

Bible Commentary

MATTHEW 1

Verse 1. The word *book* is from the Greek word *BIBLOS* and is defined by Thayer, "A written book, a roll or scroll." *Generation* is from *GENESIS* which Thayer defines, "used of birth, nativity." *Book of the generation*. This phrase is commented on by the same author as follows: "A book of one's lineage, i. e. in which his ancestry or his progeny [ancestors from whom he is a descendant] are enumerated." *David; Abraham*. Matthew wrote his book for the special benefit of the Jews is the reason he did not go any farther back than to Abraham. He was the first patriarch to whom the promise of the Messiah was made and their interest in Him would hence not include any earlier ancestors. After Abraham the most important man in the ancestry of Christ was David, so the record makes mention of him. The word for *book* means generally any written document, but in this place it applies only as a title for the family history of the ancestors of Christ which will include verses through 17.

Verse 2. Abraham had more than one son but the promised seed was to come through his son Isaac (*Genesis 21: 12; Romans 9: 7*), hence Matthew goes from Abraham to Isaac in the record. Isaac also had more than one son and it was stipulated that Jacob was the one through whom the line was to go (*Genesis 25: 23; Romans 9: 12, 13*) thus the author goes from Isaac to Jacob in his tracing of the blood line. Jacob also had many sons who figure in an important manner in the history, but only one of them (*Judah*, here called *Judas*) could be used in the blood line, so the significant wording is *Judas and his brethren*. This idea of singling out the particular one in each family was observed all down the line. I have gone into detail in this verse to set forth the subject, and such details will not need to be repeated in all of the following verses.

Verse 3. *Thamar* is called *Tamar* in *Genesis* and she was the daughter-in-law of *Judah*. The account of how she became the mother of his sons is in *Genesis 38*.

Verse 4. *Aram* is in the form of *Ram* in the Old Testament account.

Verse 5. *Booz* is *Boaz* in the account found in the Old Testament. His mother *Rachab* is called *Rahab* in *Joshua 6: 25*; she was the woman in *Jericho*. This verse names two women who were connected with the blood line of Christ (*Rachab* and *Ruth*) who were not direct descendants of *Abraham*. However, this should not confuse us because it was customary in ancient times to ignore the daughters in the family registers. But these women were so outstanding in their parts of the great drama that the inspired writer gives them special mention.

Verse 6. Here the record takes on an additional phase of importance. In the days of *Samuel* the prophet the people of *Israel* clamored for a king in order to be like the nations around them. The Lord was displeased with their request but suffered them to have a king. The first one was *Saul* of the tribe of *Benjamin*, but he was so unrighteous that God took the throne from him and his family and even shut out that tribe from the royal line. The throne was then given to the tribe of *Judah* which had possession of the kingdom in *Jerusalem* until the *Babylonian* captivity. *David* was the first man to occupy the throne from that tribe, hence the words *David the king*. All of the rest to be named in the blood line were kings also but the fact will not be mentioned. This special notice was given to *David* because he was the first man to be in both the royal and blood lines. And in having such a place in the history of *Israel* he became the most important type of Christ as king, hence the various references to Him as sitting on the throne of his father *David*. The term "father" refers to the blood line and the term "throne" refers to the royal line. The mother of *Solomon* is referred to but not named as were *Rachab* and *Ruth*. No reason is given in the Scriptures for this variation in the mention of persons. It is worth considering, however, that of the many wives that *David* had, this one was the mother of both *Solomon* and *Nathan* (*1 Chronicles 3: 5*). The significance of this is in the fact that both of these sons of *David* were direct ancestors of Christ; *Solomon's* line coming down to *Joseph*, the (foster) father, and

Nathan's coming down to Heli the father of Mary. Hence, the two blood streams from David coming through the two sons who were full brothers, were brought together by the marriage of Joseph and Mary.

Verse 7. *Roboam* is Rehoboam in the Old Testament and *Adia* is *Adijam*.

Verse 8. *Joshaphat* is Jehoshaphat, *Joram* is Jehoram, and *Ozias* is Uzziah in the O. T.

Verse 9. *Joatham* is Jotham, Achaz is Ahaz and *Ezekias* is Hezekiah formerly.

Verse 10. *Manasses* is spelled Manasseh and *Josias* is the same as Josiah.

Verse 11. *Jechonias* has three different forms in the Old Testament but the one generally used is Jeholachin. He was not the last temporal king that the people of Israel ever had; there was one more (Zedekiah). But while he was a son of Josiah, he had been placed on the throne in Jerusalem by the king of Babylon (1 Kings 24: 17), having deposed Jeholachin and taken him to Babylon as a captive. But the blood line remained with him, hence the present verse words it *Jechonias and his brethren*. Also, the words about the time they were carried away to Babylon are explained by the facts just mentioned in this paragraph.

Verse 12. *After they were brought to Babylon*. Family life was not discontinued even though the Jews were in captivity. The inspired writer is able to give us the names of lineal descendants that he wished to use in connecting the blood line from Abraham to Christ. Not all of the succeeding names are given nor was that necessary. The present verse virtually covers the 70 years of the captivity, for it was in the days of *Zorobabel* (Zerubbabel) that they came out of it (Ezra 3: 2).

Verses 13-15. This paragraph covers the space of over four centuries, from the return after the captivity to the time of Jacob, father of Joseph. It is evident that not all of the men in the blood line are named, but only enough of them to show the connection of the list as that would affect the ancestry of Jesus.

Verse 16. The use of the term "begat" is not used here because Joseph was only the foster father of Jesus. But the verse states that he was the husband of Mary in order to show how the two blood streams from David

were joined. *Husband* is from ANER which is the only word for "husband" in the New Testament. It is so rendered 50 times and by "man" 156 times. The word cannot hence be known to designate a married man except by the connection in which it is found. *Jesus who is called Christ*. The specific meaning of the first word is "saviour" and the last is defined "anointed." The force of the combined title is "Saviour and King."

Verse 17. *Generations* is from GENE and Thayer's definition at this place is, "The several ranks in the natural descent, the successive members of a genealogy." The three sets of 14 generations are so arranged for the sake of uniformity as an aid to the memory. There are several names omitted and a man may be said to have begotten a person when it really means a generation or more later. This manner of speaking was done before this; for instance, in Daniel 5: 18 Belshazzar is spoken of as the son of Nebuchadnezzar whereas he was his grandson. The count of the generations is based on the ones named in the chapter. By strict count there are 40 instead of 42 as the three sets of 14 would require; this is because David and Jechonias are each counted twice.

Verse 18. The meaning of espousal as compared with marriage will be considered at verse 20. *Before they came together* means before they began living together as husband and wife. *Found with child* should be considered separately from the words of *the Holy Ghost*. Joseph did not know that her condition was produced by a miracle but thought she had been impure. The inspired writer adds the italicized words for the information of the reader. The meaning of the clause is as if it said "she was found with child (which later proved to be by the Holy Ghost)."

Verse 19. *Being a just man* denotes that Joseph was kind and considerate, yet was conscientious and unwilling to ignore the moral law. Because of this he planned to *put her away* which means to break the engagement. He had such a personal regard for her that he did not want to expose her to public disgrace, yet he did not think it would be right to live with her.

Verse 20. While Joseph was pondering the subject the angel of the Lord appeared and explained the situation. He further advised him to proceed with their plans because Mary was

pure from all wrong. She is here called his *wife* and in Luke 2: 5 she is called his "espoused wife." All this is because in Biblical times an espousal was regarded as binding, as to the obligation, as the actual marriage.

Verse 21. The angel not only told Joseph the cause of Mary's condition, but even told him what to call the child when born. Proper names in ancient times usually had some specific meaning, hence the name Jesus, meaning "Saviour," was to be given to this son to be born of Mary, because he was designed to save his people from sin.

Verse 22. The information was also given Joseph that what was happening was in fulfillment of prophecy, all of which would meet his approval because he was a believer of the inspired word.

Verse 23. The angel then quoted the prophecy to which he had referred which is in Isaiah 7: 14. The thing of special importance is that the child was to be born of a *virgin*, an event that could not occur by the laws of natural reproduction alone. *God with us*. This signifies that since the body of this child was both divine and human, it meant that it would be virtually the presence of God with man, hence he was to be called by the name of Emmanuel which has that meaning.

Verse 24. *Did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him* denotes that what follows in this verse and the next will be in obedience to the command of the angel. *Raised from sleep* is explained by the fact that in ancient times God used various means in communicating His will to the people (Hebrews 1: 1) and one of them was by dreams. After the dream had delivered the desired information to Joseph, it was time for him to arise out of sleep and proceed with the program pointed out by the angel.

Verse 25. Joseph took Mary into his home in fulfillment of his espousal and on the instructions of the angel. *Knew her not* is a Biblical expression for the intimate relation of the sexes. The reason Joseph did not have this relation with Mary now was because the angel had told him that her son was to be born of a virgin, which required that at the time of the birth his mother must never have had intimate relations with a man. *Till she had brought forth* has to mean that after the birth of Jesus, Joseph lived with Mary in the intimate relation of

husband and wife, else the language is meaningless and deceptive. It therefore proves that Mary did not continue to be a virgin, but lived with her husband in the relationship of a wife, and her children by that marriage will be met with in later chapters of this book.

MATTHEW 2

Verse 1. *Bethlehem* was a small town not far from Jerusalem, and *Judea* was one of the three divisions or territories into which Palestine was divided in the time of Christ. Judea was the most important part of the country in that it contained the important city of Jerusalem, which was the capital and place of the temple of the Jews. *Herod the king*. I shall quote from history regarding this man who occupied so prominent a place in the affairs of God's people: "This year was born Herod the Great, who was afterwards king of Judea (for he was twenty-five years old when he was first made governor of Galilee in the year before Christ 47). His father was Antipas, a noble Idumaeen, and his mother Cyprus of an illustrious family among the Arabians. . . . By country therefore he was an Idumaeen, but by religion a Jew, as all other Idumaeans were from the time that Hyrcanus brought them all to embrace the Jewish religion, of which I have above given an account." Prideaux's Connexion, year 72. "But Antigonus, by way of reply to what Herod had caused to be proclaimed, and this before the Romans, and before Silas also, said, that they would not do justly if they gave the kingdom to Herod, who was not more than a private man, and an Idumean, i. e., a half Jew." Josephus, Antiquities, Book 14. Chapter 15, Section 2. The Herodian family figures prominently in the New Testament history, and the various members of it will be identified by their individual names as they appear in the passages. *Wise men* is from *MAGOS* which Thayer defines at this place as follows: "Oriental wise men (astrologers) who, having discovered by the rising of a remarkable star that the Messiah had just been born, came to Jerusalem to worship him." The original word is used with reference to both good and evil men, but the whole context indicates that it was used in the former sense in the present instance. We are sure that the case of the shepherds as recorded in Luke 2 was not an accident, likewise the fact that the star led the wise men

correctly would show their standing with the Lord. Furthermore, God spoke to them in a dream (verse 12) on the matter which again proves that the visit of the wise men to Jerusalem was under the direction of God. Since the New Testament was not yet written, this event would be another to come under Hebrews 1: 1. East is defined by Thayer, "eastern region, the east." The term therefore refers not merely to the direction from which the wise men came, but the country in general lying in that direction from Palestine. The guidance of the star was general only and directed them to Jerusalem. This was doubtless by the hand of God, to bring them in contact with those who were concerned in this grand occasion, particularly Herod who was destined to play such an important part in the drama.

Verse 2. When the wise men reached Jerusalem they made inquiry, seeking the exact location of the newborn *king of the Jews*. This specific statement is another proof that the whole movement of these men was under the instruction of the Lord. *Seen his star in the east* denotes where they were when they first saw the star, not that it was merely in the east when they saw it. It was over Jerusalem when they reached the city, for verse 9 describes it as moving immediately before them even to the extent of detailed guidance in the local territory. They gave as their mission only the desire to *worship* the newborn king. It might be wondered as to how an infant could be worshiped by wise men, seeing that the general idea seems to restrict that word to some specified schedule of religious performance. The word in its several English forms is used in various connections in the New Testament, and also comes from many different Greek originals. These Greek words are also rendered by other words in the Authorized Version. I shall give a complete list of these words, showing where they occur as the original for *worship*, followed by other words (if any) by which they have been translated in the New Testament. The figure after the word denotes the number of times the word is so rendered. DOXA, Luke 14: 10. Worship 1, dignity 2, glory 144, honor 6, praise 4, glorious 6. EUSEBEIO, Acts 17: 23. Shew piety 1, worship 1. THERAPEUO, Acts 17: 25. Cure 5, heal 38, worship 1. THRESKEIA, Colossians 2: 18. Religion 3, worshipping 1. LATREUO, Acts 7: 42; 24: 14, Philip-

pian 3: 3; Hebrews 10: 2. Do service 1, serve 16, worship 3, worshiper 1. NEOKOROS, Acts 19: 35. Worshiper 1. PROSKUNTES, John 4: 23. Worshiper 1. SERAZO, Romans 1: 25. Worship 1. SEBOMAI, Matthew 15: 9; Mark 7: 7; Acts 16: 14; 18: 7, 13; 19: 27. Worship 6, devout 2, devout person 1, religious 1. SEBASMA, 2 Thessalonians, 2: 4. Devotion 1, that is worshiped 1. THEOSEBES, John 9: 31. Worshiper of God 1. PROSKUNEO is rendered "worship" 58 times in the New Testament and is never rendered by any other word. Not one of the Greek words in this group is used of the public services of the church when translated by the word "worship." This list will not be copied again, so the reader is advised to mark it for ready reference.

Verse 3. Herod was only half Jew and was appointed to the office of ruler by the Romans, who had acquired control of the country. He was fearful of losing the throne when he heard that a child of Jewish blood had been born and was spoken of as king of the Jews. He was therefore troubled or disturbed in mind. All Jerusalem with him was troubled also, because there were a great many men in the city who depended upon him for the place of dignity that they were permitted to enjoy.

Verse 4. Herod was an Idumaeen by nation but a Jew in religion. He thus had learned something of the Old Testament Scriptures, and knew that it had been prophesied that a king was some day to be born to the Jewish nation. However, he was not sufficiently informed to locate the town where it was to take place. He called upon the priests and scribes for the information because they were supposed to be able to give it. (See Leviticus 10: 11; Deuteronomy 17: 9; Malachi 2: 7.)

Verse 5. Concordances and other works of reference were not in use at the time of this history, but the scribes were familiar with the scriptures from having to copy them so often. It is not much wonder then that they could give Herod the information.

Verse 6. As proof of their statement they quoted from Micah 5: 2 which designates where the birth was to occur and also what the child predicted was to do. *Rule* is from POIMAINO and sometimes it means to feed or nourish. Thayer defines it in this place by, "To rule, govern," and he explains

the word elsewhere as meaning, "of the overseers (pastors) of the church." It should be observed that the newborn king was to rule the people of Israel, not the political world.

Verse 7. Herod evidently believed that the star appeared at the same time as the birth and that would give him a point from which to recognize the age of the child. He called the wise men privately because his entire behaviour was prompted by craftiness.

Verse 8. The wicked king doubtless believed the prophecy, for he sent the wise men to Bethlehem in search of the child. *Diligently* is from ἀκριβώς which Thayer defines, "exactly, accurately, diligently." Hence they were not only to be diligent or earnest in their investigation, but were to be careful that the information that they obtained was reliable. It will be understood that Herod's claim of wanting to worship the child was made in hypocrisy.

Verse 9. The wise men were obedient to Herod for the present in that they started on their journey to Bethlehem. That was a small town not far from Jerusalem and could have been easily found without any special aid. But it was necessary that they not only go to the right town but also that they find the particular house where the child was at that hour. The community was full of people who had come in response to the decree of Caesar (Luke 2: 1-3). It might not have been known that a child had been recently born among the throng, and an inquiry would not likely bring any accurate information. Hence the star, which evidently had temporarily disappeared, came into view again and went as an escort for the wise men, going even to the very house where the infant was then being nursed.

Verse 10. Having been led from their home country by the star, the confidence of the wise men had already been pretty well established. Now that it reappeared just at the time they were starting on the final lap of their journey, their confidence was made stronger and hence they had great rejoicing.

Verse 11. They worshiped him, not the mother. For the meaning of *worshiped* see the note at verse 2. *Gifts* is from δόξον and Thayer says in this place that it means "gifts offered as an expression of honor." An infant this young could not have personal appreciation for material articles,

hence the performance was in token of their recognition of his dignified importance. It was customary in old times to show recognition of either social or official rank by making presents. (See Genesis 32: 13; 1 Samuel 10: 27 and the comments on those passages.)

Verse 12. To be *warned* ordinarily conveys the idea of danger, but it might not concern the person receiving the warning but someone else to whom he was to deliver the message. The word is from *CHREMATIZO* and Thayer defines it, "To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed." The meaning is that God instructed the wise men not to return by way of Jerusalem. The word would include the idea of danger, but it would be concerning the child Jesus and not the wise men directly. Had they gone back through Jerusalem they would have been forced to meet up with Herod, and that would have given them no way to keep the information from him that would have meant harm to Jesus.

Verse 13. *When they were departed* indicates that the angel gave these instructions to Joseph at the same time that he started the wise men on their journey homeward.

Verse 14. This verse indicates that Joseph arose while it was yet night, for it was under the darkness that he started for Egypt. This is another instance showing promptness in obeying the command of the Lord. Abraham manifested a similar attitude about the offering up of his son as recorded in Genesis 22: 3.

Verse 15. The writer completes the part of his story that pertained to Egypt in order not to break into the line of thought, and he will resume it a little later on. In giving instructions for Joseph to come with his son out of Egypt, the prophecy in Hosea 11: 1 was fulfilled the second time; first time was in the days of Moses.

Verse 16. The original word for *mocked* has a somewhat varied meaning, but in the present instance it denotes that Herod regarded the actions of the wise men as intended for a trifling with him. Whether they had such a motive or not, he was much enraged at the slight upon his dignity. But he was not to be frustrated (as he thought) in his wicked plot to make away with the child whom he regarded as his rival. He therefore formed the plan to draw a

dragnet around the territory of Bethlehem in the hopes of entrapping the child Jesus, and he placed the maximum age at two years. It had been that long since he made his inquiry of the wise men which he supposed was the time of the royal birth. This plot might have accomplished his satanic purpose had it not been for the intervention of the Lord as recorded in verse 13. Many people have been confused between the slaughter of these infants and the one in Egypt in the time of Moses. In that case the male children only were to be slain, while no distinction was made in the present instance. Pharaoh was concerned only about children who might become soldiers to make war against him and hence he ordered just the males to be killed. Herod would not risk the excuse that could have been offered by some in sparing their infants had the girls been exempted, hence the passage says that *all the children* were ordered slain. That word is from PAIS which Thayer defines in this place by the following: "1. a child, boy or girl; . . . plural infants, children."

Verse 17. When one inspired writer makes an application of another inspired statement, it leaves us with no uncertainty as to its meaning. Thus we know that Jeremiah had the "slaughter of the innocents" in mind when he wrote Jeremiah 31: 15.

Verse 18. The context of the statement in Jeremiah had to do with the sorrows of ancient Israel at the hands of the heathen nations. Many of them had been slain or otherwise mistreated by these foreign people. Rama (or Ramah) was near Jerusalem and Rachel was buried in that district. She was an important "mother in Israel" and her name is used to represent the mothers in Israel generally. Following a practice of the Old Testament prophets in going from their time to that of the New Testament for a like occurrence, Jeremiah looked forward to another when the near kin of Rachel would be cruelly mistreated. This was done when Herod caused so many of the Jewish children to be slain, hence the reference of Matthew to that prophecy of Jeremiah.

Verse 19. Sometimes angels were sent in visible form to communicate with man on behalf of God, and at others they came only in an inspired dream which was the way it was done

to Joseph in Egypt when it was necessary to give him information.

Verse 20. He was instructed to leave Egypt and return because the ones who sought to slay the child were dead. The first instructions were general and designated only that he should return to the *land of Israel* which would include Galilee as well as Judea.

Verse 21. This verse is still in the general form and merely states that Joseph brought the child and his mother into the *land of Israel*, and in so doing he carried out the first instructions of the angel delivered to him in the land of Egypt.

Verse 22. It was after the Lord informed him of the reign of Archelaus that Joseph was afraid to enter Judea which was only one part of the *land of Israel*. The word *notwithstanding* is not in the original and serves no good purpose by being injected into the text and should be ignored. The verse simply means that God warned (same word as in verse 12) Joseph about the son of Herod, and that caused him to change his course and enter another part of the land of Israel called Galilee.

Verse 23. The city to which Joseph went with his family was Nazareth, which was the former home of Mary (Luke 1: 26, 27). This seems to have been a mere coincidence for them to settle at this place, but we may be sure that God had a hand in all of the affair. The writer says it was in fulfillment of a prophecy that *He was to be called a Nazarene*. The last word is not in any prophecy of the Old Testament. The term is derived from the formation of the name Nazareth which seems to signify "a sprout or branch," and under such like terms Jesus is referred to in Isaiah 11: 1; 53: 2; Jeremiah 23: 5; 33: 15; Zechariah 3: 8; 6: 12.

MATTHEW 3

Verse 1. *In those days* is indefinite and it is at least a quarter of a century after the close of the preceding chapter. In that chapter (verse 21) Jesus was but a "young child" while now he is about 30 years old (Luke 3: 23). *Baptist* is from the Greek word BAPTISTES which Thayer defines, "a baptizer; one who administers the rite of baptism," hence the name John the Baptist. It is sometimes asked why a man would come to baptize in a wilderness where there are no people

to baptize nor any water available for such a purpose. Both assumptions are wrong, for while the territory was not settled or inhabited, there was nothing to prevent the people of the settlements going out to him, which they did (verse 5). Also the word does not mean a place where there would be no water. *Wilderness* is from ΕΡΕΜΟΣ which Thayer defines, "an uncultivated region fit for pasturage." There would not likely be much pasturage where there was no water. Besides, Judea was not so large a region but that the river of Jordan could be reached for the purpose of baptizing.

Verse 2. *Repent* is from ΜΕΤΑΝΟΕΩ and Thayer defines it here as follows: "To change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence for one's past sins." To amend means more than a mere state of the mind; it requires that one do something about it. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑ is the only word in the Greek New Testament for "kingdom." It has several phases of meaning and hence I consider it well to give a pretty extensive quotation from the lexicons as to their definitions: "1. royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. 2. a kingdom i. e. the territory subject to the rule of a king. 3. properly the kingdom over which God rules . . . the kingdom of the Messiah . . . the rule of God, the theocracy . . . God's rule, the divine administration."—Thayer. I have quoted only such words in Thayer's lexicon as are in italics, which denotes the direct definition, omitting for the sake of space his many remarks on the word. The same rule will be followed in quoting from the other lexicons: "1. dominion, reign, rule. 2. a kingdom, dominion, realm."—Robinson. "A kingdom; royalty, dignity, power, reign, rule, sovereignty, dominion."—Groves. "A kingdom, realm, i. e. the region or country governed by a king; kingly power, authority, dominion, reign."—Greenfield. This paragraph may not be quoted again in full, hence the reader is urged to study it carefully to discover its shades of meaning, also to make a note of its location for ready reference. *At hand* is from ΕΓΓΙΣΤΟ and means "is near," which denotes that it was not yet in actual existence in the days of John the Baptist.

