's race have any right to grace or glory, and therefore no wrong is done to any of them, by withholding them from them, whereby nothing is taken from them, and given to others; and by punishing them for sin; nor to any elect men, by making others partners with them; since they are all alike by nature, unworthy of grace and glory, and deserving of wrath: what is enjoyed by any of them, is of mere grace, and not through merit; and one has not a whit the less, for what the other is possessed of; so that there is no room for envy, murmuring, and complaint:

is thine eye evil because I am good? An "evil eye", is opposed to a good eye, frequently in Jewish writings, as a "good eye" signifies beneficence and liberality; hence it is said ^{f1062}

"He that gives a gift, let him give it **hpy ʿy[b** "with a good eye"; bountifully and generously; and he that devoteth anything, let him devote it with a "good eye","

cheerfully and freely: so an "evil eye" intends envy and covetousness, as it does here: and the sense is, art thou envious at the good of others, and covetous and greedy to monopolize all to thyself, because I am liberal, kind, and beneficent? Men are apt to complain of God, and charge his procedures in providence and grace, with inequality and injustice; whereas he does, as he may, all things according to his sovereign will, and never contrary to justice, truth, and goodness; though he is not to be brought to man's bar, and men should submit to his sovereignty.

Ver. 16. *So the last shall be first, and the first last*, etc.] As he had asserted in (^{<4180>}Matthew 19:30) and which is clearly illustrated by this parable, as it may be applied to Jews or Gentiles, or to nominal and real Christians:

for many be called; externally, under the ministration of the Gospel, as the Jews in general were, by Christ and his apostles; but

few chosen; in Christ from all eternity, both to grace and glory; and in consequence, and as an evidence of it, but few among the Jews; as also in the Gentile world, comparatively speaking; and even but a few of those that are outwardly called, are inwardly and effectually called by the powerful grace of God, out of darkness into marvellous light, into the grace and liberty of the Gospel, into communion with Christ, and to the obtaining his kingdom and glory, according to the eternal purpose of God. It is a saying of R. Simeon ben Jochai ^{f1063}

“I have seen the children of the world to come (elsewhere ^{f1064} it is, of the chamber), ^{ˆyj} [^{wm} ^{ˆhw}], “and they are few”.”

Though he vainly thought, that if those few were but two, they were himself and his son.

Ver. 17. *And Jesus going up to Jerusalem*, etc.] Which was situated ^{f1065} in the highest part of the land of Israel: the land of Israel, is said to be higher than any other land whatever; and the temple at Jerusalem, higher than any part of the land of Israel; wherefore Christ’s going to Jerusalem, is expressed by going up to it. Whither he came either from the coasts of Judea, from beyond Jordan, (^{<0191>}Matthew 19:1) where he had been some time healing diseases, disputing with the Pharisees, discoursing with the young ruler, and instructing his disciples; or from a country near to the wilderness, from a city called Ephraim, (^{<0154>}John 11:54) where he continued some time with his disciples, after the sanhedrim had took counsel to put him to death; for this was his last journey to Jerusalem.

Took the twelve disciples apart in the way: into some private place, which lay near the road; for it seems that there were others that followed him, besides the twelve; when he was not willing they should hear what he had to say to them, concerning the issue of this, journey; lest either they should be discouraged and desert him, or it should be made public, and methods be used to prevent it: and said unto them; the disciples, whom he thought

fit once more to remind of his sufferings and death, and to prepare them for the same; and though they would not so thoroughly understand all that he should say, yet when it was come to pass, they would remember it, and which would be of service to confirm their faith in him, as the true Messiah. *See Gill* “^{<4118>}*Mark 10:32*”.