Verse 3. The prophecy cited is in Isaiah 40: 3 where the prophet passes from a favorable turn in the affairs of ancient Israel to the time when prepa-

rations were to be made for Christ's entry upon the new dispensation. *Make his paths straight* has the idea of preparing a path for another to use afterward. By taking down the high and rough places and taking out the sharp curves, the other party could make better progress in his travels. Of course this is all figurative and refers to the work of John in bringing about a reformation among the Jews. Such a work would get a group of people in better frame of mind and character to receive the more advanced work of Christ.

Verse 4. In Zechariah 13: 4 a false prophet is described as wearing a rough garment to deceive the public, indicating that such a garment was an article of clothing peculiar to a prophet. It was appropriate that John the Baptist, who was a true prophet, wear such a piece made from the hair of camels. The girdle served as a belt to hold the loose garment close to the body. Leviticus 11: 22 included the locust among clean foods that the Jews were permitted to eat. *Wild honey* is so called because it was made by wild bees and deposited in hollow trees or crevices of rocks. Honey is one of the purest of foods in the vegetable class, and locusts could be classed with the animal kind. John the Baptist, therefore, had a somewhat balanced though simple diet.

Verse 5. The text does not say that every individual in these districts was baptized, but that great throngs from all of them came out to be baptized.

Verse 6. *Baptized* is from ΒΑΠΤΙΖΩ which Thayer defines first, "Properly to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge. 2. to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water." Strong defines it, "To make whelmed (i. e. fully wet)." From this meaning of the word we can understand why John was baptizing in *Jordan*, not at or nearby. *Confessing their sins* is the simple phrase used here, but in Mark 1: 4 and Luke 3: 3 it is worded "baptism of repentance." The meaning of the passage is that the people professed to have repented of their sins and were baptized on that declaration.

Verse 7. The *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* were two leading sects of the Jews in the time of Christ. They had some radical differences which will be described in another place. There were some principles, however, which they both had in common and one of

them was hypocrisy, and both made great claims of excellence which they did not possess. This, too, will be described elsewhere. *Generation of vipers* is a figure of speech meaning a class of vile and poisonous characters. They came to the baptismal services of John for the outward appearance it made. In his preaching John exhorted the people to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, in order to escape the wrath of God. He had not specified any classes, so the response of these sects was an outward admission of their being sinners though their attitude was one of self-righteousness.

Verse 8. *Meet for repentance* means for them to prove by their works that they have really repented. A mere sorrow or regret for sin does not constitute repentance in the sight of the Lord, but the guilty one is expected to reform his life by ceasing to do the things that were wrong.

Verse 9. John was an inspired man and could read the thoughts of these boastful pretenders. But aside from this truth, the language of these Jews indicated their pride of ancestry. (See John 8: 33.) John did not intend to belittle the importance of Abraham, but he meant that having descended through the line of that great patriarch did not entitle them to any special favors in their wrong doing. It was God's will that Abraham's lineal descendants become the special race for His purposes, but that was not because no other plan would have been possible. As far as power or ability was concerned, He could have caused the stones to become impregnated with the divine germ of life so that they could give birth to children to be enrolled in the register of Abraham's seed. Such a possibility as described above existed though the Lord never intended to do such a thing. There was another feat, however, that was as wonderful as that, which was to convert Gentile heathen into descendants of Abraham by faith. (See Romans 4: 11.)

Verse 10. This verse is figurative and general and denotes the judgments of God against sin. An ax lying at the root of a tree suggests a probable attack upon it. The instrument is near but inactive, yet ready to be used if and when a decision is made against the tree. The fact on which the decision will be made is that the tree does not produce good fruit. I do not

believe this verse applies to the Jewish nation as a whole for there was only one "tree" of the Lord that could be considered. The words *every tree* indicate that John was speaking of individuals all of whom were exhorted to repent and thus escape the wrath of God. The condemnation to such wrath was starting through the preaching of John, but the final result of rejecting that preaching would not come until the great judgment day. Being an inspired man John the Baptist was able to predict the future lot of all classes of men who were in his hearing, even to the punishment of fire awaiting the unsaved at the time of the final judgment. This prepares us to understand the following two verses.

Verse 11. There are three baptisms referred to in this verse, one administered by John and two by the Lord; the two were in the future when John spoke. The three baptisms were in different elements, namely, water, Holy Ghost and fire, and the three were for that many different kinds of subjects. The water baptism administered by John was performed upon penitent Jews and it was for the remission of their sins. The Holy Ghost baptism administered by the Lord was performed upon the apostles and it was to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13). The baptism with fire to be administered by the Lord (at the judgment day) upon the unsaved and it is for the purpose of punishment. The simple pronoun *you* is used by John because he knew that in his audience were men who would become apostles and hence would receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He knew also that some of his hearers would live and die in their sins because they would be too stubborn to repent, and these would receive the baptism of fire. But he spoke to the multitude as a whole and intended the two baptisms to be applied to the ones deserving them. This explains Acts 1: 5 and 11: 16 where the baptism of the Holy Ghost only is mentioned because the apostles were the only ones being considered. *Shoes not worthy to bear* is an allusion to the customs of that time. Loose sandals were worn in foot travel and upon entering a home they were removed and taken charge of by a servant. By way of illustration John regarded himself as unworthy even to bear the shoes of the one who was soon to come after him in the work of further reformation.

Verse 12. The figures now change and are drawn from a different source. In verse 10 they were based upon the work of horticulture, while in this they are upon that of agriculture. *Fan* is from ΠΥΘΩΝ and is defined "a winnowing-shovel" in Thayer's lexicon. Grain was piled down on a smooth place called the threshing floor and trampled out by oxen or beaten with a large club called a flail. Then an instrument like a broad shovel was used to scoop up the shattered grain and toss it up into the wind so the chaff could be blown to one side. The grain was stored in the garner (granary) and the chaff was burned. The process is used to illustrate the separation of the wicked from the good at the day of judgment. The good will be taken to the garner which is heaven, and the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire. The terms ordinarily used to describe the threshing process do not cover all of the phases of the work as it pertains to humanity, hence John qualified the fire by the word *unquenchable* which comes from the Greek word ΑΣΒΕΣΤΟΣ and Thayer's definition is, "unquenchable." There will be only one judgment day and hence no continual gathering of chaff to cast into the fire. There is but one explanation, therefore, for using unquenchable fire, and that is that the wicked will not be put out of existence as literal chaff is, but will continue to exist and burn endlessly, and that will require a fire that cannot be put out.

Verse 13. Jesus had spent his life through childhood and early manhood with his parents at Nazareth which was in Galilee. The time came when he was to enter upon his life's work and he had reason for starting it with being baptized. There was only one man baptizing people then and that was John the Baptist, hence Jesus left his home and came into Judea where John was baptizing in the Jordan.

Verse 14. John did not know the divine identity of Jesus until the baptism had taken place (John 1: 33), therefore his remarks were not prompted by that subject. They were cousins according to the flesh and about the same age. It is reasonable to conclude that John knew Jesus as a near relative and humbly placed himself in a lower rank of excellence. All that John knew as to the purpose of water baptism was that it was for the remission of sins. Someone had to

start the great work of reform without being baptized himself, and of the two John considered Jesus to be the more worthy of the honor.

Verse 15. Had the remission of sins been the only result to be accomplished by baptism, Jesus would not have come to John at all for it because he had no sins to be remitted. Hence it was necessary for John to be informed of the reason why Jesus made the request. *Fulfill* is from ΠΛΗΡΩΩ and Thayer's definition at this passage is, "to perform, execute." *Righteousness* is from ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ and Thayer defines it as follows: "b. integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting. Matthew 3: 15; 5: 6, 10, 20; 6: 33." Note that nothing in the definition requires any act in the nature of repentance or confession, hence Jesus who had no sins to confess could adopt the definition in his reason for requiring baptism. But while he had no sins to confess he did have a duty to "perform," and by so doing he could maintain his "integrity." When this explanation was made to John he promptly performed the baptism and thus cooperated in the act that Jesus said would be fitting or becoming.

Verse 16. If Jesus went up out of the water it was necessary that he go down into it, and that would agree with the definition of "baptize" as given at verse 6. The heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit in the form of a dove. This together with John 1: 32-34 indicates that Jesus and John were the only witnesses of this remarkable event. It was fitting that John be permitted to see it since that was the sign the Lord had given him by which he was to recognize the One for whom all this preparatory work was being done.

Verse 17. If only the eyes of John and Jesus saw the heavens open and the bodily shape of the dove, it would be reasonable to conclude that their ears only heard these words. It also indicates one reason why the words "hear ye him" were not added as they were at chapter 17: 5. The Father here acknowledged Jesus as his Son after he had fulfilled his righteous duty of being baptized. But his life's work was only beginning and hence it was not time to give the command to hear him.

MATTHEW 4

Verse 1. *Led up of the spirit* denotes that Jesus was divinely instructed to

go into the *wilderness* (same place as chapter 3: 1) and submit to the test. *Tempted* is from ΠΕΙΒΑΖΟ and has various shades of meaning in the New Testament. I shall copy most of the italicized words in Thayer's definition which constitutes his direct description of the word: "To try, i. e. 1. to try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor. 2. to try, make trial of, test. To solicit to sin, to tempt. To inflict evils [afflictions] upon one in order to prove his character and steadfastness of his faith." The context must be considered in each case to determine which part of the definition applies. The word *devil* is from two originals in the Greek New Testament which are ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟΝ and ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ. Thayer defines the first, "1. the divine Power, deity, divinity. 2. a spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men . . . evil spirits as the messengers and ministers of the Devil." (It is the word frequently thought of for demons.) The second word is defined, "prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely . . . false accuser, slanderer . . . In the Bible and in ecclesiastical writings THE ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ is applied to Satan." The rule is that when the plural word "devils" is used it comes from the first word above, and if singular, "the devil," it is from the second word and means Satan.

Verse 2. A man would not have to go forty days without food to become hungry in the ordinary sense or degree. The meaning is that by the end of that period the pangs of hunger became severe.

Verse 3. *Tempter* is from the same word as "tempted" in verse 1, and the person doing the tempting is the devil also defined in that verse. The devil knew that the great issue at stake was the divinity of Christ, hence the suggestion he made was a challenge for Him to prove his claim. There is no doubt with us (and neither was there with the devil) as to Christ's ability to do the thing suggested. But Christ never used his miraculous power or divine character in his own behalf. He was here to set an example for his followers who were to be taught the lesson of self-denial. It would have been inconsistent to ask his disciples to resist temptation when they had only their natural powers for support, while He overcame his trials by falling back on his divine power. Another thing that would have made it wrong for Christ to turn the stones into bread

is that it would have been an act proposed by the devil. It is wrong to have any fellowship with Satan in any act, even though it might be right in itself.

Verse 4. In quoting the statement that is in Deuteronomy 8: 3, Jesus showed his respect for the inspired word of God and set a worthy example for others. He ignored the challenging phase of the preceding verse and based his reply on the principle that physical satisfaction is not the only thing that should interest a person in this life. One might be abundantly supplied and contented physically and yet lack the more important food which is for the inner man and is found in the words of God.

Verse 5. Thayer's definition for the original of *take* is, "1. to take to, to take with one's self, to join to one's self." The word does not mean that Jesus was carried against his will to the place, but that He accompanied the devil as a further step in the procedure of the test to which he was being put. The word *pinnacle* is a subject of some uncertainty in the several works of reference that I have consulted as to what part of the temple is meant. It is evident that a specific place is meant for the Greek definite article is used in the original text, making it read "the pinnacle" instead of "a pinnacle." But regardless of all these considerations the point is that it was a place high enough to have caused death to one who would fall from it.

Verse 6. Much importance has been attached by commentators to the devil's omission of the words "in all thy ways" from his citation to Psalms 91: 11, 12. The word *ways* is from ΠΕΡΕΧ which Strong defines, "a course of life or mode of action," regardless of whether that course is right or wrong. The context must determine in each case whether it is the one or the other. To say that casting himself down would have been wrong is to assume the very point in question. Had it been right for him to perform such a stunt as the devil suggested, then the passage which he cited would have given the assurance of divine protection according to the passage in Psalms.

Verse 7. The word for *tempt* is similar to the one in verse 1 but is a stronger word and is defined by Thayer, "To prove, test, thoroughly tempt." Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6: 16 and thus it will be well to look at that passage and consider the connection. It says not to tempt God as

they tempted him in Massah. That refers to Exodus 17: 2, 7 where the people complained because of their thirst and questioned if the Lord was among them. It was trying (one meaning of tempt) on the patience of God to hear such attacks upon His power and goodness. That justifies the comment of Thayer in his definition of the word when he says, "by irreligion and immorality to test the patience or avenging power of Christ." God's long-suffering is infinite for people who sincerely rely on Him for help, even to the last degree of indulgence for their unusual requests. But He will not suffer being approached in the spirit of challenge just to see if He can and is willing to gratify their disrespectful curiosity.

Verse 8. If the reader will examine the various definitions of *kingdom* given in chapter 3: 2, he will learn that the word sometimes means the territory ruled by a king; in other words, it is something that can be seen with the fleshly eye. However, the rulership of such realms would necessarily involve much *glory*, so the devil called the attention of Jesus to that feature. A miracle or supernatural performance had to be done in order to make such a display before the eyes of Jesus, but that does not present any difficulty for the Bible has numerous instances that show he has been suffered to use such power when it suited the Lord's plan to have it so.

Verse 9. In the corresponding passage in Luke 4: 6 the devil makes a stronger claim than is recorded here. He says that he possesses the "glory" of all these realms of the world and Jesus does not deny it; the following passages will also bear out his claim. (John 14: 30; 16: 11; Ephesians 2: 2.) In this verse the devil promises to give up his control of the glory existing in the kingdoms of the world and turn it over to Jesus. The only condition he requires is that Jesus fall down and *worship* him. See the note in comments on chapter 2: 2 for the meaning of *worship*. Regardless of what phase of that word the devil had in mind, to have complied with the proposition would have been sin and that would have for ever disqualified Him from being a perfect sacrifice.

Verse 10. The word *satan* is spelled the same in both Greek and English and the definition in Thayer's lexicon (the part written in italics) is the single word "adversary" when used as

a proper name, and "a Satan-like man" when used figuratively. Jesus used it as a proper name in this verse and thus identified him with "the devil" in this account of the temptation. *Get thee hence* means for him to leave which he will do in the next verse. *Worship* is from PROSKUNEØ and *serve* is from LATREUØ, and both of them are found in the long note on the word "worship" at chapter 2: 2.

Verse 11. Luke 4: 13 adds the words "for a season" to the statement here that "the devil leaveth him." This is significant and adds force to the statements in Hebrews 2: 17, 18; 4: 15 which indicate that Jesus was subject to temptation all through his life on earth. These temptations came whenever the devil or his servants had an occasion to try their hand. For the present the devil has gone the limit of his resources, for 1 John 2: 16 says that "all that is in the world" is the "lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life." He used these three with Eve and won over her. He used them in the temptation of Christ in the wilderness and was defeated. The item of bread was an appeal to the lust of the flesh; the display of the kingdoms of the world appealed to the lust of the eyes, and the idea of casting himself from the pinnacle appealed to the pride of life in that it would only be pride that would prompt a person to perform some sensational exploit. Having been defeated in this encounter with Jesus, the devil quit the scene to await another opportunity.

Verse 12. The account of John's imprisonment is in the 14th chapter, being inserted there to explain a remark that was made by the Herod who was reigning then. We are not told in this place why Jesus departed from Galilee, but the purpose is indicated in John 4: 43-45. *When Jesus had heard*. Jesus did not have to obtain information about the activities of men by the ordinary means of hearing (John 2: 23-25), so the phrase is used merely to state the occasion on which he left Judea. It means as if it said "upon the report," etc., Jesus left Judea and went to Galilee. The word *hear* is from AKOUØ and has various shades of meaning which must be understood in each passage according to the connection. The word is so important that I believe it will be well to give a quotation from Thayer's lexicon on the definitions of the word. I shall quote the parts in italics since

that is his direct definition, while the words in regular type are his own comments and explanation of the definitions. I urge the reader to make note of it and be prepared to consult it as occasion suggests. "To be endowed with the faculty of hearing. To attend to; consider. To understand, perceive the sense of what is said. To get by hearing, learn. A thing comes to one's ears, to find out (by hearing), learn (hear of); to learn. To comprehend, understand. To perceive any one's voice. To give ear to one, listen, hearken. To yield to, hear to one; to listen to, have regard to. To perceive the distinct words of a voice. To yield obedience to a voice."

Verse 13. *Nazareth* was a town in Galilee where the parents of Jesus lived after coming back from Egypt. Now he moves his residence to another town in the same province called Capernaum. From now on when mention is made of "his own city" it will mean this place, while the term "his own country" will still mean the vicinity of Nazareth.

Verse 14. *That it might be fulfilled* does not always mean that a certain thing was done just so a particular prophecy might be fulfilled, although it will sometimes mean that. In every such passage it will be well to consider it in the light of saying, "and in so doing the prophecy was fulfilled which," etc.

Verse 15. The prophecy of Isaiah 9: 1, 2 is quoted which was fulfilled when Jesus took up his residence in the city of Capernaum. Sometimes more than one place would have the same name, hence the inspired writers gave several marks of identity by which the correct one would be known.

Verse 16. Heathen darkness had brooded over the communities around Capernaum, but the presence and teaching of Jesus penetrated that gloom and gave the people the benefit of spiritual light which fulfilled an important prophecy of the scriptures.

Verse 17. *From that time* denotes that Jesus began his public teaching after his baptism and not before. Likewise, men are not regarded as the Lord's workers today until they have been baptized. It indicates also that they are expected to begin working for Him as soon as they are baptized. In most respects the preaching of Jesus was like that of John in that its main subject was to require men to repent in view of the nearness of the king-

dom of heaven. Each of them taught that the kingdom was *at hand* which would mean that it did not exist in fact in their lifetime. Moreover, it also shows that it was soon to appear which disproves the teaching of the present day by some that the kingdom is still in the future.

Verse 18. According to John 1: 35-42 these two brothers were disciples of John. They had not ceased their regular occupation since there was nothing wrong about it and the command of John that his disciples repent would not interfere with their business. They were fishermen by occupation and were in the act of casting a net into the water when Jesus came by. That was the principal means of fishing in those days; the other was with a hook (Matthew 17: 27).

Verse 19. We note that the Lord did not say anything to these men as to their personal conduct. They had already been converted by John and hence nothing was wanting along that line. John's work was to "prepare the way of the Lord" by persuading men and women to repent and be baptized. That made it entirely proper for Jesus to call upon them to enter the work for which they had been prepared. *Make you fishers of men.* That was a psychological appeal to these men in view of their usual occupation. Jesus did not belittle or even criticize their business, but only promised to give them an improved opportunity to work at the trade of fishing. He intended for them to have better bait (spiritual meat) and take more valuable fish, the souls of men.

Verse 20. In leaving their nets they gave up their secular occupation for the sake of following Christ. A similar but fuller statement will soon be made of two others whom Jesus will call.

Verse 21. *Zebedee* is referred to in the reference works simply as a Jew who was a fisherman by trade. The information that he was the father of the two apostles, James and John, will be useful in other places for distinguishing them from other men with the same names. These brothers were called by Jesus and no particulars are given as to why they were called.

Verse 22. This contains the fuller statement referred to in verse 20; the brothers left the ship *and their father*. This would not have been necessary if nothing but information were the object. It would be taken for granted that they could not follow Jesus with-

out leaving their father as well as all other objects at home. The lesson is that love for earthly relatives should not be regarded above service for Christ.

Verse 23. The word *synagogue* occurs many times in the New Testament and I will give Thayer's definition of the original Greek: "In the N. T. 1. an assembly of men. 2. a synagogue, i. e. a. an assembly of Jews formally gathered together to offer prayer and listen to the reading and exposition of the Holy Scriptures. b. the building where those solemn assemblies are held." The first meaning of the word is virtually the same as a congregation and then it came to be applied to the building in which the people met. Thayer says the following historically on the subject: "Synagogues seem to date their origin from the Babylonian exile. In the time of Jesus and the apostles every town, not only in Palestine but also among the Gentiles, if it contained a considerable number of Jewish inhabitants, had at least one synagogue, the larger towns several or even many."

The law of Moses made no provision for these buildings, yet there was nothing in its teaching that would prohibit them. The national worship was conducted at Jerusalem where the tabernacle and later the temple were located. Such services, which consisted in the animal sacrifices and burning of incense, also the service of the show-bread and burning of oil on the golden candlestick, must all be conducted at Jerusalem only. But other items of Jewish worship might be performed in any place available and hence these many synagogues that are mentioned throughout the New Testament.

The word *gospel* is from EUAGGELION, and its universal definition in the lexicons is "glad tidings" or "good news." Any specific additional meaning to be attached to it must be obtained through the connection in which it is used. Hence in the present verse the words *gospel of the kingdom* simply means the good news that the kingdom is at hand. There is not much difference between *sickness* and *disease*. The first especially refers to the symptoms of nausea and the second to some bodily weakness. In taking care of *all manner* of ailments Jesus proved his superhuman power.

Verse 24. Syria embraced most of the country including Palestine and the region north and northeast of it. Such beneficial work as Jesus was

doing would naturally be reported so that would cause him to become famous. The personal interest that people would have in such subjects as sickness and other afflictions would bring them forth to have Jesus relieve them. *Possessed with devils* will be explained in another place.

Verse 25. The preceding verse makes a general statement of the territory from which the afflicted people came; this specifies some parts of that vast area.

MATTHEW 5

Verse 1. This and the next two chapters constitute what is commonly called the "sermon on the mount," so called because the verse says that the Lord *went up into a mountain*. The text does not specifically state why Jesus went up to this place further than to say he did it *seeing the multitudes*. However, since the distinction is made between the multitudes and the disciples, we may reasonably conclude that the purpose was to be less hindered in the teaching of the ones who were really interested in it, and not moved only by curiosity or desire for temporal favors. *Disciples* is from MATHETES which Thayer defines, "A learner, pupil, disciple . . . the twelve apostles." The word has a broader or narrower application according to the way it is used, and the connection must always be considered in determining its meaning in a given case. Thayer's remarks included with the definition also show the word sometimes means those who favored Jesus and "became his adherents." That is its most prevalent meaning and the one it has in the present verse.

Verse 2. *Opened his mouth and taught them* is very significant. In all of God's dealings with man He has never influenced him in his moral and spiritual conduct except by the use of words, either written or spoken, and hence Jesus followed that plan in talking to his disciples about things pertaining to the kingdom of God. In this great sermon Jesus lays down many principles of life that pertained to the time before the kingdom was set up, and others were to be applied afterward. Where a distinction is necessary to the understanding of any passage I shall so state it.

Verse 3. *Blessed* is an adjective coming from the Greek word MAKARIOS, and Thayer defines it simply by the words "blessed, happy." In the Authorized Version it is rendered by the first

43 times and by the second 6 times. These verses are usually called "beatitudes," and Webster's definition of that word is, "Consummate [complete] bliss; blessedness." It will be well for us to think of the word in the sense of being happy as that is the more familiar word. To be *poor in spirit* means to recognize one's need of spiritual help. Such characters are the ones who will accept the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 4. There could be no happiness in the fact of mourning but it is by way of contrast. The new system that Jesus was about to set up would provide the only genuine relief from the sorrows of this world.

Verse 5. The word for *meek* is *πραος* which Thayer defines, "gentle, mild, meek." It is a contrast with the fierce and domineering spirit so often shown by the members of earthly kingdoms, especially the rulers. To *inherit* is generally defined in the lexicons "to receive by lot." Thayer's definition of this verse is, "to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom." *The earth* is the same that is referred to in 2 Peter 3: 13 which the apostle says was promised to the righteous.

Verse 6. To hunger and thirst after righteousness means to be eager to learn what constitutes a righteous life. It does not stop there, for when a man is hungry he not only seeks to find some food, but also is ready to partake of it. This means that the ones whom Jesus was blessing would be eager to do that which is right.

Verse 7. The single English word "mercy" is Thayer's definition of the word here. It is defined in the English dictionary to mean to be sparing in inflicting even punishment that is due another. It does not call for endorsement of wrong or for overlooking it, but to be considerate of the other person.

Verse 8. When disconnected from all qualifying terms the word *pure* simply means "unmixed"; something that is not combined with any other substance, and hence it could mean either good or bad. An object that has no good in it would be pure evil. When the connection shows it is used in a good sense (as in our verse) it means a heart not mixed up with the evils of a sinful world. The definition of the Biblical heart will be given in another place.

Verse 9. Every statement of scripture must be understood in harmony

with others on the same subject for the words of inspiration do not contradict each other. James 3: 17 says the wisdom from above is *first* pure *then* peaceable, and Paul in Romans 12: 18 commands us to live at peace with all men "if possible." The verse here means that disciples are to make every scriptural effort to be at peace with each other, and also to bring about a peaceable settlement between others who are at variance. Such will be called *the children of God* because He deals with mankind on that principle.

Verse 10. Thayer defines the original at this place, "to harass, trouble, molest," and he says that it may be done "in any way whatsoever," hence the persecution may be against one's body or his mind. But this must be done because the victim is righteous, and has no reference to accidental affliction, or punishment for wrong doing. These persons have the qualities of the citizens in the *kingdom of heaven*.

Verse 11. This verse is similar in thought to the preceding one except that it is considering only the persecution of the mind. The evil things said against a disciple must be done in falsehood to bring him under the application of this blessing.

Verse 12. This verse continues the thought of the preceding one. It will be nothing new for the Lord's disciples to be treated unjustly, for the righteous prophets were thus treated in former years. The *rejoicing* is to be for having been classed with the righteous prophets. The reward will come after this life is over and the victims have been admitted into heaven.

Verse 13. The teaching of Jesus contains many illustrations drawn from nature and the customs of mankind. *Salt* has two outstanding qualities; preservation of articles with which it comes in contact, and rendering food more agreeable to the taste. The lives of true disciples will shed the truth among men by example and teaching, and thus contribute to the salvation of their souls. And next, the trials or hardships of this life will be easier to bear, will "taste better" for having the salt of divine truth mixed with them. But if the salt *loses its savour* ("to make flat and tasteless") it will not be of any use either as a preservative or palliative. The first it is a pronoun for *the earth* which cannot be salted if it (the salt) has lost

strength. Such salt is fit for nothing but to be trodden upon as the soil of the ground. Likewise, if the disciples of Christ cease to be an influence for good—cease to practice the principles taught by their Master, they will finally be rejected and trodden upon by the Judge.

Verse 14. Disciples of Christ are the light of the world in much the same sense that they are the salt of the earth. The righteous lives they exhibit and the truth they spread among their fellowmen will reflect the light that comes from the Lord. The *hill* is the mountain or government of Christ and the light of divine truth shines forth from that exalted position like the glow of light from a city upon a hill.

Verse 15. It is possible for a strong light to be rendered useless, which would be done if a man lighted a lamp and then put some vessel over it. But men do not do such things in temporal matters; only in spiritual things do they act thus foolishly.

Verse 16. Jesus does not wish his disciples to act so unreasonably as the description in the preceding verse implies. *Let your light shine* does not call for any special effort to bring attention to the good light that has been made. If a host just makes a good light and leaves it uncovered, the guests will see it and give proper credit for the favor. *Your light* and *good works* are mentioned in direct connection which shows they mean the same. It is not necessary for one to boast of his good works in order to have men see them; all that is necessary is to perform the works. However, the doer of these good deeds for the benefit of others, must also live a good life otherwise or in addition to his benevolence, or his good deeds will be rendered ineffective in the mind of men. ("Let not then your good be evil spoken of.") *Glorify* is from *doxazo* and Thayer's definition at this place is, "to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate." It is the Greek word for "glorify" in every place in the Authorized Version. The reason men will glorify God for these lives of the disciples is because they know that such conduct is not the natural result of the fleshly motives.

Verse 17. Jesus lived and completed his work on earth while the law of Moses was in force. He taught that men should respect and obey that law, yet he gave many instructions that

were not specifically set forth in that system. That was because he was getting ready to bring into the world another system of laws that were to be different from the old. This opened the way for the critics to charge him with being opposed to the law of Moses. In answer to such erroneous notions he used the difference between *destroying* and *fulfilling*. He was not in the world for the first but for the second. The Old Testament writings had predicted that a son of David was to come into the world and give it a new religious law. Because of such predictions, the very things Jesus taught of a different character constituted a fulfilling of the law.

Verse 18. *Verily* is from the Greek word *AMEN* which occurs 150 times in the New Testament. In the Authorized Version it is rendered "amen" 50 times and "verily" 100 times. Thayer defines the word as follows: "surely, of a truth, truly; most assuredly; so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." These various phrases define the word according to the connection in which it is used, whether at the beginning or ending of a passage, etc. *Till heaven and earth pass* is a phrase denoting the certainty of the fulfillment of the law of God. The material universe will pass away, but not until it has served the purpose of the Creator. Likewise, the law will not pass away until it has all been fulfilled. *Jot* is from *iota* which is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet and was originally written as a subscript under the regular line. *Tittle* is one of the diacritical marks used by the Greeks in their writings. The two terms are used to illustrate the importance that Jesus attached to the law. Even such apparently small points of the law as these will not be dropped until they have been fulfilled.

Verse 19. The commandments of the law will not be in force in the kingdom of heaven. The thought is that a man who would break the least of these commandments while they are in force shows the wrong attitude toward divine law. Such a person would not rank very high in the kingdom of heaven after it has been set up.

Verse 20. *Exceed* is from the same Greek word that is used in 2 Corinthians 3: 9, and we know that it is there used in the sense of quality and not quantity. Jesus means that his disciples must have a better kind of righteousness than the Pharisees prac-

ticed, for theirs was done for appearance and came from the lips only. A full description of the Pharisees will be found in connection with the comments at chapter 16: 12. The kingdom of heaven was to be entered into only by men who were converted in heart and whose actions were induced by a genuine acceptance of the Lord's commandments.

Verse 21. In half a dozen places in this chapter Jesus quotes some things that were said in *old time* which means the time that was regulated by the law of Moses. He does not discredit the authority of the Sinaite lawgiver, but shows how some changes or additions will be made in the teaching for the kingdom of heaven. He being the Son of God and the one who will be the king on the throne of David when the church is set up, it was appropriate that he begin showing some of the contrasts between the two. Those contrasts will generally consist in making a more spiritual application of the ancient laws, and/or in tightening their requirements so as to make them more rigid.

One of such items was the law of trial for murder, that such a crime would lay a man under charges to be heard by the *judgment*. This is from the Greek word *krisis* and I shall give the definition of two lexicons: "The college of judges (a tribunal of seven men in the several cities of Palestine; as distinguished from the Sanhedrin, which had its seat at Jerusalem . . . Matthew 5: 21, 22)." — Thayer. "A judgment seat, tribunal, put for a court of justice, judges, i. e. the smaller tribunals established in the cities of Palestine, subordinate to the Sanhedrin; see Deuteronomy 16: 18; 2 Chronicles 19: 5. According to the Rabbins they consisted of 23 judges; but Josephus expressly says the number was seven."—Robinson. Even as serious a crime as murder was considered as only being in danger of facing this secondary court of justice.

Verse 22. Jesus is teaching that under the standards of right and wrong that he will establish, being angry with a brother *without a cause* will endanger one before the same *judgment* seat as murder did in old time. As a further indication of increased strictness, to give way to one's temper to the extent of calling his brother *Raca* (a term of reproach meaning empty-headed or senseless), would endanger him before the greater

court; the *council* which was the Sanhedrin. Still increasing the picture of responsibility, to accuse a brother of being a *fool* will put a man in danger of hell fire. According to Thayer, Robinson and Greenfield, the word for *fool* means "a wicked rebel against the Lord." And it should be noted that all of the evil actions are on condition that they are *without a cause*. The word *hell* is from *GEHENNA* which refers to the lake of unquenchable fire into which the wicked will be cast after the judgment. A fuller definition of the English word "hell" as it is used in the New Testament will be given in another part of the COMMENTARY.

Verse 23. *Therefore* is said because the last subject treated was the sin of showing the wrong attitude toward a brother. Under the law of Moses the Jews were encouraged to bring voluntary gifts to be consecrated to the Lord on the altar of sacrifices. These were in addition to the sacrifices specifically required on stated occasions or for specific purposes. Such an act was supposed to indicate that the giver was very much devoted to the Lord, and yet at the very time he might recall that his brother had a complaint against him. Such a complaint, for instance, could consist of calling him "a fool" according to the preceding verse.

Verse 24. One command is no more important than another, neither may one duty be made to take the place of another. But the gifts presented at the altar were expected to proceed from the heart, which would not be the case if a man would refuse to make a matter right with his brother. In other words, a ritualistic service should not be treated as a substitute for one of humility and brotherliness. Hence the man was directed to postpone his altar service until he had made it right with his brother.

Verse 25. This verse is in the nature of good advice concerning disputes with a fellow citizen on the subject of a debt. A conscientious attorney will advise his client to "settle the case out of court" if possible, which is the gist of this admonition from Jesus. *Whiles thou art in the way with him* means while they are still out of the jurisdiction of the judge. A man would better suffer some loss and remain a free man, rather than risk having the case decided against him and then have to spend a term in prison because of being unable to pay

the sum assessed. All of this is to be understood in the light of an old law where a man could be put into prison for a debt.

Verse 26. Had the man offered to settle privately he might have been let off upon the payment of a part of the debt. If he lets it go on through court he may have to lie in prison until the entire debt is paid to which will be added the "court costs."

Verse 27. This verse introduces another place where Jesus shows that his laws will be stricter than the old ones. The law against adultery pertained to the physical act only as it was pronounced "by them of old time."

Verse 28. This passage has been strained out of its true meaning. To say it means a man sins if he thinks of the subject of sex at all in connection with a woman would be to fly in the face of much scripture. In 1 Corinthians 7: 2 Paul instructs a man to marry in order to "avoid fornication," and yet he could not have been in any danger of that sin unless he had been mindful of the subject in connection with some woman. The apostle does not condemn him for the mere fact of that state of mind and hence we should not construe the teaching of Jesus to make it condemn him. The thought is of a man who has no intention of honorable marriage, but who indulges his mind with the subject and who cultivates an imagination on the subject in a case where he knows he could not carry out his inclinations without violating the moral law, either because he or the woman would not be free to consummate the union.

Verse 29. A physical operation will not cure a moral evil of the mind. If a man were deprived of his natural eyes it would not prevent him from thinking of the woman towards whom he had been looking with evil intent. But the loss of so valuable an organ as the eye is used to illustrate the extent of sacrifice that one should make in order to rid himself of an evil action of body or mind. A friend or an occupation may seem to be as valuable as the eye, yet one should better go on through life without it rather than enjoy it a few years and then he be lost entirely.

Verse 30. The lesson in this verse is exactly the same as that in the preceding one, using the hand instead of the eye for the illustration. A full definition of the word *hell* will be

given here and may not be repeated in full again. The reader should mark the place for convenient reference when needed. The word comes from three different Greek words in the New Testament. I shall give Thayer's definition, based upon his knowledge of history and of the language: "GEHENNA, the name of a valley on the S. and E. of Jerusalem . . . which was so called from the cries of the little children who were thrown into the fiery arms of Moloch, i. e. of an idol having the form of a bull. The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by King Josiah (2 Kings 23: 10), that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires were always needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by their putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called GEHENNA Puros [Gehenna fire]." The following are all the places in the New Testament where the word *hell* comes from GEHENNA. Matthew 5: 22, 29, 30; 10: 28; 18: 9; 23: 15, 33; Mark 9: 43, 45, 47; Luke 12: 5; James 3: 6.

HADES is defined by Thayer as follows: "1, a proper name, Hades, Pluto, the god of the lower regions, the nether world, the realm of the dead . . . it denotes, therefore, in Biblical Greek, Orcus, the infernal regions, a dark and dismal place . . . the common receptacle of disembodied spirits." Following are all the places in the New Testament where the word *hell* comes from HADES: Matthew 11: 23; 16: 18, Luke 10: 15; 16: 23; Acts 2: 27, 31; Revelation 1: 18, 6: 8; 20: 13, 14. The word *hell* comes from TARTAROS in one place only which is 2 Peter 2: 4, and the definition is not very different from that of Hades. To sum up, HADES is the place where all disembodied spirits go at death regardless of whether they are good or bad. TARTAROS is that part of HADES where the spirits of the wicked go at death. GEHENNA is the lake of unquenchable fire into which the whole being of the wicked (body soul and spirit) will be cast after the judgment.

Verse 31. The law referred to is in Deuteronomy 24: 1 which required a man to give his wife a writing that showed she had not deserted him, but that he had compelled her to go away. We know that was the purpose of that law, for the next verse says she may

become another man's wife. If she did not have the writing no man would risk marrying her for fear she was a deserter. If the writing had been done the husband was considered as having done full justice to his wife. But Jesus is going to show this to be another instance where his law will be stricter than the old.

Verse 32. Jesus never taught anything at one time that disagreed with what he taught at another. This verse should be considered in connection with chapter 19: 9 which is a fuller statement. The mere putting away of a wife does not constitute adultery, for there may be cases where a man would have to put his wife from him in order that he might live a Christian life. A woman might be guiltless as far as the intimate subject is concerned, and yet develop such a character and conduct herself in such a manner as to prevent a man from doing his full duty as a disciple of Christ; this idea is taught in chapter 10: 34-39. But unless his wife also is guilty of immorality the husband is not permitted to marry another. Neither would the wife who is put away for some cause other than immorality have the right to marry another under the regulations of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus was soon to set up.

Verse 33. *Forswear* means to make a false oath, or to testify under oath that which one does not intend to fulfill. The reference is to Leviticus 19: 12 where false oaths were expressly forbidden. Jesus cites the saying in contrast between his ruling and the old.

Verse 34. As to whether an oath is true or false is not the question with Jesus, for he forbids his disciples to make any oath at all. When a man makes an oath he backs it up by the authority of some power supposed to be great enough to make the oath good. That is why Jesus mentions various things by which men might pronounce an oath. The Jewish people had come to think they should not swear by the name of God, but Jesus shows it is as bad to swear by heaven since that is God's throne.

Verse 35. On the same basis as the above, they should not swear by the earth since it, too, is a part of the seating place of God, being his footstool. Jerusalem was the city of the great King who was God in the old system and will be the city of the new

king when the kingdom of heaven is set up.

Verse 36. If a man cannot even cause one hair of his head to change its color at his will, it would be foolish to rely upon it for making his oath good.

Verse 37. *Yea, yea; Nay, nay* means to let the statements be simply that of affirming what is in the positive class and denying the negative. The laws of the state do not require any man to make an oath if he declines to do so, but will accept his affirmation at the same value as an oath. Since that is true, there could be no good reason for wanting to add the oath, which is the reason Jesus said it *cometh of evil*.

Verse 38. In a number of places the old law did require the kind of penalty that is described in this verse. That was to be done as a legal act and not a personal one. Jesus teaches that no personal retaliation was to be permitted under the pretense of that law. If a man is actually harmed he has the right to appeal to the law of the land as it is in authority for that purpose (1 Timothy 1: 9, 10), but he should not take the law into his own hands.

Verse 39. The sermon on the mount is largely a document of principles and not specific rules, and the spirit of the teaching is to be followed instead of the letter. This very verse is an indication of the correctness of the aforesaid conclusion, for no one would be expected literally to turn a cheek toward a would-be smiter.

Verse 40. Men wore inner and outer garments in old time. Using the circumstance as an illustration only, as was done with the cheek, Jesus teaches that if a man insists on having one's outer garment, just let him have the other also.

Verse 41. Under some peculiar customs of the old times there seems to have been one of providing an escort for a man making a journey. However, the lesson is the same as that contained in the preceding verses which is that the disciples of Christ should show a willingness to be imposed on rather than wanting to impose on others.

Verse 42. In all of the teaching of the scripture regarding the granting of favors, we should consider what Jesus says in Matthew 7: 6. We should always try to learn whether the person asking a favor is worthy before granting it. If we find that he is, then

we may give him what he asks and lend him what he wishes to borrow.

Verse 43. The passages that were cited for the saying in this verse are Leviticus 19: 13 and Deuteronomy 23: 6. Jesus is still on the line of contrasts between his teaching and the old, and that introduces the subject of *love* which has caused some difficulty with students of the Bible. They think that Christians are required to have love in cases where it seems impossible. The difficulty lies in not understanding that the English word *love* comes from two words in the Greek New Testament which have different meanings. I shall give the information gleaned from the lexicons and the reader should make note of it for reference.

One of the Greek words in verb form is AGAPAO, and it is defined in part as follows: "To love, to be full of goodwill and exhibit the same: Luke 7: 47; 1 John 4: 7; with accusative [objective] of a person, to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of: Matthew 5: 43; 19: 19; Luke 7: 5; John 11: 5; Romans 13: 8; 2 Corinthians 11: 11; 12: 15; Galatians 5: 14; Ephesians 5: 25, 28; 1 Peter 1: 22, and elsewhere; often in the epistle of John of the love of Christians towards one another; of the benevolence which God, in providing salvation for men, has exhibited by sending his Son to them and giving him up to death, John 3: 16; Romans 8: 37; 2 Thessalonians 2: 16; 1 John 4: 11 . . . of the love which led Christ, in procuring human salvation to undergo sufferings and death, Galatians 2: 20; Ephesians 5: 2; of the love which God has for Christ, John 3: 35; 10: 17; 15: 9; Ephesians 1: 6. When used of love to a master, God or Christ, the word involves the idea of affectionate obedience, grateful recognition of benefits received: Matthew 6: 24; 22: 37; Romans 8: 28; 1 Corinthians 2: 9; 8: 3; James 1: 12; 1 Peter 1: 8; 1 John 4: 10, 20, and elsewhere. With an accusative [objective] of a thing AGAPAO denotes to take pleasure in the thing, prize it above other things, be unwilling to abandon it or do without it; . . . to welcome with desire, long for; 2 Timothy 4: 8."—Thayer. "To love (in a social or moral sense)."—Strong. In the noun form it is from AGAPE and defined in part as follows: "a purely biblical word. . . . In signification it follows the verb AGAPAO; consequently it denotes 1. affection, good-will, love, be-

nevolence: John 15: 13; Romans 13: 10; 1 John 4: 18. Of the love of men to men; especially of that love of Christians toward Christians which is enjoined and prompted by their religion, whether the love be viewed as in the soul or as expressed; Matthew 24: 12, 1 Corinthians 13: 4-8; 2 Corinthians 2: 4; Galatians 5: 6; Philemon 5, 7; 1 Timothy 1: 5; Hebrews 6: 10; 10: 24; John 13: 35; 1 John 4: 7; Revelation 2: 4, 19, etc. Of the love of men towards God; . . . of the love of God towards Christ; John 15: 10; 17: 26. Of the love of Christ towards men: John 15: 9; 2 Corinthians 5: 14; Romans 8: 35; Ephesians 3: 19: . . . 2. Plural AGAPAI, agapae, love-feasts, feasts expressing and fostering mutual love which used to be held by the Christians before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at which the poorer Christians mingled with the wealthier and partook in common with the rest of food provided at the expense of the wealthy: Jude 12."—Thayer. "From AGAPAO; love, i. e. affection or benevolence; specifically (plural) a love-feast."—Strong. The other word for love is PHILEO, a verb, and is defined in part as follows: "1. To love; be friendly to one, Matthew 10: 37; John 5: 20; 11: 3, 36; 15: 19; 16: 27; 20: 2; 21: 15-17; 1 Corinthians 16: 22; Revelation 3: 19; . . . to love, i. e. delight in, long for, a thing . . . to love to do with pleasure: 3. As to the distinction between AGAPAN and PHILEIN: the former by virtue of its connection with AGAMAI, properly denotes a love founded in admiration, veneration, esteem, like the Latin diligere, to be kindly disposed to one, wish one well: but PHILEIN denotes an inclination prompted by sense and emotion, . . . Hence men are said AGAPAN God, not PHILEIN; and God is said AGAPESAI TON KOSMON (John 3: 16), and PHILEIN the disciples of Christ (John 16: 27); Christ bids us AGAPAN (not PHILEIN) TONS ECHTHROUS (Matthew 5: 44), because love as an emotion cannot be commanded, but only love as a choice . . . As a further aid in judging of the difference between the two words compare the following passages: John 11: 5, 36; 21: 15-17 . . . From what has been said, it is evident that AGAPAN is not, and cannot be, used of sexual love."—Thayer. "To be a friend to (denoting personal attachment, as a matter of sentiment or feeling: while AGAPAO is wider, embracing especially the judgment and the deliberate assent

of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety)."—Strong.

These definitions are somewhat detailed, and for the convenience of the reader, I shall condense the two and the information of the lexicons will be the authority for the statements. One word means that sentiment of feeling such as a man will have for his wife or other close friend. The other is that feeling of interest that a man can have in another's welfare that would prompt him to try to save him if possible, regardless of his unpleasant disposition that might naturally provoke a feeling of dislike.