Ver. 18. *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem*, etc.] This is the last time of our going thither; observe, and take notice of what I am about to say; some extraordinary things will come to pass, and, as Luke relates that he said,

all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished; everything that is recorded in (^{<4921>}Psalm 22:1-31), and in (^{<2511>}Isaiah 53:1-12), or in any other prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to the ill treatment the Messiah should meet with, to his sufferings and death, and all the circumstances attending them, shall be exactly fulfilled in every point: and that they might not be at a loss about what he meant, he gives an account of various particular things, which should befall him;

and the Son of man shall be betrayed: he does not say by whom, though he knew from the beginning who should betray him, that it would be one of his disciples, and that it would be Judas; but the proper time was not yet come to make this discovery: the persons into whose hands he was to be betrayed, are mentioned;

unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes; who were his most inveterate and implacable enemies; and who were the persons that had already taken counsel to put him to death, and were seeking all advantages and opportunities to execute their design:

and they shall condemn him to death; which is to be understood not of their declaring it as their opinion, that he was guilty of death, and ought to die by a law of their's, which declaration they made before Pilate; nor of their procuring the sentence of death to be pronounced by him, upon him; but of their adjudging him to death among themselves, in the palace of the high priest; which was done by them, as the sanhedrim and great council of the nation; though either they could not, or did not, choose to execute it themselves, and therefore delivered him up to the Romans; for this act of condemning him to death, was to be, and was, before the delivery of him up to the Gentiles, as is clear from what follows.

Ver. 19. *And shall deliver him to the Gentiles*, etc.] To Pilate, an Heathen governor, and to the Roman officers and soldiers under him; (see ^{<4185>}John 18:35).

To mock him, as they did, by putting on him a scarlet robe, plating a crown of thorns, and placing it on his head, and a reed in his hand; and then bowed the knee to him, and cried, hail, king of the Jews!

and to scourge him: as he was by Pilate, at least by his orders: Mark adds, “and spit upon him”; as not only did the Jews in the palace of the high priest, but also the Gentiles, the Roman soldiers, after they had mocked him in the manner before described:

and to crucify him: which, as it was a cruel and shameful death, such as slaves and the worst of malefactors were put to, so it was a Roman one; for which reason, the Jews choose to deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The Persic version here adds, “and put him into the grave”: which though it followed his crucifixion, was not done by the Gentiles, but by Joseph of Arimathea, a Jew, and a disciple of Jesus; and that not in a contemptuous, but honourable manner

and the third day he shall rise again: this he said for the comfort of his disciples; but now, though these things were so clearly and distinctly expressed by Christ, and which show his omniscience, and give proof both of his deity and Messiahship, yet Luke observes of the disciples, “that they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken”: the words were plain, the grammatical sense of them was easy, but they could not imagine that they were to be taken literally; which was such a glaring contradiction to their received and rooted principles of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and the grandeur of it, that they fancied these expressions carried a mystical, secret meaning in them, which they were not masters of: and certain it is, that what our Lord now said, was so far from destroying, or weakening these prejudices of theirs, that it rather confirmed them in them; particularly, what he said about rising again, which seemed to have put them afresh in mind, and to excite their hopes of this external felicity, as appears from the following case.

Ver. 20. *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children*, etc.] Whose name was Salome, as may be concluded from (^{<4175>}Matthew 27:56) compared with (^{<4150>}Mark 15:40). She is not called the wife of Zebedee,

who might be now dead, but the mother of his children, his two sons, as the Arabic version renders it: James and John, and who were the disciples of Christ: it is not certain, that Zebedee was ever a follower of him; and therefore the woman is described by her relation to her children, and not her husband; and the rather, because it was in their name, and on their account, that she came to Jesus. She is said to be the sister of Joseph, the husband of Mary, the mother of our Lord; and if so, might hope to succeed in her request, on the foot of relation; as also, since she herself had been a constant follower of, and attendant on him; and especially, inasmuch as her sons were his favourite disciples;

with her sons; her two sons, James and John, whom Mark mentions by name:

worshipping him,

and desiring a certain thing of him; that is, she came in a very submissive manner to him, either bowed unto him, or kneeled down before him, or threw herself at his feet, and signified that she had a single favour, and a very considerable one, to ask of him. Mark represents the case thus, that her two sons, James and John, came to Christ, and that they themselves spoke to him, and addressed him in this manner: "Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us, whatsoever we shall desire": which was a very odd request, both as to the matter and manner of it; that they should ask; and insist upon everything to be done for them, they desired; and suggest, that they expected that he would promise them this, before they declared the particular favour they had to ask of him. The matter may be reconciled thus. These two disciples, having observed what Christ had said concerning the twelve disciples sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and what he had just related, concerning his rising again the third day, which they might understand of some display of his glory; and concluding from all this, that the setting up of his temporal monarchy was at hand, inform their mother of it, and move to her, to use her interest with Christ, in their favour: and which they did, partly to shun the envy and ill will of the rest of the disciples; and partly, to conceal their own pride and vanity; as also, they might think a request from her, on their behalf, would be more easily granted: accordingly, she agreeing to the motion, they all three came, as Matthew relates, and the mother is the mouth, and speaks for her sons; so that they may be said to make such a request by her, she

representing them; or they joined in the petition with her; or as soon as she had made it, they seconded it, and made it their own.

Ver. 21. *And he said unto her, what wilt thou?* etc.] Mark says, “he said unto them”; her two sons, James and John, “what would you that I should do for you?” Both is true; what is this singular favour? what business of moment and importance is it, you would have me do for you, you are so eager and pressing for, and so solicitous of? This he said, not as being ignorant of the matter; he knew the corruption of their hearts, the vanity of their minds, their carnal, worldly, and ambitious views; but to lead them on to say all they had to say upon this head; in which may be observed the goodness, humanity, and patience of Christ, in not upbraiding them with their pride and insolence, in bearing with their rashness and folly, and in giving them room to believe, that he should answer their request in every thing that was right and reasonable to be done,

She saith unto him, grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on the right hand, and the other the left in thy kingdom: or, as in Mark, “in thy glory” that is, in thy glorious kingdom; meaning a temporal one, which would outdo all the kingdoms of the world, in external glory, pomp, and splendour, as they imagined: to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of Christ, when he should be seated, literally, on the throne of his father David, signifies to be nearest to his person; to be next to him in power and authority; to have the highest posts of honour, and places of trust and profit; to be his prime ministers; and, in a word, to have the greatest share next to him of worldly honour, riches, and power. To sit at the right hand, was, with the Jews, reckoned a great mark of honour and affection; (see ^{<1029>}1 Kings 2:19) and so with other nations: with the Egyptians especially, it was accounted a great honour to be placed on the right hand, but the greatest to be in the middle: which was equally observed among the Romans, and the same with the Africans and Numidians; though Xenophon relates, that Cyrus, with a singular prudence, that he might receive his guests the more honourably, used to place them at the left hand, accounting that part, as nearest the heart, to be the more worthy. ^{f1066} These two, the best and most honourable places, this woman was for engrossing for her two sons, who joined with her in the request; for Mark says, that “they said unto him, grant unto us that we may sit, etc.” and Christ’s answer here, which follows, implies as much.

Ver. 22. *But Jesus answered, and said,* etc.] To her two sons,

ye know not what ye ask. They were ignorant of the nature of Christ's kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world: or they would never have asked such a question, or sued for that which will never be enjoyed by any and supposing that Christ's kingdom had been such as they imagined, yet in asking for honours and riches, they might not know what they asked for; they might promise themselves much pleasure and happiness in the enjoyment of them, and yet, if indulged with them, might be disappointed, and find unexpected troubles and uneasiness. It would have been much more proper and seasonable, on hearing of Christ's being mocked, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, if they had put such a question to themselves, Christ here directs to,

are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? meaning his reproaches, sorrows, sufferings, and death; which because of the disagreeableness of them, he compares to a bitter cup of vengeance, wrath, fury, and indignation; and because they were appointed to him, and allotted for him, they were his portion, therefore he expresses them by a "cup"; and because they were so many and great, of such an overwhelming nature, that he seemed to be plunged into them, and covered with them, therefore he likens them to a "baptism" and which the ordinance of water baptism, performed by immersion, is a lively representation of. Now Christ suggests to these disciples, that instead of indulging their ambitious desires of worldly grandeur, that they would do well to consider what a bitter cup he had to drink of, and what a sea of sorrows and sufferings he was about to be plunged into, and drenched in; and whether they could think of enduring anything of the like kind, for his sake, which was most likely to be in a short time, what they would be called unto, and not to honours, ease, and pleasure; and what they must be sure, more or less, to undergo, before they entered the everlasting kingdom of glory:

they say unto him, we are able; not considering the nature of these sufferings, and their own weakness; but partly through ignorance of themselves, and a vain confidence which possessed them; and chiefly through a vehement desire of the places in his kingdom, they asked for, and which they thought drinking his cup, and being baptized with his baptism, were the condition, and the means of enjoying; and so rashly affirm their ability, and which includes their willingness to comply herewith.

Ver. 23. *And he saith unto them, ye shall drink indeed of my cup,* etc.] Not of the selfsame, but of what was like unto it; meaning, that they should endure much persecution for his name's sake, as all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect in one shape or another. Thus James, who was one of these persons, was slain with the sword by Herod; John, the other, was imprisoned, and beaten by the order of the Jewish sanhedrim, was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian; and, some say, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, though saved in it: so that these words seem to be a prophecy of what they should suffer for Christ, instead of enjoying places of worldly honour and profit under him, they were seeking for.

And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: this clause is here, and in the former verse, omitted by the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in some Greek copies, and is thought to be transcribed hither out of Mark's Gospel; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Persic versions have it, and so has Munster's Hebrew Gospel, and it appears in many Greek copies. James, being bathed in his own blood, when killed with the sword, and John being cast into a vessel of scalding oil, these are fitly expressed by a baptism.

But to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine, to give; in the sense in which they asked it, since he was no temporal prince; nor was his kingdom of this world; nor had he any such external favours, or worldly honours: and as to the true and spiritual sense of such a phrase, it was not a point to be fixed now by him, as man, and according to his own will; as who should reign with him in the kingdom of heaven, who should sit down on the same throne with him, and enjoy all the glories and happiness of the world to come; and though, as mediator, all this glory was given to him, and he had it in his hands to give to others, yet to none

but those for whom, says he, *it is prepared of my Father:* for this is the true reading and sense of the last clause; signifying, that eternal life, or the heavenly glory, is a kingdom prepared by his Father, from the foundation of the world, and not for anybody, and every person, but for some only, according to his Father's sovereign will and pleasure; and that this is an affair that was fixed by him, in his eternal counsels and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace, and not to be adjusted now; nor was the designation of it to be, nor will the distribution of it be according to the merits of men, but the free grace of God; and though he, as mediator, was appointed to

bestow both grace and glory on men, yet only on those the Father had given to him, for whom grace was laid up in him, and glory prepared.

Ver. 24. *And when they ten heard it*, etc.] The other ten apostles, who either were within hearing the request made, and Christ's answer, or had by some means information of it:

they were moved with indignation against the two brethren; the two sons of Zebedee, James and John: they were not so much displeased with the mother of them, who asked the favour for them, as with her sons, knowing that they have put her upon making this motion to Christ; nor were they so much moved with indignation at the action, detesting all notions of superiority and preeminence; for they were all tinctured with the same carnal principle, and each was desirous of the chief place for himself; but they were angry, and out of all temper, that these two brethren should move for that, which they thought they had as good a right unto, as any of them: wherefore, as Mark says, "they began to be much displeased with" them, and to show their resentment, not only by their looks and gestures, but by words; and very probably they would have rose to very high words, and a downright quarrel, had not Christ interposed; as, from the following verse, it appears he did.