Verse 44. *Love your enemies* is explained with the note on the preceding verse. *Bless* is from EULOGEO which Thayer defines, "2. to invoke blessings, Matthew 5: 44," or to wish something good of another. *Curse* is from KATA-RAOMAI and Thayer defines it in this place as follows: "To curse, doom, imprecate [ask or wish for] evil on." The clause means that while an enemy is wishing for some evil to come on us, we should be wishing something good for him. *Do good to them that hate us* does not mean to do him a favor that he could use in the furtherance of his evil intentions, but do something that will actually benefit his soul. To pray for our persecutors denotes that we ask the Lord to help us overcome the evil one with righteous deeds in the hope of leading him into a reforming of his life.

Verse 45. Children are supposed to be like their parents in disposition and actions. The disciples of Christ should be like their Father in heaven in that they are not selfish or partial in the bestowal of favors. God gives the blessings of nature on all classes alike, because these favors are not supposed to be rewards for righteous living, and hence their bestowal could not be regarded as an endorsement of their lives.

Verse 46. *Love* here is from AGAPAO, and the word is defined in the long note at verse 43. From that it can be seen that Jesus disapproves of the selfishness that would lead us to benefit only those who are willing to benefit us. Even the publicans were willing to do that, although that class of citizens was not thought of very highly.

Verse 47. To salute means to "pay one's respects to" in the way of polite greeting. We should show that much courtesy even to those who are not in our class; not be "clannish."

Verse 48. *Perfect* is from TELEIOS and the simple meaning of the word is "completeness." When anything or person is all that is expected of it, it can be said to be complete and hence perfect. It is taken for granted that human beings are not expected to possess all of the traits that God has, but the spirit of impartiality is one characteristic that man can possess in common with God. If he does then he is complete on that score and hence is like the Father in heaven.

MATTHEW 6

Verse 1. *To be seen* is the key to this verse. To say it means we should do all of our good deeds unknown to others would make it contradict chapter 5: 16 where others were to see our good works. But our motive in doing good deeds should not be to be seen of men. If we do so, we will get only the reward that men can give us in the form of praise, for the Father will not give us any reward for it.

Verse 2. The three words *sound a trumpet* are from SALPIZO which Thayer defines "to sound a trumpet." The same author comments on the word as follows: "To take care that what we do comes to everybody's ears, to make a noise about it." In the preceding verse the alms were done in order to be seen of men. This verse goes further and sounds the trumpet in order to be sure the deeds will be seen. *Hypocrite* is from HYPOKRITES which Thayer defines as follows: "1. one who answers, an interpreter. 2. an actor, stage-player. 3. in Biblical Greek a dissembler, pretender, hypocrite." The word originally had no moral significance, meaning only a man who went upon the stage to play a certain role in a drama. It then got into the moral and religious language to mean a man who acts a part on the stage of human experiences. The word means one who pretends to be something he knows he is not. *Have their reward*. The first word is defined, "To have received all that one can expect." The praise of men is what these hypocrites sought and that is what they will have; nothing else.

Verse 3. *Hands* cannot literally know anything hence we have to conclude this verse means we should not make a great ado over our good deeds.

Verse 4. *Alms in secret*. We have seen in verse 1 and chapter 5: 16 that our good deeds are not required to be done literally in secret. The meaning of this verse, therefore, must be that

we should do good even in cases where men may not realize the good we have done. But God knows all things and will give full credit where it is due.

Verse 5. The place of the praying is not what is condemned, but the motive, *to be seen*, is the thing that is wrong. At any proper time it would be right to pray even on the streets, but it must not be done for show. *Have their reward* virtually means they may not expect any further reward. (See verse 2.)

Verse 6. The servants of the Lord may offer either private or public prayers in lawful service to Him. Both kinds should be considered in connection with this chapter. But it is improper to pretend to be offering a private prayer and yet do it in a way to attract attention. This verse means that if a disciple actually means his prayer to be private he should seek a private place to offer it.

Verse 7. *Vain repetitions* is explained in the lexicon to mean saying the same things over and over again for the sake of taking up time, or for the purpose of making a favorable impression. *Heathen* is from *ETHNIKOS* which Thayer defines, "3. in the New Testament savoring of the nature of pagans, alien to the worship of the true God, heathenish." *Much speaking* means the same as vain repetitions as to its motive. Many prayers of disciples of Christ today have unnecessary phrases that would come under the disapproval of Jesus. Our prayers should be brief and simple and made to pertain to the occasion that caused the prayer to be called for.

Verse 8. Prayer is not for the purpose of informing God about our needs for He already knows that. It is an occasion of showing our faith in the Heavenly Father.

Verse 9. After *this manner* denotes that Jesus only intended this to be an example of the kind of prayers he wished his disciples to offer. It therefore is not "the prayer he taught his disciples to pray." There are no set forms of service in the kingdom of heaven as to the wording of them. *Hallowed* is from *HAGIAZO* and is defined, "to render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow." It is equivalent to saying that the name of our Father is holy.

Verse 10. Both John and Jesus had taught that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. That would mean that it was near but not yet set up. The

prayer for the kingdom to come would therefore be a scriptural one for the disciples to offer at that time. However, it would be unscriptural to make that prayer today since the kingdom is *in earth now. As in heaven.* God's rule had been going on for centuries in heaven, hence the prayer was to recognize that fact while praying for it to take place on the earth. Such a prayer indicated two things; that the disciples wished the kingdom to come, and also that they believed in the promise of Christ that it was to come soon.

Verse 11. There are two outstanding thoughts in this verse. *Daily* is from a Greek word that means "necessary," showing they were to pray for what they needed and not what they merely desired. And *this day* indicates that prayer should be offered daily.

Verse 12. God does not have to be given an example of righteous performances before He will do it. But if a disciple is unwilling to forgive those indebted to him, the Lord will not regard him as worthy of such a favor. (See chapter 18: 23-35.)

Verse 13. *Temptation* is from a word that sometimes means "adversity, affliction, trouble," and *evil* is from one meaning "hardships." God never leads men into sin and the words are not used in that sense in this place. The clause is simply a prayer for God to help the disciples in the trials of life. *For thine is the kingdom*, etc., is given as a reason for believing that God could control the elements of creation according to His will, and hence he would be able to give the disciples this assistance. For the meaning of the word *amen* see the comments at chapter 5: 18.

Verses 14, 15. See the comments on verse 12 for the explanation of these.

Verse 16. Fasting was never commanded as a regular practice, but it was voluntarily done on particular occasions as an outward symbol of grief or penitence or great anxiety. The act was approved by the Lord when prompted by a sincere motive. But the hypocrites wished to obtain the praise of men for fasting when they had not actually abstained from food long enough to produce any visible effects on their countenance. To accomplish their purpose they would *disfigure* their faces and then put on a sad look. Thayer defines the word *disfigure*, "to deprive of lustre, render unsightly; to disfigure." This was done in order to

appear unto men to *fast* or appear as men fasting.

Verse 17. When David was ready to cease fasting (2 Samuel 12: 20) at the death of his child he arose and washed himself. Jesus instructed his disciples to proceed with the usual customs of daily life in spite of their season of fasting. That would tend to the opposite effect of the disfigurement that the hypocrites practiced for attention.

Verse 18. *Appear not unto men to fast.* By following the usual routine as described in the preceding verse the disciples would not appear to be men on a fast. That would take them out of the class of hypocrites who made a show of their performance in order to receive the praise of men. God who knows the hearts of men would see and reward the devotions of His servants as would be fitting.

Verse 19. *For yourselves* is the key to this verse and is in line with 1 Timothy 6: 18. To say the passage forbids the accumulation of property beyond the present day needs would be to set some scriptures against others. We may lay up something for the future but not simply *for ourselves*; it is that "we may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4: 28). When we have thus accumulated a surplus we must be careful not to trust in it or become attached to it lest we make it an idol.

Verse 20. In addition to the reasons against hoarding described in the preceding verse, it is also foolish from the standpoint of an investment. Our idle wealth may be attacked and taken by thieves and all be lost for any good use. But the treasures in heaven, which consist of the credits from God for our righteous lives, will be safe because no thief will ever be admitted to that place, neither will any form of decay be possible there. That is why Paul used the impressive words, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy 6: 19).

Verse 21. This is another reason for not hoarding material wealth *for ourselves*, because that will become the object of our greatest interest which will lead to a form of idolatry. Doubtless that is the reason for Paul's statements in Ephesians 5: 5 and Colossians 3: 5. The heart is the inner man and the seat of emotions and the cause of activities. If that is centered in worldly wealth it will induce man to

devote his attentions upon it to the neglect of God.

Verse 22. The human body is again used for illustration, the eye being the particular part for the comparison. This organ is the only one that admits light into the body and hence complete dependence upon it is necessary. *Single* is from HAPLOUS which Thayer defines by, "good, sound." The literal fact is that if a man's eyes are sound or normal he will be able to receive all the light that is offered him.

Verse 23. *Evil* is defined in the lexicon to be "in a bad condition." *If the light that is in thee be darkness.* If the only means that one has for receiving light be darkness (which it would be if it became in bad condition), then the darkness would be great because one has no other means of seeing. The lesson in this illustration is that a man has only one means of receiving spiritual light which is his intellect or mind. It is that part of his being by which he either accepts or rejects spiritual light. (See John 3: 19-21.) Therefore if that mind is rendered "unsound" by the love of darkness or evil deeds, "how great is that darkness."

Verse 24. In the time of Christ and the apostles the country had many slaves and the relation of master and slave was referred to frequently in the speech and literature. If a man belonged to a certain master he would not be able nor even should desire to serve another or to divide his services. If he so much as attempted to do so he would be brought to punishment by his rightful master. Jesus made his own application of the illustration by comparing it to God and *mammon*. That word is derived from a Chaldean one that is defined, "what is trusted; treasure; riches." We have seen in verses 19-21 above that our wealth can become an idol in our hearts, and that would make it another god that would be a rival of the true God. The lesson is that we must not try to divide our devotion between God and anything or anyone else.

Verse 25. *Therefore.* If you are going to serve God and not riches, you will not be so concerned about temporal things which do not constitute the object of your chief devotions. *Take no thought* is from MERIMNAO, which Thayer defines, "to be anxious; to be troubled with cares." It is the word for *be careful* in Philippians 4: 6 where the connection shows it means

not to be too much concerned but to look to the Lord for help. Hence Jesus does not mean that his disciples were to be indifferent about the needful things of life, but they should not be overanxious about it. The reasoning of the Saviour offers is both simple and forceful. The body and the life within it are certainly more valuable than the clothing for the body or the food for the life. But they already possessed the major blessings, then why have any doubts about God's ability and willingness to give them the minor ones?

Verse 26. This verse is not intended to encourage indolence on the part of man, for the fowls cannot perform the scientific works of production while man is able to do so. The idea is that since these helpless creatures are abundantly supplied without their own help, it shows the power and willingness of the Creator to accomplish all that is necessary. Therefore the servants of God should have full confidence in His ability and willingness to supply all the needs of man that he cannot obtain for himself.

Verse 27. Undue anxiety will not add the slightest amount to one's size, hence it is useless to be concerned about the necessities of life to the extent of foolish worry.

Verse 28. This verse has the same lesson as verse 26 except it has to do with clothing only. The lilies are as helpless as the fowls and do nothing to produce their outward appearance and growth.

Verse 29. The glory of Solomon's royal robes was artificial, made by the art of man, and doubtless was unexcelled by any other king of his time. His general surroundings also were the greatest of his time. (See 1 Kings 10.) The glory and beauty of the flower is natural and hence is made directly by the hand of the Creator without the instrumentality of man, which shows the ability of God to accomplish the utmost in the field of adornment and clothing.

Verse 30. *Grass* is from *CHORTOS* and is defined in the lexicon, "grass, herbage, hay, provender." The lily is of the vegetable kingdom and hence is in the general class of the herbs. *Which* is comes from *ONROS* which is defined, "truly, in reality, in point of fact . . . that which is indeed."—Thayer. The thought is that this beautiful lily is actually in existence but only for a brief time. Notwithstanding its uncertain and short existence, God

thinks enough of it to give it a beauty that far excels that of Solomon. Certainly, then, He will not forget man who is made in His image. *Cast into the oven* refers to the use of light fuel such as leaves and grass that was burned in the portable baking stoves of many homes in that day. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following of these ovens: "The eastern oven is of two kinds—fixed and portable. The latter is adapted to the nomad [traveling] state. It consists of a large jar made of clay, about three feet high and widening toward the bottom, with a hole for the extraction of the ashes. Each household possessed such an article, Exodus 8: 3, and it was only in times of extreme dearth that the same oven sufficed for several families; Leviticus 26: 26. It was heated with dry twigs and grass, Matthew 6: 30, and the loaves were placed both inside and outside of it."

Verse 31. This verse is a summing up of the thoughts in the verses starting with 25 and the repetition is for the purpose of emphasis.

Verse 32. *Gentiles* is from *ETHNOS* and refers to the nations in general out over the world. God knows all about our needs for He has created the very bodies that have them, hence he certainly will not refuse to provide what is necessary to support them.

Verse 33. There is nothing that we really have to do in making a living that will need to interfere with our work in the kingdom of God. The point is that we must be concerned first about the righteousness belonging to the kingdom. While doing that we can also do what is necessary for our temporal needs, and it is in that way that "all these things shall be added unto us."

Verse 34. Again the exhortation comes not to be overanxious about *the morrow* which means the future in general. *Evil* is from *KAKIA* and Thayer defines it at this place, "evil, trouble." The thought may well be expressed with a familiar one "don't borrow trouble" from the future. Also by another household saying not to try to "cross a bridge before we get to it." Sufficient unto the day, etc., means that each day has enough trouble for itself without looking ahead and worrying about some evil that may never come anyway. When the morrow comes, if it brings trouble to us it will then be time enough to think about it. We will be able then to care for it in the way just set forth in this chapter.

MATTHEW 7

Verse 1. *Judge not.* These words are often quoted by people who resent being corrected for their wrong doing. Such persons fail to consider that the word has a very wide range of meaning and that they should learn the bearing of it in any particular place before applying it to themselves. Were they asked if they believe the Bible contradicts itself in any way they would say no, yet the same Greek word is used in John 7: 24 where Jesus says for us to judge. But it may be replied that Jesus says to judge "righteous judgment." That is the very point, and hence our present verse simply means not to judge unrighteously. But if a judgment is according to the truth and facts in a case then it would be righteous judgment and not forbidden by this verse.

Verse 2. With the first verse explained this one should not be difficult. If a man passes unrighteous judgment upon another he lays himself open to condemnation. In other words, if a man condemns another without evidence, it will indicate that he is himself the guilty one and is trying to divert attention from himself to another.

Verse 3. The terms *mote* and *beam* are used figuratively to illustrate the inconsistency of a hypocrite. Two wrongs do not make one right, neither must a man profess to be "as pure as an angel" before he has the right to condemn sin in others. It should be noted that both these men were afflicted in the same manner (in the eye), only one was less than the other. The illustration pictures a man with a serious obstruction in his eye and wanting to operate on the eye of another who is much less affected. In practice it would be like a man condemning another for getting drunk every Saturday night when he was himself drinking every day.

Verse 4. This continues the thought of inconsistency just described.

Verse 5. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be what he knows he is not. This man pretends to have unaffected eyes, yet he knows better if he is able to recognize what is an affection in the other's eye. That is, he knows his own eye is not right if he can understand that a mote renders the other man's eye defective.

Verse 6. *Dog* sometimes means a sodomite (Deuteronomy 23: 18; Revelation 22: 15) or other impure man,

but it is here associated with literal swine and hence should be understood as meaning the brute creatures. Both animals were classed as impure and unclean under the law and hence are used to illustrate unworthy human beings. The lesson in the verse is that we should not bestow favors upon those who are not worthy. If a man spends money in unrighteous indulgences, we should turn a deaf ear to him when he makes a cry of poverty and destitution.

Verse 7. The favors of God are offered to us on conditions. Thus the invitation to *ask* is restricted to the things that are "according to his will" (1 John 5: 14). The promise of obtaining what we seek for is to be in harmony with chapter 6: 33, and the same principle would apply to knocking, which is merely a sign that we wish to be admitted into the favor of God.

Verse 8. This is an assurance of fulfillment of the preceding verse, the key to it being in the words *every one*. Since God is no respecter of *persons* (Acts 10: 34), it follows that all who meet the conditions set forth in the preceding verse will be favored of God without partiality as to who the individual is.

Verse 9. A humane father would not answer a son's request for bread with a stone.

Verse 10. Or will he substitute a fish with a serpent in his son's request.

Verse 11. *Being evil* is used as a contrast with God. The disciples would admit that they were sinful men and yet were humane in their treatment of their children. Certainly, then, a divine Father will be kind to his children. It is significant that He will give *good things* to them who ask him, not just anything they might think they needed. Even an earthly humane father might deny a request of his son if the thing asked for should not be the best thing for his welfare.

Verse 12. *Therefore* is from *OUN* and Thayer's over-all definition of it is as follows: "Then, therefore, accordingly, consequently, these things being so," and Robinson and Greenfield define it in virtually the same way. The conclusion is drawn from the facts and truths set forth in verse 7-11. God will not refuse to grant necessary favors to His children, and even sinful man will not refrain from granting like requests to a relative. Using this

as an example, we should even not wait to be asked for a needed favor since we would not refuse the thing if requested, but should voluntarily advance the favor, such as we would expect from others under the same circumstances. *This is the law and the prophets* is equivalent to "on these hang all the law and the prophets" (chapter 22: 40). If we love our neighbor as ourselves we will do to him as we would expect him to do to us. We will not steal his property, or invade his home, or falsify on him, or seek to kill him, etc., because we would not want him to do so unto us.

Verse 13. A companion passage to this is Luke 13: 23-30 where the connection shows the subject is eternal salvation after the judgment day. *Enter ye in*, therefore, means to enter into eternal life. Jesus first describes the way that leads to destruction. *Gate* and *way* are used figuratively, because there is no specific route established for the purpose of taking people to eternal death. It means that the opportunities for entering or starting on this evil way are many and the kind of life that will lead to death of the soul is so easy that it is compared to a wide or roomy one; that is the reason that many go that way. It is the universal practice of man to follow the course of least resistance in this life. Such is the way of sin because there are only a few people who will oppose a man who wishes to follow a life of sin.

Verse 14. Both Thayer and Robinson give "narrow" as one definition of the original for *strait*. *Narrow* is from *THLBO* and is defined by Thayer, "A compressed way, i. e. narrow, straitened, Matthew 7: 14; figuratively to trouble, afflict, distress." From the definition we understand the road to eternal life is one in which the traveler will be pressed with hardships and persecutions. It is also narrow in the ordinary sense of that word because the travelers go as individuals as far as responsibility is concerned, and just one man does not need a wide path; the going is "single file." *Find* is from *HEUBISKO* and Thayer's first definition is, "To come upon, hit upon, to meet with; to find a thing sought." Not many people are looking for a way of life that will bring them hardships and tribulation, hence Jesus says *few there be that find it*.

Verse 15. *False prophets* comes from *PSEUDOPROPHETES* which Thayer defines, "One who, acting the part of a divinely

inspired prophet, utters falsehoods under the name of divine prophecies, a false prophet." The same author explains *sheep's clothing* to mean "the skins of sheep." A wolf having the skin of a sheep around him would be like these evil men who are posing as the prophets of God.

Verse 16. *Know them by their fruits*. The wolf would soon show his true character by his ravenous attack upon the unsuspecting sheep. A thorn bush or thistle will finally prove itself to be such by bearing thorns instead of fruit.

Verses 17, 18. These verses are a direct statement of facts upon which the foregoing comparison was based. The statements are absolute and describe conditions that are normal, not those that may only seem to be. However, an evil tree without exception will be unable to bear good fruit. If a tree that is or was naturally good appears to bear evil fruit it is because something has been done to it to interfere with its regular function and virtually turned it into an evil tree. We know that such a change is possible in the life of a man, for a good one may fall from his righteous course of life and become evil and henceforth bear evil fruit in his life.

Verse 19. In the literal field, a farmer will remove an evil tree to make room in his orchard for a good one, and will do away with the bad tree by burning it. The lesson is that if men do not bear good fruit, which means to practice good deeds while in this life, the great Owner of the garden will cast them into fire.

Verse 20. This verse is the conclusion of the important comparison of good and bad trees which applies to the lives of men in this world.

Verse 21. *Lord* is from *KURIOS* and means, "One who has control of a person, the master." The mere addressing one as a master without doing what he expects of his servant is inconsistent. Such empty professors will not be admitted into the kingdom of heaven, because there will be things that need to be done by its citizens.

Verse 22. Neither may a servant select his own type of activities according to what suits his preferences and expect to be rewarded for it. If that should be permitted there would be much necessary though less apparently glorious work neglected. The works described in this verse were possible in the days of miracles and Jesus does

not deny the claims of these one-sided servants.

Verse 23. In spite of the ritualistic performances or works of display which these men did, there was something of the practical that was lacking. They did only what suited them and were content to construct a character that did not respect all the sayings of Christ. For this reason Jesus says he *never knew you*, which means he never recognized or endorsed them as being true servants.

Verse 24. No doubt the people described in the preceding verse lived a life that made a fair appearance to others because their deeds seemed out of the ordinary. Yet they were not well founded because they were not backed up by a program of practical obedience to the whole law of useful service. A house must not only be pleasing to the eye of an admirer in order to stand, but it must be founded on something solid. Hence Jesus compares the all-around and serviceable man to one who not only put some desirable things into the construction of his building, but who was careful to underlay it with a rock foundation.

Verse 25. The elements of the weather are used to illustrate the final test that will be put upon every man's life. The trials of this world will have their part to play in the great drama, but the final test will come when the Lord tries all mankind at the bar of the last judgment when Christ sits upon the throne of judgment.

Verse 26. The man who builds a house on the sand is like one who estimates his needs by present conditions only. In the absence of water and wind, sandy ground would seem about as firm as a rock, or at least enough so that it would appear firm and hard and suitable to hold up a house. Likewise, if no tests were made of a man's work in this life, either now or at the judgment, then one kind of spiritual structure might be as acceptable as another and hence he might as well do as he sees fit about it.

Verse 27. But the test is sure to come and the house on the sand will fall. *Great will be the fall* because it will be the loss of a soul.

Verse 28. The word for *astonished* is defined by "amazed" in the lexicon, which was caused by the *doctrine* or teaching of Jesus. *People* is from *ochlos* and that Greek word has been rendered by company 7 times, multi-

tude 79, number 1, people 82, press 5. It has a wide range of definitions in the lexicon such as, "a crowd; multitude of men who have flocked together in some place, a throng; the common people; a multitude." From chapter 5: 1 and 8: 1 we cannot conclude that it means all the people of the territory heard him in the mount, yet a considerable number did follow the Lord to that place as those desiring to learn of him.