Ver. 25. *But Jesus called them unto him*, etc.] All his twelve disciples, perceiving that the same ambitious views prevailed in them all: to discourage which, and to prevent their quarrelling one with another, he called them to him, and made use of the following reasonings:

and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; appealing to them in a case that was well known by them, what the princes of the Gentiles did; or, as Mark expresses it, "they which are accounted", or "seem to rule over the Gentiles": who know not God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who neither serve and obey him, or have any dependence on him, but assume a power of governing others, take upon them to rule the nations of the world, and are acknowledged as such by them: these claim a superiority over others, and exercise lordly power over them; and they that are their great ones, their lords, and nobles under them; these also assert a preeminence, and exercise authority on those that are below them; which they have received from those that are above them: this is the usual way and method of the governments of the kingdoms of this world: wherefore, for the apostles to affect and desire a superiority to each

other, in the kingdom of Christ, was to imitate the Gentiles, and to act according to worldly forms of government; which is very unsuitable to the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world.

Ver. 26. *But it shall not be so among you*, etc.] This is not to be extended to Christian nations, as if there were to be no order of magistracy subsisting in them; but that all must be on a level, and no distinction of princes and subjects, of governors and governed; nor to Christian churches, as if there was no ecclesiastical authority to be used, or any church government and power to be exercised; none to rule, whom others are to obey and submit themselves to; but is to be restrained to the apostles as such, among whom there was an entire equality; being all apostles of Christ, being equally qualified and sent, and put into the selfsame office by him: the same holds good of all pastors of churches, who have no superintendency and pre-eminence over one another, or can, or ought to exercise any lordly power and authority, one, or more, over the rest; being equally invested with the same office power, one as another: for otherwise Christ's kingdom would appear like the nations of the world, and to be of a worldly nature; whereas it is spiritual, and does not lie in worldly pomp and grandeur, and in external superiority and pre-eminence of one another; but in the spiritual administration of the word and ordinances; which every pastor of a church has an equal right to exercise, and obedience to them lies in a submission to these things:

but whosoever will be great among you, let him be, or, as in Mark, *shall be your minister*: whoever would be reckoned a great man in the kingdom of Christ, or under the Gospel dispensation, must be a minister to others if he is desirous of being truly great in the esteem of God, and of men, he must do great service for Christ, and to the souls of men; and seek to bring great glory to God, by faithfully ministering the word and ordinances, and by denying himself worldly honour and glory, and by serving others, through much reproach, difficulty, and opposition.

Ver. 27. *And whosoever will be chief among you*, etc.] Or first, or have the pre-eminence, the first place in the kingdom of the Messiah,

let him be your servant; or, as in Mark, *shall be servant of all*: not only a minister, but a servant; not a servant of some only, but of all. This was verified in the Apostle Paul, who became a servant to all men, though he was free, that he might gain some to Christ; and by so doing was the chief,

though he reckoned himself the least of the apostles, yea, less than the least of all saints. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this, that ^{f1067}

“everyone that makes himself **db[k**, as a servant, for the words of the law in this world, shall be made free in the world to come.”

Ver. 28. *Even as the son of man*, etc.] Meaning himself, the seed of the woman, the son of Abraham, and of David, according to the flesh; and whom he proposes as an example of humility, and as an argument to draw them off from their ambitious views of worldly grandeur, and from all thoughts of the Messiah’s setting up a temporal kingdom; since he

came not to be ministered unto by others; to be attended on in pomp and state, to have a numerous retinue about him, waiting upon him, and ministering to him; as is the case of the princes, and great men of the world; though he is Lord of all, and King of kings;

but to minister; in the form of a servant unto others, going about from place to place to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men: he “came” forth from his Father, down from heaven, into this world, by his assumption of human nature, to “minister” in the prophetic office, by preaching the Gospel, and working miracles, in confirmation of it; and in the priestly office, one branch of which is expressed in the next clause,

and to give his life a ransom for many: what he came to give was his life, which was his own, and than which nothing is more dear and precious: besides, his life was an uncommon one, being not only so useful to men, and entirely free from sin in itself, but was the life of the man Jesus, who is in union with the Son of God: this he came to “give”, and did give into the hands of men, to the justice of God, and death itself; which giving, supposes it to be his own, and at his own disposal; was not forfeited by any act of his, nor was it forced from him, but freely laid down by him; and that as a “ransom”, or redemption price for his people, to deliver them from the evil of sin, the bondage of Satan, the curses of a righteous law, from eternal death, and future wrath, and, in short, from all their enemies: which ransom price was paid “for” them in their room and stead, by Christ, as their substitute; who put himself in their legal place, and laid himself under obligation to pay their debts, and clear their scores, and redeem them from all their iniquities, and the evil consequences of them: and this he did “for many”; for as many as were ordained to eternal life; for as many as the Father gave unto him; for many out of every kindred, tongue, and people,

and nation; but not for every individual of human nature; for many are not all.