Verse 29. *Having authority, not as the scribes*. The scribes were not inspired men neither were they in any official position. Their business was to copy the law and then quote it to the people for their information; they could only say "it is written." Jesus was the Son of God and could speak independent of all written documents, although he always respected what had been written by Moses and the prophets.

MATTHEW 8

Verse 1. The *multitudes* evidently were the ones Jesus left behind in chapter 5: 1 when he went up into the mount. Their interest did not seem to be strong enough to take them up the place where they would have to climb. Now that he is again on the lower level they are ready to go along after him. *Followed him* refers to their bodily movement in walking with him and not to any particular attitude of mind toward his teaching.

Verse 2. The leper *worshiped* Jesus which would mean only that he assumed a position of respect. See the long definition of the word at chapter 2: 2. The law of Moses required a leper to maintain a safe distance from others (Leviticus 13: 45, 46), hence the conduct of this man could be only one of courtesy. Leprosy was incurable except by miraculous power, and Jesus had previously proved his ability to cure bodily ailments by his miraculous power (chapter 4: 23, 24).

Verse 3. Jesus was willing to heal the leper and did so both by physical contact and word of mouth. The healing was *immediate* and not like the pretended working of miracles today where the patient is exhorted to "hold out with faith and finally be cured."

Verse 4. There was no medical cure for leprosy known to the ancients but sometimes a leper was cured miraculously. And after the physical cure had been accomplished, a ceremonial cleansing was required under the law which included certain sacrifices. (See

Leviticus 14.) The Mosaic law was in force in the time of Christ, hence he commanded this man to comply with that ordinance pertaining to leprosy. *For a testimony unto them.* When the former leper presented himself before the priest to perform this service, it was proof that a miraculous cure had been done and hence another bit of evidence would be furnished of the power of Jesus.

Verse 5. The Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary defines a *centurion* as follows: "The commander of a 'century,' i. e., a hundred men, the sixtieth part of a legion, in the Roman army." This man was a Gentile, being an official in the Roman military forces. But the fame of Jesus had reached the ears of all classes, and they believed that the benefit of his mercy was to be enjoyed by any who were afflicted.

Verse 6. The word *Lord* in the original has several shades of meaning, one of which is "sovereign, prince, chief." This centurion had not become a disciple of Jesus and hence he did not address him as *Lord* from that standpoint. But he had learned enough about his great work to believe him to be a superior person in wisdom and power. He therefore appealed to him on behalf of his servant who was sick of the palsy which was a form of paralysis that retained a considerable amount of feeling in the parts.

Verse 7. Jesus was able to give "absent treatment" as effectively as otherwise. However, the proposal to come to the home of the centurion drew from him an expression of complete faith. He had not even requested that Jesus come, but only appealed to him in the attitude of a simple trust in his power and willingness to do something for him.

Verse 8. This verse gives us one reason why the centurion had not asked Jesus to come to his home; he did not feel worthy of such a guest. He therefore was to be satisfied with the favor to his servant though absent, and expressed his belief thus.

Verse 9. This verse indicates that the good things the centurion said in the preceding verse did not come out of a desire to use empty flattery, because he gave a logical reason for his statement. *Under authority . . . under me* is a very significant line of argument. The centurion had the power to give commands to servants who were *under* him, even though he was himself *under* another. Jesus, on the other

hand, was under no one (as the centurion thought) and hence should be able to exercise unrestricted authority. This was in line with one definition for *Lord* which is: "One who has control of a person, the master."

Verse 10. A meaning of *marvel* is "to admire." Jesus could not be surprised or impressed as if by some unexpected occurrence for his wisdom was divine. Therefore we are to understand this to mean he was filled with admiration for this unusual exhibition of faith. *So great faith, no, not in Israel.* The centurion was not a member of the nation of Israel but belonged to the idolatrous Gentiles. Yet he showed more faith than the people who were supposed to possess great confidence in the seed of Abraham.

Verse 11. *East and west* is used figuratively to mean the earth or world in general, not merely the land of the Jews that was virtually restricted to the land of Palestine. *Kingdom of heaven* means the "everlasting kingdom" that is promised in 2 Peter 1: 11 to the faithful. *To sit down* means to become a guest and admitted to the hospitality of a home. It is used in this place to refer to the favors that will be given to the faithful in the Eternal Home after this life on earth is over.

Verse 12. *Children* is from *huios* and Thayer's definition at this place is, "those for whom a thing is destined." It does not necessarily mean those who had actually become members of the kingdom, but those who would logically have been expected to be foremost in entering it as were the Jews. The fathers of that nation, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, had lived faithfully under the system that was in force over them (the Patriarchal Dispensation), but their descendants of the later centuries in the time of Christ rejected the teaching of their great *seed* and will be rejected in the day of judgment. Paul set forth this same thought in his speech at Antioch (Acts 13: 46).

Verse 13. Having concluded his speech to the hardened Jews, Jesus gave his final attention to the centurion by promising him the favor he requested. *As thou hast believed* means that the centurion would receive the favor he believed he would, namely, the healing of his servant at once by the simple word of Christ. Hence the statement that the servant *was healed in the selfsame hour* is given in direct connection.

Verse 14. One observation we should make here is that Peter had a wife, contrary to the dogma of the church of Rome. *Laid* means she was prostrated with the fever as if thrown down by the force of the disease.

Verse 15. In this case Jesus saw fit to make bodily contact. We are not told here whether he said anything, but in Luke 4: 39 it says he "rebuked the fever." This healing also was immediate and complete for the woman was able to perform the work of administering to them.

Verse 16. Thayer defines *even* in this passage to mean, "from our three to six o'clock P. M." That accounts for the many things that seem to have been done yet on that same day. *Possessed with devils* will be explained at verse 28, but it should be noted here that healing the sick was distinguished from casting out devils. It is also stated that Jesus did both *with his word*.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled* does not always mean that a certain thing was done just so a particular prophecy might be fulfilled, although it will sometimes mean that. Which-ever the case may be, it will be well to consider it in the light of saying, "and in so doing the prophecy was fulfilled which," etc. The prophecy cited here is in Isaiah 53: 4.

Verse 18. Sometimes the multitudes were so great that it interfered with the work of Jesus (Mark 2: 4; 3: 9; Luke 8: 19). That was the case here and hence Jesus gave orders for them to depart unto the *other side* (of the Sea of Galilee).

Verse 19. A full description of the work and character of the *scribes* will be given at chapter 13: 52, but I will state now that they were a very important group of men among the Jews. They made great pretensions of learning and wished to be recognized as an indispensable class. This scribe came to Jesus with an air of one who was deeply concerned in the work of the new teacher who was gaining so much fame among the people. But Jesus knew his heart as he always did all other men, and knew that he had mixed motives in his apparent devotional attitude.

Verse 20. To *follow* Jesus at that time meant to go bodily over the country with him and with no certain arrangement for personal comfort. The foxes and birds had fixed places of abode and always knew where they

would lodge. However, we should not take the saying of Jesus to mean that he would be like a friendless wayfarer with no chance of accommodations at night. We are sure that he had friends (such as the family of Lazarus) who gladly opened their homes for him. But he did not hold possession of any such a place so that he could provide the comforts of temporal life for his followers, hence there was no object in following him with such luxuries in view. There is no ground for saying this verse is a statement to show how "poor" Jesus became as a popular notion claims for it.

Verse 21. It is unreasonable to suppose that this man's father was actually dead at this time, for had that been the case he would not have been away from home. The necessary conclusion is, then, that the father was aged and likely to pass away almost any time, and the son presented this family duty as an excuse for not going abroad over the country with Jesus.

Verse 22. As the father was not yet dead, and this man professed to be a disciple of Jesus and hence *alive* spiritually, he should leave the temporal work of a burial to those who were *dead* spiritually. The general lesson in the case is that even as important a circumstance as a funeral should not be allowed to interfere with the spiritual services we owe to Christ.

Verse 23. The *disciples* were that part of the crowd that professed to be the followers of Jesus in belief as well as wanting to go along with him in the traveling. We would naturally conclude that the multitude could not enter the ship.

Verse 24. In the Scriptures as in any other literature, we should deal with figurative language according to reason. We know that had the ship been literally *covered* with the water, the disciples would have already perished and would not have been able to speak. The meaning of the passage is, therefore, that the ship was filling and that unless it was stopped they would perish.

Verses 25, 26. The disciples had been with Jesus and had seen his power over great obstacles. They should have had such confidence in him that as long as he was with them no harm could come. Their failure to take that view of it was the reason for charging them with "little faith." Jesus then did what they should have confidently

expected him to do; he stilled the tempest.

Verse 27. Each new miracle seemed to fill the disciples with astonishment. The distinguishing feature of this event would lie in the fact that it was inanimate things that Jesus controlled. That is indicated by their word *obey*, which ordinarily would require intelligent response which the storm could not do.

Verse 28. Gergesenes (also called Gadarenes) was situated near the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The *tombs* were caves in the rocks that were used for the burial of the dead. They were generally open so that persons could enter and leave them as occasion suggested. It was in this kind of a place that the Lord met the two afflicted men, *Possessed with devils* all comes from the Greek word *DAIMONIZOMAI*. Another Greek word that is always (with one exception) rendered by "devil in the Authorized Version is *DAEMONION*. These two Greek words are so frequently related that I shall consider them both in the comments at this verse. I shall quote from both Thayer and Robinson as they discuss the words in their lexicons. Because of the important history that they give in connection with their specific definitions, I think it will be well to give the reader the benefit of this authentic information. It will be so necessary in various places in our study of the New Testament, that I urge the reader to make it convenient to consult it carefully any time it is referred to. First will be Thayer on *DAIMONIZOMAI*:

"In the N. T. *DAIMONIZOMENOI* are persons afflicted with especially severe diseases, either bodily or mental (such as paralysis, blindness, deafness, loss of speech, epilepsy, melancholy, etc.), whose bodies in the opinion of the Jews (see *DAEMONION*) demons had entered, and so held possession of them as not only to afflict them with ills, but also to dethrone the reason and take its place themselves; accordingly the possessed were wont to express the mind and consciousness of the demons dwelling in them; and their cure was thought to require the expulsion of the demon." Next is Thayer on *DAEMONION* "1. the divine Power, deity, divinity . . . 2. a spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men . . . evil spirits or the messengers and ministers of the devil . . . to have a demon, be possessed by a demon, is said of those who either suffer from some ex-

ceptionally severe disease, Luke 4: 33; 8: 27; or act and speak as though they were mad, Matthew 11: 18; Luke 7: 33; John 7: 20; 8: 48. . . . According to a Jewish opinion which passed over to Christians, the demons are the gods of the Gentiles and the authors of idolatry. . . . The apostle Paul, though teaching that the gods of the Gentiles are a fiction (1 Corinthians 8: 4; 10: 19), thinks that the conception of them has been put into the minds of men by demons, who appropriate to their own use and honor the sacrifices offered to idols." Next will be Robinson on *DAIMONIZOMAI*:

"In New Testament, to have a demon or devil, to be a demoniac, to be possessed, afflicted, with an evil spirit; found only in the Gospels." Next is Robinson on the Greek word *daimonion*: "1. generally a deity, a god, spoken of heathen gods, Acts 17: 18. 2. specifically a demon. In the New Testament, a demon, devil, an evil spirit, an unclean spirit. These spirits are represented as fallen angels, 2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6; and are now subject to Satan as their prince, Matthew 9: 34; 25: 41; 2 Corinthians 12: 7; Revelation 12: 9. They were held to have the power of working miracles, but not for good, Revelation 16: 14; to be hostile to mankind, John 8: 44; to utter the heathen responses and oracles, Acts 16: 17; and to lurk in the idols of the heathen, which are hence called *daimonia*, devils, 1 Corinthians 10: 20. . . . They are likewise represented as the authors of evil to mankind, both moral and physical."

Verse 29. These devils were fallen angels (see note on preceding verse), and had been in the place of torment in Hades (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6) where they would have remained until *the time* of judgment for which they were being reserved. They had been enjoying a short relief from that torment by being in these human creatures. They knew they would be doomed eternally at the last judgment, but if they could remain on earth until that day they would escape that much torment. But now if Jesus sends them back to their place in Hades, they will again be tormented *before the time* of the great judgment day that is awaiting all intelligent beings.

Verses 30, 31. Rather than go back to their previous place in Hades, these devils preferred to inhabit the swine because then (as they thought) they would get to remain on the earth until the judgment of the last day,

Verse 32. Their request was granted but it did not benefit them very long. The possession of devils sometimes caused great physical derangement in men, and here it produced a madness in the swine that caused them to plunge into the water and perish.

Verse 33. Such an event was so unusual that the keepers fled into the city and reported the whole thing to the people.

Verse 34. The people came out to where Jesus was and requested him to leave the community. That could not have been on account of the one afflicted with the devils for in Mark's account (Mark 5: 19, 20) he was benefited and became a preacher of Jesus. The only conclusion possible is they feared others might lose some of their stock.

MATTHEW 9

Verse 1. Having been requested to leave the country of the Gergesenes, Jesus took passage in a ship and recrossed the Sea of Galilee. *His own city* means Capernaum as may be learned in chapter 4: 13 where he changed his residence.

Verse 2. The *palsy* was a form of paralysis and rendered a man helpless. Jesus knew the hearts of all men and hence the words *seeing their faith* does not mean that what he saw was what gave him the information. The conclusion must be that what Jesus saw was an outward indication of faith. But the palsied man was not doing anything, hence as far as the direct evidence shows, the men carrying the bed were the only ones who had faith. Thus we have no positive authority for saying that the patient had any faith, notwithstanding which, the Lord gave him forgiveness for his sins. We also have no evidence that such a favor was being sought when they brought him to Jesus, but rather that they merely wished to have the afflicted man cured. *Son* is from *TEKNON* and Thayer renders it in this place, "affectionate address, such as patrons, helpers, teachers, and the like, employ."

Verse 3. *Blaspheme* is from a Greek word of virtually the same form, *BLASPHEMEO*, and Thayer defines it, "To speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate [accuse falsely]." In his own comments on the word he says it means, "Specifically of those who by contemptuous speech *intentionally* [emphasis mine, E. M. Z.] come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred

things." Thus we see they accused Jesus of showing disrespect for God in claiming authority to forgive. In Mark's account of the same event they make that item the basis of their accusation (Mark 2: 7).

Verse 4. The scribes were afraid to make their accusation so that others could hear it, but Jesus knew their thoughts and exposed them.

Verse 5. The thing Jesus declared to be done was invisible and thus open to question. He then proposed to make another declaration that would be visible if accomplished. *Whether it is easier* means that if he has the authority to do the one he also has it to do the other, for one would be no harder to do than the other for one endowed with divine power as he claimed to be.

Verse 6. Jesus then proposed to prove his *power* (from *EXOUSIA* meaning authority) to perform the invisible by doing the visible. Addressing the palsied man, Jesus told him not only to arise, but to take up his bed and go home. This evidently was the bed on which he was lying when the men came to carry him to Jesus.

Verse 7. It would require something more than imaginative "mind over matter" to enable a helpless paralytic to walk and carry a piece of furniture.

Verse 8. The aforesaid logic was suggested to the minds of the multitude and they expressed themselves to that effect. Nothing is said about the attitude of the accusers, and they doubtless hung their heads in shame. *Glorify* is from *DOXAZO* and Thayer defines it in this place, "to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate." *Given such power unto men*. The last word is from *ANTHROPUS*, and its universal meaning as given by Thayer is, "A human being, whether male or female," and hence the distinction is made between the brute creation and human beings. We are not told how much this multitude knew about the dual character of the person of Christ, but the outstanding appearance was that he was a man. That is why they marveled at his authority and might which could be accounted for only by giving the credit to God.

Verse 9. *Receipt of custom* is from one Greek word that means "tax office." The man who had charge of the taxes was called a publican, and that subject will be explained in detail in the next verse. Matthew was connected with that work when Jesus came along, and he was called to follow which he

did. He was baptized by John since Jesus "came unto his own" who were the ones whom John baptized and prepared for him. It was in keeping with his instruction from John, therefore, for him to quit his secular employment and follow at the call of him for whom he had been made ready.

Verse 10. All men are sinners to some extent, but they are named as a class in this passage which means they were unrighteous in their life as a whole and hence regarded as an unworthy group. They are also classed with the *publicans* which shows they also were regarded as an unworthy group. They are referred to frequently in the New Testament, and I shall quote from the works of reference for the information of the reader.

"The class designated by this word [publican] in the New Testament were employed as collectors of the Roman revenue. The Roman senate farmed the direct taxes and the customs to capitalists who undertook to pay a given sum into the treasury, and so received the name of *publicani*. Contracts of this kind fell naturally into the hands of the *equites* [military orders], as the richest class of Romans. They appointed managers, under whom were the *portitores*, the actual custom-house officers, who examined each bale of goods, exported or imported, assessed its value more or less arbitrarily, wrote out the ticket, and enforced payment. The latter were commonly natives of the province in which they were stationed, as being brought daily into contact with all classes of the population. The name *publicani* was used popularly, and in the New Testament exclusively, of the *portitores*. The system was essentially a vicious one. The *portitores* were encouraged in the most vexatious or fraudulent exactions, and a remedy was all but impossible. They overcharged whenever they had an opportunity, Luke 3: 13; they brought false charges of smuggling in the hope of extorting hush-money, Luke 19: 8; they detained and opened letters on mere suspicion. It was the basest of all livelihoods. All this was enough to bring the class into ill favor everywhere. In Judea and Galilee there were special circumstances of aggravation. The employment brought out all the besetting vices of the Jewish character. The strong feeling of many Jews as to the absolute unlawfulness of paying tribute at all made matters worse. The scribes who discussed the

question, Matthew 22: 15, for the most part answered it in the negative. In addition to their other faults, accordingly, the publicans of the New Testament were regarded as traitors and apostates, defiled by their frequent intercourse with the heathen, willing tools of the oppressor. The class thus practically excommunicated furnished some of the earliest disciples both of the Baptist and of our Lord. The position of Zacchaeus as a "chief among the publicans," Luke 19: 2, implies a gradation of some kind among the persons employed." — Smith's Bible Dictionary, article, *Publican*.

"TELONES, 1. a renter or farmer of taxes; among the Romans usually a man of equestrian [one who rides on horseback] rank. 2. a tax-gatherer, collector of taxes or tolls, one employed by a publican or farmer-general in collecting the taxes. The tax-collectors were, as a class, detested not only by the Jews but by other nations also, both on account of their employment and of the harshness, greed, and deception, with which they prosecuted it."—Thayer. "TELONES, a farmer of the taxes or customs, one who pays to the government a certain sum for the privilege of collecting the taxes and customs of a district. . . . Whence in the English Version, a publican. The public revenues of the Greeks and Romans were usually thus farmed out; and among the latter the purchasers were persons of wealth and rank, and in the later periods chiefly of the equestrian order. . . . The farmers-general had also sub-contractors, or employed agents, who collected the taxes and customs at the gates of cities, in seaports, on public ways, bridges, and the like. . . . In the New Testament in the later sense, a toll-gatherer, collector of customs, publican, the object of bitter hatred and scorn to the Jews, and often coupled with the most depraved classes of society."—Robinson's Greek Lexicon. This long note will not be copied again, hence it will be important that the reader make careful note of its location for reference as occasion requires.

Verse 11. The information given with the comments on the preceding verse shows the moral and social standing of the *publicans and sinners*. The significance of eating with others was different in ancient times from what it is now. I shall quote from Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary on this subject: "The moral

aspects of eating are taken account of in a series of prescriptions and prohibitions on the manner, time, and articles to be eaten. 'Eating together' was a sign of community of life, and symbolized either adoption into the household, or entrance into irrevocable [unbreakable] covenant (Jeremiah 41: 1). This conception underlies the sacrificial meal in which God is taken as a participant. It was the worst form of treason, therefore, to break a covenant entered into through the ceremony of eating together." The Pharisees who pretended to be very righteous, wanted to appear shocked that a righteous teacher like Jesus would defile himself by associating with these low characters, especially on such an intimate occasion as eating a meal together.

Verse 12. Jesus does not admit that the Pharisees are as righteous as they claim, but if they are, they are inconsistent in criticizing Jesus for associating with sinners. These sinners are spiritually sick and are the very ones who need treatment. Incidentally, the Lord made a declaration that condemns those who deny the good work of physicians. It is claimed that medicine is unnecessary, that it is not a good thing, and that sick people can be healed without a physician. And this in spite of the statement in Proverbs 17: 22 that medicine "doeth good," and that Jesus said that the sick *need a physician*.

Verse 13. *Learn what that meaneth.* Learn the meaning of the statement, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* I request the reader to "learn" its meaning by consulting Isaiah 58: 3; Ezekiel 34: 1-4; Hosea 6: 6; Joel 2: 13; Micah 6: 6-8. By these passages it will be learned that the self-righteous Jewish leaders in former times imposed on the poor and common people, then tried to get things even before the Lord by offering big material sacrifices. Under those circumstances the Lord would want these leaders to leave off their sacrifices until they had showed mercy to the unfortunate populace. Jesus wanted these same pretentious Jewish leaders before him to get this lesson so they would cease their selfish attitude toward the "sinners." A physician does not make calls at homes where all are in good health, and on that principle Jesus came to call on the sinners of the earth because they are the ones who are spiritually sick. If the Pharisees were as righteous as they professed to be, they

should not expect Jesus to pay much attention to them.

Verse 14. Fasting was never commanded as a regular practice but was voluntarily done in times of grief or anxiety. At the time of this conversation John the Baptist had been slain, which is recorded later in this book, and his disciples were fasting in honor of his memory. Not that they were doing so just at the time they came to Jesus, but had been doing so *oft* or at intervals since his death.

Verse 15. Jesus represents himself as a bridegroom who is still present with the *children* which is used in the sense of friends. These friends would have no occasion to fast or mourn for their bridegroom because he was still with them. Fasting under these circumstances would be inappropriate. *Days will come* refers to the time when he would be taken from them and when that time happens they will mourn (Mark 16: 10).

Verses 16, 17. I have made one paragraph of the two verses because they are on the same subject, and whatever comments I wish to make will have a common application to both verses. But I shall first explain the literal meaning of the terms used, after which I shall offer my comments on the application. When fabric is old it is shrunk, and also weakened with age and easily torn. If a hole in it is repaired with new and unshrunk cloth, it will pull loose in shrinking and tear the old cloth. Bottles were made of the skins of animals, being closed tightly around the mouth somewhat like a leathern pouch. While these pouches are new they are moist and capable of expanding without bursting. New wine has to expand as it ferments, and if it is put into old pouches that have become dry, the expansion of the liquid will burst these vessels. The usual explanation of these illustrations is that it represents the folly of trying to mix the *new* religion that Jesus was introducing with the *old* one that Moses gave to the people of God. I do not believe that is the purpose of the illustrations and will give the reasons for my statement.

It would be an abrupt change of subject from anything that had been said for several chapters. Nothing in the conversation between Jesus and the audience would call for the injection of a highly figurative argument concerning the comparative merits of the Old and New Testaments. On the other hand, the importance of the work of

John and Christ, and of the truth that the first was to be replaced by the second, would justify some further teaching from Jesus on it. If the old garment and old bottles represent the old law, on which and into which the new law should not be put, then what constitutes the old cloth and old wine that is to be attached to it? I believe the whole point is simply a lesson on the subject of appropriateness. The disciples of John could fittingly mourn because he had been taken from them. Jesus was still with his disciples and they could not appropriately mourn. It will be well to recall the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3: 4, "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

Verse 18. The word for *ruler* is defined by Thayer, "A ruler, commander, chief, leader." The word could hence be applied to various persons, but in this verse it means, "of the officers presiding over the synagogues." For a description of these synagogues and their uses see the comments at Matthew 4: 23. This man was a Jew and had learned enough about the work of Jesus to have the faith that he expressed. He was consistent in his attitude, for if a person has the power to perform other miracles he also can raise the dead. Modern professed miracle workers betray their fraudulent practices by refusing even to try raising the dead, because they know they have no miraculous power.

Verse 19. Jesus had previously showed his ability to work miracles by "absent treatment" (chapter 8: 13). He therefore had some special reason for going to the ruler's house.

Verse 20. On the way to the ruler's house an afflicted woman sought relief from a chronic case of hemorrhage of blood of twelve years' standing. Her only contact with Jesus was that of touching the hem of his garment. There was no literal curative properties in the clothing of the Lord, but the woman thought there was and her faith was manifested by touching it which induced him to favor her.

Verse 21. The woman expressed her faith in words only to herself.

Verse 22. Jesus could read the thoughts of mankind and knew the woman said *within herself*. Turning, he made no mention of her touching his garment, but granted her the cure because of her faith. As usual, the recovery from her disease was immediate.

Verse 23. By this time Jesus had

reached the ruler's house. As he entered he saw the *minstrels* (musicians) and the people *making a noise*. These words are from *ῥοιζῶντες* which Thayer defines at this place, "to wail tumultuously." The instruments that such minstrels used were flutes and they could be made to produce a turbulent "noise."

Verse 24. *Not dead but sleepeth*. The Bible as well as secular compositions uses both figurative and literal language, and the distinction should always be remembered or confusion may result. I shall quote Webster on the two words: "figurative, 2. Expressing one thing in terms normally denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous [similar]; as figurative language, sense. Literal, 4. Of senses of words, conveying the primary meaning,—opposed to figurative." With this authentic information we may form a convenient and correct formula as follows: "Figurative language is that based on appearances regardless of the facts; literal language is that based on the facts regardless of appearances." Jesus used the figurative because when a person is dead he "appears" to be asleep. The people did not recognize the figure but thought he was speaking literally and hence they *laughed him to scorn*. The last word is not in the original and the statment should merely say that they laughed at him. The same kind of circumstance as to language occurred in the case of Lazarus in John 11: 11 and 14, except that Jesus used both figurative and literal language for his disciples.

Verse 25. This is another instance where Jesus saw fit to make bodily contact in performing the miracle. However, that would not account for it as far as any physical cause was concerned, for the same procedure would not raise the dead if performed by another without the possession of supernatural power.

Verse 26. *Fame* is from the Greek word *PHEME* and one word in Thayer's definition is, "report." The idea means to express the fact of the extent of the news about the deed, not so much the thought of Jesus from the standpoint of notoriety.

Verse 27. These blind men must have heard this report referred to in the preceding verse. *Son of David* means he was descended from David in the blood line. Many people in Palestine were familiar with the prediction in the law that the Messiah

was to come through that line. Their addressing him with this title not only acknowledged him to be possessed with miraculous power (others had possessed that), but that he was the fulfiller of the law and the prophets.

Verse 28. The blind men did not lose heart but followed Jesus until he had entered another house, and there they came to him for relief. Jesus knew all hearts and was aware of the faith in the minds of these men, but a public profession of faith is one of the acts that puts a man in favorable light before the Lord.

Verse 29. *According to your faith* is said on the same principle as that said to the centurion in chapter 8: 13, "as thou hast believed."

Verse 30. *Eyes were opened.* Thayer explains the last word to mean, "to restore one's sight," hence the passage does not mean their eyelids had been closed.

Verse 31. Did not Jesus know these men would immediately begin to spread the report of their wonderful recovery? They would have been the most unnatural and ungrateful persons in the country to have received such an unspeakably gracious blessing and then not tell anyone about it. But Jesus did not want the public to think he was doing miracles just for the sake of fame. Should anyone accuse him of it, there would be plenty of witnesses to deny the accusation because they had heard him ask the favored ones not to make an ado about it.

Verse 32. *Dumb, possessed with a devil.* The reader should consult the long quotation from the lexicons that is given at chapter 8: 28. It will there be seen that being possessed with a devil did not always produce the same effect on the people. In the case of our present verse it produced dumbness in the man.

Verse 33. The relief sought was granted although the fact is not stated except to take it for granted. It was the man that was dumb, not the devil, for when it was cast out the man spake. *It was never so seen in Israel.* This was the remark of the uninspired multitudes but it was true, for it was not contradicted by even the Pharisees.

Verse 34. The Pharisees could not deny the fact of the casting out of the devil, but tried to rob Jesus of due credit by attributing his power to Satan. This subject will be dealt with in chapter 12: 22-32.

Verse 35. Jesus taught in the syna-

gogues because he could meet the Jews assembled there to hear the reading of the Scriptures. *Gospel of the kingdom* means the good news that the kingdom of heaven was near. Healing every sickness and disease is significant. Modern professed miracle workers will select such ailments that are not apparent so that their failure to effect a cure cannot be known.

Verse 36. The multitudes were worn out by foot travel in their quest for the favors they hoped to get from Jesus. Their condition caused him to be moved with pity, which fulfilled the many predictions that he was to be a man who could "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4: 15).

Verse 37. There were so many people who needed help that neither Jesus nor any other man could be bodily present with all of them. That is what he meant by *harvest plenteous, laborers few.*

Verse 38. The prayer intimated in this verse will call for something definite to be done. Jesus will himself bring about a fulfillment in the next chapter.

MATTHEW 10

Verse 1. *His twelve disciples.* Jesus had many disciples, but he selected twelve out of the group to be his apostles. In Mark 3: 14 it is stated that these men were designated as the ones who should "be with him." This was to be one of the qualifications required of the original apostles. (See Acts 1: 21, 22.) These men were to be "laborers" sent forth into the harvest as was asked by the Lord in the preceding chapter. Since they were to be separated at least at short intervals from him, they would need to be qualified to back up their work by miracles of various kinds. *Power* is from *EXOUSIA* which also means "authority." With the appointment that Jesus made they were given the right and ability to execute the mission.

Verses 2-4. There are three accounts or lists of the twelve apostles; here, in Mark and in Luke. The men are the same ones but the names of some of them are not the same, and the three accounts do not give them in the same order. For the purpose of identification I shall number the list as given by Matthew from 1 to 12 consecutively, using it as a schedule for the other two. The list given by Mark 3: 16-19 should be numbered as follows to correspond with these in

Matthew: 1, 3, 4, 2, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12. Number the list in Luke 6: 14-16 as follows: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 7, 9, 11, 10, 12. All of the men with the same number are the same regardless of the name. *Who also betrayed him* is said to distinguish the traitor from the brother of James who has the same name in one list, although the betrayal had not taken place when this was written.

Verse 5. This and the following verses through 5 constitute what is familiarly known as the first commission. It was limited as to the territory or people to whom they were to go. All people who were not full blooded Jews were regarded as Gentiles. Samaritans were distinguished from the Gentiles because they were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, both in their blood and in their religion. This history of their origin is recorded in 2 Kings 17, and explained in volume 2 of this Commentary.

Verse 6. *Lost sheep*. The Jewish nation had been imposed upon and neglected by the leaders for generations, hence they were compared to sheep who were lost in the wilderness, deserted by their shepherd. That is why Jesus had compassion on them and thought of them as being "scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (chapter 9: 36).

Verse 7. At this time the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*, which shows it was near but not yet in existence as a fact. Hence we know that John the Baptist (who was then dead) did not set up the kingdom as some people teach today.

Verse 8. These apostles were able to perform the same kind of miracles that Jesus did, and that included the power to *raise the dead*. Pretended miracle workers today refuse even trying to raise the dead on the ground that the early disciples were restricted to miracles on the living. The present passage disproves their doctrine and exposes their hypocrisy. *Freely received, freely give*. The apostles received all their power from Jesus—it was not a natural trait—hence they should pass its benefits to others.

Verse 9. These metals refer to the coins used in those days. The reason they were not to provide themselves with them will be explained in the next verse.

Verse 10. A *scrip* was a provision bag, used in the same manner as the modern lunch basket. They were also

told not to take any extra clothing besides what they wore as they started. The reason given is that *the workman is worthy of his meat*. They were to be supported by the people among whom they labored. Since those people were Jews, and hence already disposed somewhat in their favor, it would be reasonable to expect some returns for their work. Later, when they were to go among the heathen, and especially as they would be without the immediate support of Jesus, they were to "look out" somewhat for themselves. (See Luke 22: 35-38.)

Verse 11. *Enquire* is from EXETAZO which Thayer defines, "To search out; to examine strictly, inquire." This would require the apostles not merely to ask some person whom they might meet as to what house it would be well to enter, but they were to take whatever means would be necessary to obtain reliable information. After finding a house worthy of their visit they were to confine their work in that town to that house. The reason for this restriction is shown in verse 23.

Verse 12. The enquiry mentioned above would include the added information they would receive through the attitude manifested by the residents of a house upon entering it. A house might be selected temporarily because of some apparently favorable indications, and the test would be concluded after meeting the people on the inside. This would be introduced by an act of courtesy in the form of *salutation*. That word is from ASPAZOMAI and Thayer defines it at this place, "To salute, greet, wish well to."

Verse 13. After the investigation has been completed, if the house is found to be worthy, their *peace* or good wishes was to be bestowed upon it. That would be accompanied with their delivering of a message of good news of the kingdom. If the house was found to be unworthy, their peace was to return to them, and that means their good wishes would be recalled.

Verse 14. A group of citizens that were such as to be regarded as unworthy, would be the kind that would reject the offered blessings of the apostles. *Shake off the dust of your feet*. People traveled on foot and thus picked up the particles of soil on the way. This act was purely a symbolic one, for there would be no contamination in the dust due to the character of the people. It meant that all responsibility for their fate was to be left at their own door, seeing they

would not receive the favors offered them by their good visitors.

Verse 15. *Be more tolerable* in popular language would mean to "stand a better chance." Sodom and Gomorrha were very wicked cities, yet their opportunities for knowing better were far less than those of the cities to be visited by the apostles. These conditions made them less responsible and hence less to answer for. It should be noted that the difference was to be made *in the day of judgment*. That is, in making up the verdict as to the eternal fate of people, the Judge will consider these facts as to their opportunities. After the day of judgment nothing is said about any difference.

Verse 16. If a sheep had to be put into the midst of wolves he would not escape being attacked but by the best kind of behavior. He should not make any unnecessary movement toward one of these beasts for that would attract his attention. Instead, he should go about his search for food or whatever he was seeking, using his good judgment and not doing any harm to the interests of the beasts. The simple lesson was that the apostles were to be discreet in their dealings with the people they met.

Verse 17. The *councils* were the sanhedrins, the highest courts the Jews were permitted to have at that time, and the synagogues were the buildings where they met for religious purposes. (See the description of them at Matthew 4: 23.) The object in forcing the apostles into these places was to persecute them from both the secular and religious standpoints as far as their authority permitted.

Verse 18. Not being satisfied with what they could accomplish in their own assemblies, the Jews would drag the apostles before the rulers of the Roman Empire where they would hope to obtain some decrees against them. *For a testimony* does not mean the persecutors would hail the apostles into those courts for the purpose of hearing the testimony against themselves. Jesus meant that such a circumstance would give them an opportunity thus to speak against them and all the sinful men of the nations.

Verse 19. This verse is in line with the comments on the preceding one, that the calling of the apostles before the various courts was to be turned into an opportunity for speaking the truth. They were not to be worried as to what kind of speeches they were to make, for they would be furnished

with the necessary material for the speech. *In that same hour* indicates that the subject matter would be adapted to the circumstances of the occasion when it arrived.

Verse 20. This verse states the means by which the apostles were to speak, that they would be guided by the Spirit of their Father.

Verse 21. The same opposition to truth that would bring the apostles into the courts, will also divide between the members of families. This prediction is made specifically in Luke 12: 53 where Jesus is speaking of the results of his teaching.

Verse 22. *Hated . . . name's sake*. Because of their loyalty to the name of Jesus, men would hate the apostles wherever they labored. *Endureth to the end* means those who hold out faithful to the end of the persecutions will be saved or divinely blessed.

Verse 23. To endure persecution does not mean that one must needlessly expose himself to possible death. If he can escape without compromising any truth or evading any duty, he should do so and thus be able to do good elsewhere. The apostles would have plenty of places in which to preach, therefore when their work was rejected and their lives endangered in one city, they were to flee into another. Even then they would not have time to visit all the cities in Israel until their period for working would be ended. That was the reason for the restrictions mentioned in verse 11.

Verse 24. The word *above* means the disciple and servant are not any better than their master and lord, or any more entitled to escape persecution than they.

Verse 25. *Enough to be as*. It should be regarded as a favor not to be any more liable to persecution than they. Since the master of the house has already been virtually called Beelzebub (chapter 9: 34), the servants may expect the like treatment.

Verse 26. The persecutors perform their evil deeds often in an underhanded and cowardly manner. But their works will finally be exposed and all false charges disproved.

Verse 27. *Darkness and light* are used figuratively, and have the same meaning as the next clause. Jesus taught his apostles many things while they were alone with him, and they were then expected to tell them to others publicly. The *housetops* were flat in those times and used very much in the

same manner as our verandas or side-walks. (See Deuteronomy 22: 8; Matthew 24: 17; Acts 10: 9.) That would give the apostles an opportunity to preach to the people in a public manner.

Verse 28. Mere human beings can cause us to die physically, but Jesus teaches that they cannot go any further in their work of destruction while someone else can. All this proves that death as we use that term does not end it all, hence the materialists are shown to be teachers of false doctrine. God is the One who can *destroy* (cast) our whole being in *hell*, therefore we should *fear* or respect Him. See the note at chapter 5: 30 for the lexicon explanation of *hell*.

Verse 29. God's care for his creatures is the point in this verse. A sparrow was of such little commercial value that two of them could be bought for a farthing, one of the smallest of coins; yet every time one of them is brought down God sees it.

Verse 30. Before finishing the subject of the sparrow, Jesus makes direct reference to the value of the human being. *Numbered* is from the Greek word ΑΡΙΘΜΕΩ, and Thayer defines it with the one word only that we have in our Authorized Version. Robinson defines it, "To number, to count." The meaning is that each hair is counted or considered.

Verse 31. If God takes such notice of the sparrow which has such small value, He certainly will not overlook man who is destined never to cease his existence.

Verse 32. The fear of persecution might cause some to deny Christ, so this verse is properly placed in the midst of that subject. *Confess* is from ΗΟΜΟΛΟΓΕΩ, and I shall give Robinson's definition of the word because it is more condensed: "To speak or say together, in common, i. e., the same things; hence to hold the same language, to assent, to accord, to agree with." To confess one, then, means to admit being in agreement with him and endorsing his teaching. Of course Jesus will not need to agree with the teaching of his disciples except to acknowledge that the disciples had accepted the teaching given them by the Lord.

Verse 33. This verse is simply the opposite of the preceding one.

Verse 34. *Peace* is from ΕΙΡΗΝΗ and the primary definition in Thayer's lexicon is, "A state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and

havoc of war." His definition in our verse is, "Peace between individuals, i. e., harmony, concord." Jesus uses the word *peace* in a restricted or figurative sense, and hence the word *sword* is also thus used, and the meaning will be explained in the verses following.

Verse 35. The conditions described in this verse are the opposite of the specific definition of "peace" in the preceding one. These relatives will be set at variance with each other because some of them will accept the teaching of Christ and some will not.

Verse 36. Not only will distant relatives be opposed to each other, but right in a man's household there will be members who will become his personal enemies because he is determined to accept Christ's teaching.

Verse 37. The only way to prevent the above difficulty is to reject the doctrine of Christ. If one does that it proves that he loves his earthly relatives more than he does Christ, in which case he becomes unworthy of his Lord. That will put him in the class mentioned in verse 33 and he will be rejected at the last day.

Verse 38. The *cross* is used figuratively in this place. The original word is defined by Thayer simply, "A cross." However, the same author cites us to some history that explains the language of Jesus as follows: "The judicial usage which compelled those condemned to crucifixion themselves to carry the cross to the place of punishment, gave rise to the proverbial expression [about bearing the cross], which was wont to be used of those who on behalf of God's cause do not hesitate cheerfully and manfully to bear persecutions, troubles, distress,—thus recalling the fate of Christ and the spirit in which he encounters it."

Verse 39. The key word in this verse is *life* which comes from ΨΥΧΗ in both cases. The word has been rendered in the Authorized Version by heart 1 time, life 40, mind 3, soul 58. Among the phrases in Thayer's long definition are the following: "Breath; the vital force; life; that in which there is life; the soul; the seat of the feelings, desires, affections; the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death." From the above information we may learn that man has an outer and an inner life. Expressed in another way, he has a physical life and an inner life that can be saved spiritually. Both

kinds of life must be considered in this verse which will make it read as follows: "He that findeth [or is working for] his earthly life shall lose his spiritual life." Of course the last half of the verse means just the opposite, but we may extend the language and say that if a man actually loses his earthly or outer life (verse 28) for the sake of Christ, he will gain eternal life.

Verse 40. Jesus and his Father are one in purpose, and both were upholding the apostles who had been chosen. Of necessity, then, the attitude of the people towards any one of the three would count for all of them.

Verse 41. The apostles were classed as prophets under the new order of things under Christ. To receive one of these *in the name of a prophet* means to receive him because he is a prophet of the Lord. *Prophet's reward* means the reward such as a prophet can bestow. The same principle applies to receiving a righteous man for his reward.

Verse 42. These "little ones" are the same disciples referred to in earlier verses of the chapter. Kindness of ever so little a character shown to them is the same as doing so to Jesus and will be rewarded in due time. This is the same lesson that is taught in Matthew 25: 40.

MATTHEW 11

Verse 1. All the words *it came to pass* are from *GINOMAI* and that word is used over 400 times in the Greek New Testament. It has a wide range of meanings and has been rendered in the Authorized Version by, be done 82 times, be made 69, become 42, come 53, come to pass 82, and others. In places where it is rendered "came to pass" it has the simple meaning, "it happened." *Made an end* means for the time being, for Jesus gave them commandments many times afterward. When the twelve disciples are mentioned it always means the apostles. Having given his apostles their "first commission," Jesus resumed his own work of *teaching and preaching*. There is not much difference between these two words when applied to the words of Jesus. The specific meaning of the first is "to instruct," and the other is, "to proclaim or announce."

Verse 2. This is the third time that the imprisonment of John has been referred to without relating its events.

(See chapter 4: 12; 9: 14, 15.) The account of it will be found in chapter 14: 1-12. John sent two of his disciples on an inquiry to Jesus. Let it be noted that it was his own disciples he sent, not those of Jesus who were daily near him and seeing his miracles on the sick and infirm.

Verse 3. I do not believe that John made this inquiry through any weakness of his own faith. That would have been a serious fault after the kind of preaching he had done. His own languishing in prison even should not have put any strain on his faith for he had preached to the people and told them concerning Christ and himself that "He must increase, but I must decrease," so that his persecution would harmonize with his own preaching. And had it been the case that his faith was weakening. Jesus would certainly have said something of a reproving character either to or about him. But he not only did not do that, but the entire speech that he made afterwards at verses 7-14 about John was highly complimentary. I am persuaded that it was for the reassurance of his own disciples who had not been seeing the miracles that Christ's disciples had seen. No doubt John believed that by getting his disciples in the immediate presence of Jesus on the occasion of the inquiry, they might get to see some of those evidences for themselves. This idea is borne out by the account in Luke 7: 21 which says "in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities," etc.

Verse 4. Having "performed" doubtless for the benefit of John's disciples, he sent them back to John with the instruction to show him "again" about these miracles that they had just seen. The language shows that John had previously known about them, hence the report would not bring him any additional news. It might be asked why they should go tell John if the circumstance was just for their benefit. Well, the mission in the mind of John would have been accomplished, but their duty would not have been performed until they reported, and of course Jesus would not interfere with that.

Verse 5. This verse is the same account of the deeds which Luke says Jesus did "in that same hour." They all were things that required miraculous power unless we except the preaching of the gospel to the poor. That would require the miracle of

inspiration but not the physical kind that is usually meant.

Verse 6. *Not be offended* is from SKANDALIZO and Thayer defines it at this place, "To be offended in one," and he explains his definition to mean, "i. e., to see in another what I disapprove of and what hinders me from acknowledging his authority." Jesus was giving so many evidences of the authority in his possession that no doubt should be had as to whether he was the one "that should come," and they need not "look for another."

Verse 7. The importance of John and his work will be the subject of some verses, all of which will show that Jesus had a high regard for him. A *reed* is a tall and slender stem that would be swayed easily by the wind. Such would illustrate a man with little stability and one who could be easily influenced. The question of Jesus implied that John was not that kind of a man.

Verse 8. A man who was accustomed to the soft and luxurious life of royal palaces would be unsuited for work out in the wilderness. But the prophecy had foretold that the forerunner of Jesus was to operate in the wilderness, hence no surprise should be felt over the rough outdoor raiment of John the Baptist.

Verse 9. Coming more specifically to the office of John, the subject of a prophet was mentioned. The ordinary prophet was a man who wrote and/or spoke general predictions that would have widespread fulfillment. John had himself been the fulfiller of other prophecies and hence he was *more than a prophet*.

Verse 10. Jesus makes references to the predictions that had been made of John, which are recorded in Isaiah 40: 3, 4; Malachi 3: 1. The pronouns *I* and *my* stand for God, *thy* and *thee* refer to Christ, and the *messenger* means John the Baptist.

Verse 11. Up to the time of John's birth there had never been a greater prophet than he, for he not only fulfilled other prophecies, but uttered some himself that were of the greatest importance. Notwithstanding, he never was permitted even to see the kingdom of heaven, much less to set up and be "in it." For that reason the least person in that kingdom would be greater than John in the sense of having superior advantages over him, the privileges only possible to those who are members of the final master-

piece of Heaven in the salvation of mankind.