Ver. 29. *And as they departed from Jericho*, etc.] Which, was distant about ten parasas, or miles, from Jerusalem ^{f1068}, through which Christ just passed, and had met with Zacchaeus, and called him, and delivered the parable concerning a nobleman's going into a far country. The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, "when Jesus departed from Jericho"; and the Arabic, "when he went out of Jericho"; not alone, but "with his disciples", as Mark says; and not with them only, for a great multitude followed him out of the city; either to hear him, or be healed by him, or to see him, or behold his miracles, or to accompany him to Jerusalem; whither he was going to keep the feast of the passover, and where they might be in some expectation he would set up his kingdom. The Ethiopic version reads it, "as they went out from Jerusalem", contrary to all copies and versions.

Ver. 30. *And behold, two blind men*, etc.] Mark and Luke make mention but of one; which is no contradiction to Matthew; for they neither of them say that there was but one. A greater difficulty occurs in Luke's account; for whereas Matthew and Mark both agree, that it was when Jesus came out of Jericho, that this cure was wrought, Luke says it was "when he came nigh unto it"; which some reconcile by observing, that that phrase may be rendered, "while he was near Jericho"; and so only signifies his distance from it, and not motion to it; but this will not solve the difficulty, because we after read of his entrance into it, and passing through it. Some therefore have thought, that Christ met with, and cured one blind man before he entered the city, and another when he came out of it and that Matthew has put the history of both together: but to me it seems, that there were three blind men cured; one before he went into Jericho, which Luke only relates, and two as he came out of Jericho, which Matthew here speaks of; and one of which, according to Mark, was by name Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus; for so Bartimaeus signifies. Tima, or Timaeus, was a name in use among the Jews: we often read of R. Judah amy^t ^b, Ben Tima ^{f1069}, the son of Tima, or Timaeus. Origen ^{f1070} thinks, he had his name from the Greek word τιμη, which signifies "honour"; and so ymj , "Time", with the Jews, is used for honour and profit ^{f1071}. This man's father might have been a very honourable and useful man, though the son was fallen into poverty and distress, through blindness; for which reason he may be mentioned, as being a person well known to the Jews.

Sitting by the wayside; Mark says, “begging”, where such were wont to sit, in order to ask alms of persons, as they passed by;

when they heard that Jesus passed by; who, upon perceiving that there was an unusual concourse of people, might ask the reason of it, when it was told them that Jesus of Nazareth was coming that way: or, without asking, they might hear the people speak of him; and inasmuch as they had heard many things concerning him, and the miracles he wrought, applied to him for help, and

cried out, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David: in which may be observed the titles of honour they give him, which declare their faith in him; calling him Lord, expressing their sense of his deity, dominion, and power; and “Son of David”, thereby owning and professing him to be the Messiah, that being a common name of him, well known among the Jews; (see Gill on “~~4000~~ Matthew 1:1”), the petition they make is, that he would “have mercy on them”, who, through blindness, were in a poor, helpless, and miserable condition; and this was made with great vehemency: they “cried” out aloud, that he might hear them, and take pity on them; being eagerly desirous of having their sight, and firmly believing that he was able to restore it to them.

Ver. 31. *And the multitude rebuked them*, etc.] Who were either the friends or enemies of Christ: if his friends, they might rebuke them, that they might not be so troublesome to him, and judging it unworthy of him to have anything to do with such mean persons, and supposing that their business was only to ask alms of him; or if they were his enemies, or not so well affected to him, they might chide them for giving him such high characters, as Lord, and Son of David; and therefore being displeased with such encomiums, reproved them,

because they should hold their peace; be silent, and say no more of that kind, lest others should take up the same notion of him, and it should prevail among the people.

But they cried the more, saying, have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. They lifted up their voice higher, and cried the more loudly, that their voice might be above the noise of the people, and be heard by Christ; and renewed their request with more eagerness and importunity, repeating the characters they before gave him, being not in the least intimidated by the rebukes of the people: their faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, being more

increased, and their desires of his pity and compassion being more enlarged, they grew bolder, and more resolute, as faith often does by opposition, and trials.

Ver. 32. *And Jesus stood still*, etc.] Made a full stop, when he was near, or right against where these blind men sat; which shows the strength of faith, the force of prayer, and the great regard Christ has to both:

and called them: himself, being near unto them, and within the reach of his voice; or he commanded them to be brought to him, as Mark says: he ordered others to call them, or let them know, that it was his will they should come to him; upon which they threw away their garments, their long upper garments, which were some hindrance to a quick motion, at least Bartimaeus did; that they might be the sooner with him: and when they were come to him, he said,

what will ye that I shall do unto you? is it alms you want? or would you have your sight restored? This question he put, not as being ignorant of their desires, but to show both his power and willingness to do anything for them they should ask; and that their faith in him might be made manifest, and the people have their expectations raised, and they prepared to attend the miracle now to be wrought.

Ver. 33. *They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.*] That is, that their sight might be restored to them; for being deprived of that, it was all one as if their eyes were so closed, that they could not open them; and so the recovery of it is expressed by an opening of them. The opening of the eyes of the blind was prophesied of, as what should be done in the days of the Messiah, and by him, as an evidence of his being that person, (^{238B}Isaiah 35:5) which prophecy these blind men might be acquainted with, and be an encouragement to their faith to expect a cure from him. They do not ask for alms, but for the recovery of their sight; which being granted, they would be able to get their bread in another way; for they were not like some idle persons that choose rather to be under such a calamity, or any other, that they might not be obliged to work with their hands for a livelihood. Their request shows, that they made no doubt of it, but firmly believed that Christ was able to do this for them, though the thing was impossible to be done by man; who therefore must conclude that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God.

Ver. 34. *So Jesus had compassion on them,* etc.] His bowels moved towards them as a man; he pitied their miserable and distressed condition, and discovered the tenderness of his heart towards them by some outward sign, by his looks, or by some gesture or another: and touched their eyes; with his bare hand, without the use of any instrument or medicine. The Ethiopic version adds; “and said unto them, according to your faith shall it be unto you”; which seems to be taken out of (~~102~~ Matthew 9:29). The Evangelist Mark relates, that “Jesus said unto him (Bartimaeus) go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole”: not that the virtue of healing came from the act of faith, but from the object of it; his faith was not the cause of, nor the reason why, but the way and means in and by which he received the cure:

and immediately their eyes received sight; or, as the Syriac and Persic versions render the words, “that moment their eyes were opened”: the cure was wrought at once, directly; a clear proof of the omnipotence of Christ, and of his true and proper deity: the words, “their eyes”, are not in some copies: and are omitted by the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which read thus, “they immediately saw”. The Persic version adds, and they saw the world; the men and things of it, which they either had never seen before, or, at least, for a considerable time; which must be a very surprising and agreeable sight to them.

And they followed him; in a corporal sense they joined the multitude, and went after him to Jerusalem; partly to express their gratitude for such a wonderful favour bestowed upon them; and partly that they might be witnesses of the power of his deity, and the truth of his Messiahship, as they went along, and at Jerusalem: and in a spiritual sense; they became his disciples, they embraced his doctrines, believed in him as the Messiah, submitted to his ordinances, imitated him in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty: for, at the same time he restored their bodily sight, he gave them a spiritual one to look to him, and follow him, the light of the world, that they might enjoy the light of life in another world.