Verse 12. This verse is used by some to prove that the kingdom of heaven was in existence in the days of John. There have been several passages under observation that would forbid such a conclusion, hence we should seek for an explanation of the apparent contradiction. An organization is like a house in that it exists in preparation before it does in fact. Passing a site and seeing some digging of soil and unloading of material, a man may say to his friend: "This is our new school house." He would mean it was the school house in preparation. John began to "prepare" a people for Christ and thus it was the kingdom of heaven in preparation. But John's work was opposed even by force and hence it is said that the kingdom suffered violence.

Verse 13. After Malachi completed his book, there was not one word of inspiration from heaven recorded until the voice of John was heard in the wilderness. That is, there was silence until his teaching about the kingdom introduced the new subject.

Verse 14. *Elias* in the New Testament is the form for Elijah in the old. Malachi 4: 5 prophesied that "Elijah the prophet" was to come, which Luke 1: 17 words" in the spirit and power of Elias." John the Baptist was not Elias in person (for he had gone to heaven, 2 Kings 2: 11), but had the same kind of *spirit* (PNEUMA) and *power* (DUNAMIS) as he, and hence he is called by his name.

Verse 15. This is an emphatic call to attention, meaning that all who are blessed with the faculty of perceiving the sense of the divine teaching should use that faculty by attending to what is said.

Verse 16. *Markets* is from AGORA which Thayer defines, "1. any collection of men, congregation, assembly. 2. place where assemblies are held." The same author further explains: "In the New Testament the forum or public place,—where trials are held, Acts 16: 19; and citizens resort, Acts 17: 17; and commodities are exposed for sale." At such a place persons of all ages and classes would gather sometimes only for pastime. *Children* here is from PAIDARION which Thayer defines, "A little boy, a lad." These children were gathered to amuse each other. One set was to "furnish the

music" and the other set was to respond.

Verse 17. But the set that was to respond was hard to please which was used by the Lord to illustrate the people of that generation in their attitude toward John the Baptist and himself. The one set of children first played on their pipes or flutes, but the others would not respond by dancing. Thinking they were not in the mood for jollity, they next set up a wailing sound and the others refused to respond to that, too, showing that they were determined not to be satisfied with anything that was done.

Verse 18. *Neither eating nor drinking.* No man can live without eating and drinking, but John did not eat among the people or from their supplies. He dwelt in the wilderness and lived on locusts and wild honey. *He hath a devil.* This charge is not recorded in any place except in the words of Jesus, but that makes it an established fact. They meant by such an accusation that John was a maniac or "out of his mind" to live as he did. That was the meaning that was attached to such a charge as may be seen in the following passages. John 7: 20; 8: 48, 49, 52.

Verse 19. Jesus did the very opposite as to his social activities and did eat "with publicans and sinners" (chapter 9: 11), yet that did not suit the people so they represented him as a man especially interested in his appetites. *Wisdom is justified of her children.* The last word is from a Greek word that means something that is produced by another. The wisdom that John and Christ showed in their different manner of life will be justified by the good results (the product or children) of their work, which was adapted to the peculiar circumstances in which they moved.

Verse 20. The key to this verse is that *they repented not.* God does not condemn unrighteous persons rashly on the mere fact of their sinfulness, but it is when they have been admonished and refuse to repent. (See Revelation 2: 5, 16; 3: 3.)

Verse 21. These cities first named were not literally as wicked as Tyre and Sidon, but they had received more opportunities for learning better. Those ancient cities would have shown a better spirit in that they would have repented, which is the idea of importance in the passage.

Verse 22. Notice the toleration was to be at the *day of judgment*, not afterward. See the comments on this thought at chapter 10: 15.

Verse 23. The same comparison is to be made between the cities of this verse as was made in verse 21. *Exalted unto heaven* is a figure of speech, based on the fact that Jesus was an inhabitant of Capernaum by choice (chapter 4: 13), and hence it had the advantage of his presence. *Hell* is from HADES, and the literal meaning of it is the abode of disembodied spirits after death. However, it is used figuratively in this passage, since its fate is contrasted with what would have been that of Sodom under as favorable opportunity, namely, that *it would have remained until this day.* The prediction of Jesus is that the city will sink into a state of forgetfulness. The prophecy has been fulfilled because the works of reference can only tell of various places that claim to have been its location. Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says, "Its present site is a matter of dispute," and Smith's Bible Dictionary declares, "It is impossible to locate it with certainty."

Verse 24. For *more tolerable* see the comments on verse 22.

Verse 25. The Pharisees professed to have superior wisdom, yet their hearts had become so hardened with selfishness that the important principles of responsibility had been *hid* from their perception. *Babes* is a figurative term for the honest and humble people who were ready to hear the lessons of truth offered to them.

Verse 26. The endearing term of Father is used here, to which Jesus had joined that of Lord in the preceding verse. Jesus endorsed the work of God with *NAI* which is translated *even so.* Thayer defines it, "Yea, verily, truly, assuredly, even so." The beautiful reason for his endorsement was that it "seemed good in thy sight." The best of reasons for any action of God is that He considers it to be good.

Verse 27. The complete intimacy between Jesus and God is the main point, and he indicates it by using the terms Father and Son. In anticipation of the full delivering of authority to him (chapter 28: 18), he says *all things are delivered.* No person will be permitted to benefit from this great intimacy but the one to whom the Son reveals it, and that will be only the man who accepts the Son.

Verse 28. The willingness of Jesus to share the forementioned blessing with others is indicated by the rest of this chapter. This whole passage is often called Christ's world-wide invitation. To *labor* means to be distressed with the hardships of life, especially those brought about by sin. The kind of rest to be given will be shown next.

Verse 29. *Yoke* is from *zugos*, which has been rendered in the Authorized Version by *yoke* 5 times and pair of balances 1. The word is used as an illustration of the obligation that one must accept as a co-worker with Jesus in the service of righteousness. *Learn of me* is consistent with the whole situation, for if a man expects to serve his yokefellow he should desire to know something about him. That learning will reveal that the owner of the yoke is meek and lowly which means he is humble and interested in the welfare of the unfortunate ones of earth. The *rest* is to be for the *soul*, not that a disciple of Jesus will be an idler in the vineyard. But while his body may be bent down with the toils of the service and from its persecutions imposed by the enemy, the inner man will be at peace and rest in the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 4: 16.)

Verse 30. *Easy* is from a word that means it is not harsh nor galling because it is made correctly. If a yoke for a beast is made to fit his body, he can pull a heavy load without any injury to his shoulders, and that would make a big burden comparatively light. On that principle the service that Christ places upon the shoulders of his disciples is adapted to their needs and abilities, which makes it easy to bear.

MATTHEW 12

Verse 1. *At that time* is a phrase that does not have any specific meaning as to date. On the same event Mark 2: 23 and Luke 6: 1 word the thought "it came to pass." It is the writer's way of introducing another subject, and if the particular date is important in determining the meaning it must be learned by the context. Corn in the Bible means small grain such as wheat or barley, and *ears of corn* means the heads. Deuteronomy 23: 25 gives the public the right to make a personal use of this grain while in the field, but it was not permitted to cut any of the straw with a sickle.

Verse 2. The Pharisees knew about

this law and hence could not accuse them of trespass. They were so eager to find fault, however, that they charged them with breaking the law of the sabbath.

Verse 3. Two wrongs never make one right, but these Pharisees pretended to have so much respect for David and other of the fathers or ancestors, that it was fair to refer to him in this manner to expose their hypocrisy.

Verse 4. The incident is recorded in 1 Samuel 21 when David was fleeing from Saul. He did not eat of the bread that was then on the table, but that which had been put back for the use of the priests after the table had been supplied with new loaves. While it was intended *only for the priests*, yet an emergency existed which allowed David and his men to eat. Likewise, the disciples were out from home with Jesus and were in need of food, and that justified them in eating in this way because the necessities of life do not constitute a violation of the sabbath law.

Verse 5. To *profane* means to make a secular use of a thing. Numbers 28: 9, 10 shows the priests performing the manual labor of handling an animal in the sacrifice. John 7: 22, 23 tells of a child being circumcised even on the sabbath day. The surgical act of performing circumcision was a manual one and hence technically violated the sabbath law. But it was understood that if an emergency or positive commandment called for some physical act even on the sabbath day, then the regular law as to its observance did not apply or bind the parties to its usual observance.

Verse 6. The temple was holy and it was the place where these manual performances were done. *In this place* means the case of Jesus and his disciples, and that it was of more importance at that time than the sanctity of the sabbath day.

Verse 7. This subject is explained at chapter 9: 13.

Verse 8. The title *Son of man* is used only by Jesus himself, and it applies especially to him because he was born of a member of mankind, as well as having been begotten of God. *Lord of the sabbath* does not imply that he would belittle the law of the holy days. He was with his Father in all of the works of creation, also in the issuing of laws and dispensations for the con-

duct of human beings. Any lawmaking power has the right to alter its own edicts if and when it sees fit to meet an emergency, hence Jesus was within his rights in the above conduct.

Verse 9. The use of the synagogues is explained at Chapter 4: 23. Jesus entered into such a place and there met another opportunity of performing a good work, also of exposing the hypocrisy of the Jews who were present.

Verse 10. Jesus was not long in meeting such an opportunity as referred to in the preceding verse. A hand *withered* means one that had been cut off from obtaining its normal share of moisture and nourishment from the circulation. The condition would be caused by some permanent obstruction that could not be cured by natural means. The account here says *they asked him*, while the accounts of the same event in both Mark 3: 2 and Luke 6: 7 say they *watched him*. There is no contradiction for the last two passages explains the first to mean that they were asking that question in their minds. This conclusion is borne out by the 8th verse of Luke 6 which says, "But he knew their thoughts." The idea is that they had an accusing suspicion of him in their minds that Jesus would probably heal the man, then they could charge him with breaking the sabbath.

Verse 11. But, knowing their thoughts Jesus anticipated their verbal question and asked one himself. The manual labor necessary to lift a sheep out of a pit would be far greater than what is required to heal an afflicted man. Yet these critics would not hesitate performing that kind of deed even on the sabbath day.

Verse 12. The contrast between the value of a man and a sheep is so evident that they could not give Jesus any answer to his question. *Lawful to do well* was putting the case in an unexpected form. It ignored the technical fact of a physical action on the sabbath day and expressed the more important and unanswerable idea of doing well. They could not deny that it would be doing well to relieve a man of an affliction, neither would they presume to say that any time existed when it would be wrong to do well.

Verse 13. The hand only was afflicted, hence the man could use his arm to extend the hand toward Jesus. We have no doubt that Jesus could have healed the man without any ac-

tion on his part, but it has always been a feature of the Lord's dealings to require man to cooperate with Him. This was exhibited as an act of faith on the part of the afflicted man when he reached out his hand and so he received the favor of a cure.

Verse 14. The Pharisees displayed the very depths of wickedness in wanting to destroy Jesus. They could not deny the good done to the afflicted man, neither could they answer the reasoning that Jesus put to them, so the next resort was to destroy him. *Council* is from *SUMBOULION* and does not mean the sanhedrin, but a meeting especially called in the form of a consultation.

Verse 15. Jesus always knew what was going on and prevented the wicked designs of the Pharisees by leaving the scene. He was not intimidated from continuing his good works, for when the multitudes followed him he healed all that were afflicted.

Verse 16. *Not make him known*. See the comments at chapter 9: 30.

Verse 17. *That it might be fulfilled* is explained at chapter 4: 14.

Verse 18. The quotation is from Isaiah 42: 1-3 which is the Old Testament form of Esaias. The pronouns of the first person refer to God. *Gentiles* means the nations in general. The favor of Christ's work was finally to be given the people of the world.

Verse 19. *Strive* is from *ERIZO* which Thayer defines, "To wrangle, engage in strife." *Cry* is from *KRAUGAZO* and defined, "To cry out, cry aloud." It means that Jesus was not to be a noisy, loud-mouthed person. His voice was not to be heard in *the streets*; he was not to be an ordinary "street preacher."

Verse 20. The figures in this verse are used for the same purpose as the preceding verse, to illustrate the gentleness and quietness with which Jesus was to go about his work. A reed in normal condition is not very resistant, much less if it has been bruised. Jesus would not use enough violence even to break such an article. *Smoking flax* denotes the wick in a candlestick that is being used as a light. Jesus would not use enough violence even to snuff out that imperfect light. He was to maintain that spirit until he had completed his work and was ready to sit upon his throne.

Verse 21. The word *Gentile* comes from different Greek words and they

also are rendered by different words in the Authorized Version. The general meaning of the word is that it refers to the people of the world who are not Jews. The Mosaic system was for the Jews only while that given by Christ was for universal benefit.

Verse 22. Being *possessed with a devil* is explained at chapter 8: 28. It was the man who was rendered blind and dumb, for when the devil was cast out the man spoke.

Verse 23. It was known by many that David was to have a descendant who would be a wonderful man in many respects. When they saw these mighty works being performed by Jesus, they concluded that he was that one predicted by the prophets.

Verse 24. The Pharisees could not deny the fact of the casting out of the devil, for the people were there and saw the evidence of it. They thought of robbing Jesus of his proper credit by reflecting against the power by which he did it. It was known that Beelzebub (Satan) had displayed supernatural power, hence it seemed convenient to reason that he could be working through Jesus, little realizing how their inconsistency would soon be exposed and turned against them.

Verse 25. *Jesus knew their thoughts.* The Pharisees did not always express themselves directly to Jesus because they were too cowardly to do so, but they would make their remarks to the multitude. But they could not escape exposure in that way because the Lord always knows what people are thinking. He therefore made this argument based on the unreasonableness of their statement. For Beelzebub to assist Jesus in casting out the devils, beings in the same wicked moral class as Satan himself, would be like a kingdom engaging in conflict with itself which would certainly bring it to ruin.

Verse 26. Satan is one of the names of Beelzebub and he would be interested in the same conditions that would be favorable to the other devils, and surely would not cooperate with Jesus or any other person in opposing their interests.

Verse 27. Jesus did not admit that these persons really did cast out devils, they just made that claim such as the case in Acts 19: 13. But their position on the subject gave Christ another basis for exposing their inconsistency. They would not admit that their children did their work by the help of Beelzebub, for that would be classing

them as unworthy of respect as they were trying to place Jesus.

Verse 28. Taking for granted, then, that Christ was doing his work by the Spirit of God, it would prove his claim that he was the one to bring the kingdom of God to them.

Verse 29. This verse is another argument against the accusation of the Pharisees. Whoever can enter forcefully into a man's house and plunder him must be stronger than he. Likewise, to overcome Satan and cast him out of his lodgings, one would have to be stronger than he. Therefore, it could not be Satan doing this for that would be making him stronger than himself.

Verse 30. This verse is a conclusive statement of principle on which Jesus regards all intelligent creatures. There is no neutrality between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan. A man may refuse to be outwardly an advocate of the kingdom of Christ but still wish to profess being in favor of it. But in that case he will be regarded as an active worker in the kingdom of Satan and against that of Christ.

Verse 31. *All manner of sin.* This phrase is so direct and complete that it will not admit a single exception but the one that Jesus makes. (More on this thought in the next verse.) The original word for *blasphemy* is defined by Thayer as follows: "Universally, slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name."

Verse 32. Sometimes persons will attempt to formulate a description of some very wicked actions. They may think they have an unanswerable argument when they tell of the vicious things that have been said about Christ, and state that such conduct as that must be the "unpardonable sin" if there ever was any. Yet our present verse is directly against that because it specifically says that speaking against the Son of man "shall be forgiven." It should be noted that the Scriptures in no place calls this the "unpardonable" sin. We do not know that it would be impossible for God to pardon this sin, but we are told plainly in these two verses that *it shall not be forgiven. Neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* The original word for *world* is *AION* and one meaning of it is "age." When Jesus spoke this passage the Jewish age was in force, and the Christian age was to come. The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven under

either dispensation. This sin will be described in detail at Mark 3: 30. To say that the world to come means the life in heaven would imply that some sins will be forgiven at that time which we know is not true. All sin, whether "pardonable" or not will have to have been forgiven before the judgment day for any person to enter into that life. At that time the status of every intelligent being will be as described in Revelation 22: 11.

Verse 33. *Make* is said in the sense of describe or consider or classify. The clause means that as a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, so the good work of casting out a devil could not be done by a wicked character like Satan.

Verse 34. *Generation of vipers* is defined by Thayer, "Offspring of vipers," and the same author explains his definition thus: "Addressed to cunning, malignant, wicked men." On the principle that a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit, these wicked Pharisees are unable to bring forth good fruit in the way of righteous words or deeds. It is under that rule of reasoning that Jesus accuses them of having an evil heart, because the words of their mouth were evil against the Holy Spirit.

Verse 35. See the preceding verse for the explanation of this.

Verse 36. The original for *idle* is *argos*, and its proper or literal meaning is to be worthless or meaningless. Such a word not only cannot convey any good impression to the hearer, but it might be mistaken for something the speaker never intended. To make that use of language would therefore be wrong and will have to be accounted for.

Verse 37. See the comments at chapter 11: 19 on the word *justified*, to learn in what sense a man may be justified by his words. It should be noted that the text does not say a man will be justified by his words *only*.

Verse 38. The word *sign* is from *SEMEION* which has been rendered in the Authorized Version by miracle 22 times, sign 51, token 1, wonder 3. Jesus worked miracles for a testimony to those who were honestly disposed toward information, but there is no case on record where he did it to gratify mere curiosity. These Jews had just witnessed the casting out of the devil, and that should have convinced them that Jesus was a good man to say the least. This present re-

quest was in the nature of a challenge, and it also was in line with the leading characteristic of their race (1 Corinthians 1: 22).

Verse 39. For the reasons expressed in the preceding paragraph, Jesus called them an evil generation and refused to perform any miracle at that time. However, he was willing to stake his reputation as a prophet on an event yet to come.

Verse 40. Just as certainly as Jonas spent three days and three nights within the whale, so the Son of man will spend that much time in the heart or inner part of the earth. The subject has two significant parts as it pertains to the test that Jesus proposed. If he spends a stipulated time only in the earth, then he must come forth unharmed as Jonas did from the whale, which would prove him to be a man under the care of God. Likewise, if and when that occurs it will prove Jesus to have been a true prophet at the time he spoke this to the Jews.

Verse 41. We know that Christ will be the only one to sit on the throne of judgment at the last day, hence all apparent statements to the contrary are to be understood in some accommodative sense. The word *condemn* is from *KATAKRINO* which Thayer defines, "b. by one's good example to render another's wickedness the more evident and censurable." If the men of Nineveh were willing to repent at the preaching of a man like Jonas, there will be no excuse for people who have had that of the Son of man given them.

Verse 42. The lesson of responsibility based upon opportunity is that in the preceding verse and is the same in this. If as notable a person as a queen would come so far to hear the wisdom of a man, surely the people should show greater interest in the wisdom of such a person as Jesus. This woman is called "the queen of the south" because the country of Sheba was a great distance from Judea and was south as to direction and in such a trip signified that a great territory was represented.

Verse 43. Jesus made some arguments based on the practices and beliefs of the people without necessarily endorsing those beliefs. (See comments at verse 27). The Jews believed that the devils haunted the deserts, but made raids into the places of civilization to torment human beings. One of those devils was cast out of a man and it went back to its regular dwell-

ing place (according to the Jewish notion) but could not find a satisfactory spot to rest.

Verses 44, 45. A man's body is likened to a house and hence the clearing out of the demon is called the sweeping and cleaning of a house. The demon saw the place he had just been occupying in such an inviting condition that he wanted to share it with his special friends and took them with him. Logically, then, that man was in worse condition than he was the first time. Let the reader remember that Jesus is only using this notion of the Jews for an illustration, not that he endorses it, and it serves as a likening of what was to come to their race. The things used for the story existed only in the belief of the Jews, but the thing it was used to illustrate was to come as an actual experience upon the nation. The Jews at first accepted the Gospel and furnished many recruits, but the nation as a whole turned against it and became unbelievers. Their city was finally destroyed and they became the object of scorn in the eyes of the peoples of the world.

Verse 46. *Brethren* is from *ADELPHOS* which Thayer defines as follows: "1. A brother (whether born of the same two parents, or only of the same father or the same mother): Matthew 1: 2; 4: 18 and often. That 'the brethren of Jesus,' Matthew 12: 46, 47; 13: 55; Mark 6: 3 (in the last two passages also sisters); Luke 8: 19; John 2: 12; 7: 3; Acts 1: 14; Galatians 1: 19; 1 Corinthians 9: 5, are neither sons of Joseph by a wife before Mary (which is the account in the Apocryphal Gospels), nor cousins, the children of Alphaeus or Cleophas (i. e., Clopas) and Mary, a sister of the mother of Jesus (the current opinion among the doctors of the church since Jerome and Augustine), according to that use of language by which *ADELPHOS* like the Hebrew . . . denotes any blood-relation or kinsman, but own brothers, born after Jesus, is clear principally from Matthew 1: 25; Luke 2: 7 . . . where, had Mary borne no other children after Jesus, instead of *HUION PROTOKON*, the expression *HUION MONOGENE* would have been used, as well as from Acts 1: 14; John 7: 5, where the Lord's brethren are distinguished from the apostles." For the convenience of the reader and to save him from confusion, I will state that this quotation from the lexicon shows that Jesus had fleshly brothers who were the children

of Joseph and Mary, and that Mary did not remain a virgin after the birth of Jesus as the Romanists teach.

Verse 47. Jesus never disrespected his mother but treated her as any man should the woman who had given him birth, but the people needed the lesson that is set down here, and it was for their benefit that he spoke.

Verse 48. The question does not indicate that Jesus intended to ignore his family relations, or that he did not recognize them; it was not asked for that purpose.

Verse 49. After the aforesaid remark, Jesus pointed toward his disciples as an answer to his own question. Since the persons included in the gesture were men and women, while he named three relationships regarding family ties, we know he had some figurative sense in mind for the terms.

Verse 50. The only proper relationship that can be produced by obedience to the will of God is that of brethren. Thus the conclusion is necessary that no earthly relative should be regarded as near to one as our fellowship with Christ.

MATTHEW 13

Verse 1. The conversation reported at the close of the preceding chapter took place in a house. It was on that same day that Jesus went out and sat down on the shore.

Verse 2. A person as interesting as Jesus would not be left to himself very long if the people know where he is, so we are told that *great multitudes* came unto him. The second word is from a Greek original that means the populace or people in general, and that alone would indicate a goodly number of men and women. Then the other word emphasizes the expression so that we understand that a very large audience came together. Jesus wished to be heard by the multitude and that suggested also that he be seen. For this twofold purpose he entered a ship where he could be in the position of a public speaker with his audience on the shore that doubtless was elevated rearward on the order of an inclined floor of an auditorium.

Verse 3. The literal meaning of the original for *parable* is, "A placing of one thing by the side of another."—Thayer. As to the results of such a placing, or the reason or reasons why **it is done, that has to be determined**

by the context in each case. (See the comments at verse 11.) Caution should be observed in the study of the parables not to make them mean more than was intended. Jesus spoke about thirty parables all pertaining to the plan of salvation that he intended to set up among men. Surely that many would not have been necessary just for the sake of emphasis. The conclusion is that different parts of that plan were considered in the various parables. No one illustration could be large enough to cover all the phases of the one plan of salvation that was to be given to the world. As a result of the above truths, there may be some features of one parable that do not fit in with the Gospel plan at all. That is because the whole story had to be told in order to make it understood at the point where it does apply. Then another parable will be given that will cover the points in its application where the other one seemed not to be fitting. The parables of our Lord were drawn both from nature and art, and from the customs of man in the conduct of his public and private affairs in all of life's relations.

Verse 4. In the days before machinery, seed was sown by the system known as broadcasting, even as such seeding is done sometimes today. In such a work a man could not have full control of the direction of the seed and hence did not always deposit it where it might have been desired. *Way side* is from *HODOS* which Thayer defines, "A traveled way." In such a place the surface would be packed down and hard so that the seeds could not find any opening to bury themselves in the soil. Being thus exposed, they would soon catch the eyes of the birds and be devoured.

Verse 5. Stony ground is that where small rocks are mixed with the surface of the soil, thereby limiting the amount of earth at any given spot. *Forthwith* means "immediately," and the seed sprang up in that way because it ran out of material for growth in the ground, hence it had to come up into the open where it could feed on air and sunlight. But having been thus impelled upward prematurely, the root part of the plant was incomplete and therefore was weak.

Verse 6. Sunlight is necessary for plant life and growth, but other elements must accompany it; it must have a "balanced diet." This plant was deprived of the moisture and

mineral food that should have been supplied in the ground. Not having such necessities, the one article in the menu (that of the sun) was too much and the result was fatal.

Verse 7. *Thorn* is from *AKANTHA* which Thayer defines, "A thorn, bramble-bush, brier." It is a plant that grows near the ground in the nature of coarse grass. That is why the soldiers could plait it into a wreath or crown to place on the head of Jesus (Matthew 27: 29). The seeds of this plant were not visible at the time of the sower's work, but when the growing season came they sprang up with all other vegetation. Being more rugged and wild than the good seed deposited by the farmer, they soon choked out all the other plants just as weeds will often smother out the good grass today.

Verse 8. The *good ground* would be that where the three forementioned obstacles were not present. Yet with all that advantage it should be noted that the crop was not the same in every place as to the amount, which will be explained at verse 23.

Verse 9. See comments for this statement at chapter 11: 15.

Verse 10. Attention is called to the fact that the question the disciples asked pertained to *them*, the multitude.

Verse 11. A familiar statement that may be heard on the parables is as follows: "Jesus spoke in parables in order to make his teaching easier to be understood by the people." Such a statement is exactly opposite of the truth, for this very verse says, in answer to the question of the disciples, that it was *not given* to the multitudes to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It may be replied that it was because this knowledge of the mysteries was not possessed by the multitudes that the parables were given to explain them. But that is not correct, for even the disciples did not understand the meaning of the parables until Jesus had them to himself and explained them. A natural question now is in regard to the present day. May we speak of the parables as a means of making the subject plainer in our teaching of the subjects of the New Testament? The answer is that we may, and the reason is that we have both the illustration (the parable) and the thing illustrated with us which is the church and the Gospel, and we can show the comparison. The kingdom had not yet been started

when Jesus spoke to the multitudes and hence it was not time to introduce them to all of its mysteries or unrevealed truths.

Verse 12. Jesus had told the disciples that it was not given to the multitudes to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and in this verse he begins to tell them why. We would think it impossible to take from a man something that he hath not, hence we must look for some figurative or accommodative use of this language. A useful illustration of the subject is in John 15: 2. Every branch had been given an opportunity to bear increase but it did not do so. Hence the branch itself was to be removed from the vine. The multitudes had been given the words of Moses and the prophets, yet they refused to see in them the beauties of the kingdom of heaven in predicted form. Now it was certainly just to keep them still in the dark as to those beauties (mysteries) until such time as the whole world would have a full description of the system in detail.

Verse 13. The first clause of this verse is similar in meaning to verse 11. *Seeing see not*, etc., means that they were given the ability and opportunity to see and hear but they would not use them.

Verse 14. Failing to use the means of information within their reach is the subject of this verse. The prophecy referred to is in Isaiah 6: 9, 10.

Verse 15. The condition described is with reference to their moral or spiritual situation, but the natural organs are named by way of illustration. Gross means "To make fat; to make stupid (to render the soul dull or callous)." And this was not an accident that came to them, for the verse states the motive they had for bringing on the condition. It was done deliberately for fear they might hear some truth that would expose their evil deeds and later lead them into the service of Christ.

Verse 16. The disciples were willing to use their opportunities for obtaining information and hence were pronounced as blessed of the Lord. That was why they were admitted into the explanation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, while the multitudes were not permitted to receive anything but the unexplained parables.

Verse 17. This verse sounds as if some others who were righteous were in the same class as these multitudes in that they had not seen or heard either. The apparent difficulty is ex-

plained by going back to the time when the Lord did not expect the people to have a full knowledge of the divine plan. But even the things they could have discerned by proper attention to what was revealed, the Pharisees had failed to grasp because of their hardness of heart. *Which ye see* and *which ye hear* is spoken in prospect as if Jesus said, "which ye are going to hear," meaning the explanation of the parables which comes in the next and following verses.

Verse 18. This verse invites the disciples to listen and they will hear the inner meaning of some of the "mysteries" that had not been told even to the prophets.

Verse 19. Failure to understand might not always be a fault, yet we know it is used as one in this case. The original word is *SUNEMI*, and its general meaning is, "to set or bring together," and the definition is explained to mean, "to put the perception and the thing perceived together; to set or join together in the mind." It denotes that the hearer will give careful attention to what is said so as to arrive at the thought intended by the speaker. Of course a person will not understand what is said to him if he refuses to give it due consideration. As a further result, that person will soon forget all that was said to him and the thought will be lost as was the seed that fell on the hard or beaten ground.

Verses 20, 21. *Anon* is from a word that is defined "immediately" in Thayer's lexicon. It does not indicate that one can be too ready to accept the word, but he may be influenced more by enthusiasm than serious consideration. Such a person may be sincere in his motives, but he has failed to consider that the same word that he received with so much joy for the present, will need to be retained as firmly in the future. He will have to endure opposition from the enemies because of his devotion to the truth, and when that comes if he yields to the foe he becomes *offended* which means to stumble and reject the word he had heard so joyfully.

Verse 22. See the comments at verse 7 for a description of these thorns. *Care* is from *MERIMNA* and Thayer's simple definition is, "Care, anxiety," and he explains his definition to mean, "anxiety about things pertaining to this earthly life." Robinson defines it, "Care, anxiety, anxious

thought," and his comment on it is, "as dividing up and distracting the mind." It means to be so concerned about the things of worldly interest that one neglects to give proper attention to spiritual matters. *Deceitfulness of riches* means the false pleasures that one may have by means of his wealth. He should not be thus deceived because "the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7: 31).

Verse 23. The good ground is the heart or mind that *understands*, and this word is explained at verse 8. The hundred, sixty and thirty fold is different in amount only. It is all good wheat, but not all men even in the good class have the same ability or capacity for producing results. The Lord is not concerned about the amount of work a man accomplishes in the vineyard just so he does what he can.

Verse 24. The reader should first see the comments at verse 3 about the right use of parables. The one now before us is for a different purpose from the one just concluded. The main point in this is to show what is going to take place at the judgment day. But in order to explain why that will be done it is necessary to tell what was going on in the world before that. In relating those details the Lord mentions some things that do not represent the activities within the church. The items of the parable will first be given and the explanation will follow a little later in the chapter. It starts with the simple fact that a man sowed *good seed* in his field as no man would sow any other kind in his own territory.

Verse 25. *While men slept* means the time when mankind was usually asleep, and that would be the most likely time for an enemy to get in his evil work. *Tares* is from ZIZANION, and Thayer's description of it is, "A kind of darnel, bastard wheat, resembling wheat except that the grains are black," and Robinson says of it, "At first having a close resemblance to them" [good grain]. A common idea is that the tares were growing in such a way that the roots of them and the wheat were entwined so that a man could not pull up the one without uprooting the other. This is a mistake, and instead, it is the resemblance that is considered and which will be considered also below.

Verse 26. There was enough difference as the growing proceeded that

some informed servants recognized the presence of the tares and were puzzled about it.

Verse 27. The servants asked their master for an explanation.

Verse 28. He explained that an enemy had done it. The natural conclusion with the servants was that he would want them to gather the tares out of the field.

Verse 29. The close resemblance between the tares and the wheat might cause some of the servants to mistake the one for the other while the plants were not fully matured.

Verse 30. By harvest time the growth will be completed and hence no harm can be done to the wheat even if it is pulled up. Also by that time the distinction will be clearer so that the reapers whose experience guides them in the harvesting work will be able to make the separation between the things that should not remain together.

Verse 31. The parable of the tares was dropped for the present because the multitudes were still present and the explanation was not to be for them. Before dismissing them Jesus spoke two shorter parables, one of which was about the mustard seed.

Verse 32. The point in this parable is the extent to which the kingdom of heaven was to grow from a very small beginning. The variety of mustard that is considered is the garden kind or that which is cultivated. The word is from SINAPI and Thayer describes the plant as follows: "The name of a plant which in oriental countries grows from a very small seed and attains to the height of 'a tree'—ten feet or more." The birds of the air need not be thought as being the largest kind for the text does not require such a conclusion. There are many varieties of small birds that could easily perch in the branches of a plant ten feet high. The kingdom of heaven started in one city and with only a few hundred members at most, but it spread until it became universal and people of all nations sought spiritual shelter in it.

Verse 33. The next parable is contained in this one verse. The meaning is somewhat the same as the preceding one but from a different standpoint. The nature of leaven is to work its way through the mixture in which it has been deposited. If nothing inter-

feres with its operation it will continue until it converts all of the material into a nature like itself. The leaven of the Gospel was deposited at Jerusalem and it spread its influence until it reached to the extremities of "the whole" world or was carried out according to the great commission (Romans 10: 18; Colossians 1: 23).

Verse 34. *Without a parable* applies to the multitudes at such times as Jesus was using to talk about the kingdom of heaven (verse 11).

Verse 35. In speaking the parables Jesus fulfilled a prophecy spoken by David in Psalms 78: 2. *World* is from kosmos and means the people of the earth.

Verse 36. The first verse of this chapter states that Jesus went out of the house where he spoke to the multitudes. He now dismissed them and went back into the house, and when the disciples came to him they asked for an explanation of the tares and wheat.

Verse 37. The sower is the Son of man or Jesus the Christ.

Verse 38. The field is the *world* (mankind in general) and not the church as some people teach. *Good seed are the children* means the good seed (which is the divine truth) produces children for the kingdom of heaven. The tares are the children or product of evil teaching. These evil men are people of the world who would not accept the kingdom of heaven and the Lord's teaching.

Verse 39. *Devil* is from DIABOLOS which means Satan or Beelzebub. He has always been an enemy of righteousness and has used his influence to keep men out of the kingdom of the Lord. *World* in this and the following verse is from AION and means age; specifically the age of the earth. Angels have been instruments of God since the human family has existed. They are said to be the reapers, and the *same prediction is made of their part* in the last harvest as recorded in Revelation 14: 14-20.

Verse 40. All refuse material that accumulates in the course of a growing season generally is disposed of at the time of harvest. Thus it will be done with the tares at the harvest time which will be at the end of the world.

Verse 41. One meaning of the word for *kingdom* is, "The territory sub-

ject to the rule of a king," and Jesus said (chapter 28: 18) that "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This shows that the whole inhabited earth is the kingdom of Christ in this broad sense. Hence the wicked characters in the world will be taken out of it at the last day and cast into the fire.

Verse 42. *Wailing and gnashing of teeth*. The subject of endless punishment will be fully considered at chapter 25: 46. It will be stated here however, that the phrase in italics indicates a condition of conscious torment.

Verse 43. *Then* is an adverb of time and refers to the condition just after the harvest which is at the end of the world. In 1 Corinthians 15: 24 Paul says that Jesus will give up his kingdom when he comes and deliver it to his Father. That is why this verse says that the righteous will then shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Verse 44. The lesson in this parable is the value of salvation, and hence the sacrifice that one should make willingly in order to obtain it. The treasure represents the salvation which Jesus brought and deposited in the same field that is a part of the parable of the tares. When a man "finds" that salvation through hearing the Gospel and desires to obtain it, he will devote all his time and talents for that purpose.

Verse 45. This parable teaches the *same lesson as the preceding one* on the value of salvation. One word in the definition for *goodly* is, "genuine." There are many things that appear as pearls but are only imitation. This merchant was not wishing anything but the real and hence he was *seeking* for it.

Verse 46. Salvation also is something for which a man should seek (chapter 6: 33), and he should be just as careful to find the genuine and not *some imitation*. Like the parable, there are systems made by man that have the appearance of being good, like "simulated pearls," but upon examination will be found to be false. And there is no reason for anyone to be deceived for the Scriptures will make it very clear as to what the salvation from God is like. When a man finds it he must devote his entire attention to it in order to retain this *pearl of great price*.

Verse 47. When a man casts a net

into the water he does not know what may be taken because he cannot see the fish until the net is drawn out. Likewise, no man can read the mind of another, and when he offers the Gospel to the world he cannot see the hearts of those who profess to accept it.

Verse 48. After the fishing time is over the net will be drawn out and taken to the shore where the good fish can be separated from the others. In like manner the Gospel fish net will be spread out on the shore of the judgment. Then all those persons who have deceived their fellow men will be exposed before the eye of the great Judge.

Verse 49. As in the parable of the tares, the angels are represented as the servants of the Lord in separating the good from the bad at the end of the world.

Verse 50. This verse takes the same comments as verse 42.

Verse 51. Jesus was still talking to his disciples, the multitudes having been dismissed (verse 36), hence it was appropriate for him to ask them if they understood what had been said. We recall that the disciples who were following Jesus had shown enough sincere attention to the things that had been recorded to have formed a commendable idea of the matters, which entitled them to the explanation of the "mysteries" of the kingdom. But some of the teaching of Jesus was more literal or direct so that honest minds like these would be able to grasp it without special explanation. Hence we are not surprised that they answered his question with *yea Lord*.

Verse 52. One important key word in this verse is *scribe*, and I shall give some information from the writings of learned authors upon the work of this special class of men. The word is from GRAMMATEUS and Thayer's general definition of it is, "1. A clerk, scribe, especially a public scribe, secretary, recorder . . . 2. In the Bible, a man learned in the sacred writings, an interpreter, teacher." This definition of the word is based on the special work of these men. On this subject Robinson in his lexicon says the following: "The scribes had the charge of transcribing the sacred books; whence naturally arose their office of interpreting difficult passages, and deciding in cases which grew out of the ceremonial law. Their influence was of course great, and many of them were members of

the Sanhedrin." As further consideration of this subject, we observe that mechanical means of recording literature were not in existence in Biblical times, hence the copies of the law had to be made by hand. Such frequent contact with the sacred writings naturally made these men familiar with the text, and they could be relied on to quote from it when occasion called for it. With this knowledge of the Old Testament to begin with, after a scribe received the instruction belonging to the kingdom of heaven he would be qualified to offer the treasures of sacred knowledge from both the *New* and *Old Testaments*.

Verse 53. *Finished these parables* refers to the ones in this chapter.

Verse 54. Jesus was in Galilee all the time he was teaching these parables and hence he was already in his *own country* with reference to the province. Thus the term has specific reference to the vicinity of Nazareth where he had been brought up. Having lived there in his boyhood and early manhood, the people were acquainted with his humble life and hence they were astonished when they heard his teaching and saw his works.

Verse 55. The people were acquainted with much of the family history of Jesus and never knew of any training he had gone through to give him the talents he was now displaying. There could be no question about his general standing as a citizen for they knew all of these nearest relatives and could mention them by name. For comments on the term *brethren* see those at chapter 12: 46.

Verse 56. The Romanists insist that Mary always remained a virgin, and that when his "brethren" are mentioned it means his disciples since they are known by the name of brethren also. That is true, but when so used it includes all of the disciples regardless of sex. If that had been the meaning intended in verse 55 there would have been no reason to mention *sisters* in this verse for they would have been included in the other.

Verse 57. *Offended* is from SKANDALIZO and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To find occasion of stumbling," and he explains his definition to mean, "To see in another what hinders me from acknowledging his authority." Jesus uttered the familiar proverb about a prophet's honor in his own country. People are inclined to

have more respect for a teacher who is unknown to them than for their acquaintances. Jesus did not state any reason for this and hence I am unable to explain it.

Verse 58. Pretended miracle workers try to explain their failure at performing certain miracles on the ground of the unbelief of the multitude. They will refer to such passages as the present verse and try to hide behind it. They ignore the point that Jesus did do some of his works in spite of the unbelief of the multitude. The reason their unbelief restricted his mighty works so that he did not *many* of them was their unbelief which rendered them unworthy. (See chapter 7: 6 and Mark 6: 5.)

MATTHEW 14

Verse 1. The Herodian family was a prominent one in the days of Christ and the early years of the church. Its head was Herod the Great who had several sons by a number of wives. The name "Herod" became a family title and the various members had personal names that made distinctions between them. The different members of the Herodian family held offices of greater or lesser importance in Palestine and figured largely in the affairs of the church as well as the nation. The one in this verse was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. *Tetrarch* originally meant "ruler of a fourth part of some territory," but finally came to mean one who had the rulership over a small part of any district to which he might be assigned.

Verse 2. Hearing of the fame of Jesus, Herod thought he would have to make some kind of an explanation of it since he could not deny the facts. He doubtless had a sort of guilty feeling over the way he had treated John the Baptist and it gave him this weird-like impression. He explained the matter to his servants by saying that John had come back to life and was doing these mighty works in the person of Jesus. However, this return to life on earth to which Herod referred was not a part of the general resurrection that is taught in the Scriptures, but to a belief that many people had that is described in the histories and other works of reference as "transmigration."

I shall quote Webster's definition of the word: "Act or instance of transmigration; specifically, the passing of the soul at death into another body or

successive bodily forms, either human or animal; also (*often transmigration of souls*), the doctrine that souls so pass." We know that such a doctrine did not originate with any true teacher from God, although many of His professed people took up with it. The idea of repeated transmigrations was based on the theory of Brahma, the Hindu name of the Supreme Being. I shall quote from Myers Ancient History (pages 99, 100) on this matter: "A chief doctrine of Brahmanism is that all life, apart from Brahma, is evil, is travail and sorrow. . . . The only way to redemption from evil lies in communion with and final absorption with Brahma. But this return to Brahma is dependent upon the soul's purification, for no impure soul can be reabsorbed into Brahma. . . . As only a few in each generation reach the goal, it follows that the great majority of men must be born again, and yet again, until all evil has been purged away from the soul and eternal repose is found in Brahma. He who lives a virtuous life is at death born into some higher caste, and thus he advances towards the longed-for end. The evil man, however, is born into a lower caste, or perhaps his soul enters some unclean animal. This doctrine of rebirth is known as the transmigration of souls." While this doctrine originated with the heathen teachers, it had become widely known in the time of Christ and the apostles and was reflected even in the opinions of some of the Jews. That made it necessary for our Saviour and his apostles to deal with it (Matthew 16: 14; Mark 8: 28; Hebrews 6: 2), hence the reader should make himself familiar with this paragraph for future reference when the subject may be mentioned.

Verse 3. The imprisonment and slaying of John the Baptist had taken place several months before this but nothing was stated on the subject at the time. Now the remark of Herod being recorded by Matthew brought up the subject which might leave the reader in confusion, hence he interrupts his story and goes back to tell that incident, beginning with this verse and running through verse 12. The cause of the trouble was the marriage of Herod with the wife of his brother Philip I.

Verse 4. John the Baptist told Herod that it was unlawful for him to have her. That would have been a true accusation for more than one reason, but

the most outstanding one was the fact that his brother Philip was still living.

Verse 5. Herod would have slain John in spite work, but was kept from it by the force of public opinion which held John in high esteem as a prophet of God. Besides, Herod might not personally have been inclined so harshly towards him if he had not been influenced by his wicked wife. Mark 6: 19 tells us that she quarreled with John and would have put him to death had she been able to do so.

Verse 6. But an unexpected event gave her the opportunity she wanted to accomplish her wicked purpose that was prompted by an adulterous heart. Herod celebrated his birthday by a banquet to which he invited the high men of rank in his estate. The text does not state that his program included the following performance, but for some reason the daughter of his wife by a previous marriage danced before him and his guests. The word for *dance* is *ORCHEOMAI* which Thayer defines simply, "to dance." Robinson defines it, "to lift up, to raise aloft; to leap, to dance." Young's definition is, "to lift up (the feet), dance." There is no intimation of any display of musical rhythm, but on the other hand from the definitions of the word in the lexicons, and also from the effects her dancing had on the adulterous mind of Herod, the conclusion is clear that the girl exposed herself before the eyes of that lustful king. It says it *pleased Herod*, and that pleasure overcame his better judgment.

Verse 7. Herod was so overcome by the effect of the girl's appearance before his eyes that he seems to have lost his reason. He told her with an oath and without any stipulation that she could have whatever she asked, and Mark's account says that Herod extended his offer to include half of his kingdom.

Verse 8. *Before instructed of her mother*. Herodias knew the nature of Herod, in that he was willing to marry her while her husband was living. Doubtless it was her suggestion that caused the girl to dance before the group and display her charms in the way she did. She further prompted her daughter what to do in case her dancing produced the effect she anticipated. Consequently she asked for the head of John the Baptist in a *charger* which means a large dish. The wicked woman would not risk merely request-

ing the death of John for she would never be sure that it was carried out. But if his head is severed from his body and brought to her she would know the deed was done.

Verse 9. The king was not expecting such a request as this and he was doubtless genuinely sorry because of it. But he had bound his promise with an oath in the knowledge of his royal guests, and pride as well as a false notion of the sacredness of an oath, though a sinful one, prevailed over his personal sentiments so that he commanded the wish to be granted and gave orders to the executioner to behead the righteous man.

Verse 10. John was in prison and the beheading was done there.

Verse 11. The head of John the Baptist was placed in a dish and brought to the damsel. The head of that forerunner of Christ, the one who had been foretold by the prophets, the man whose preaching aroused the multitudes of all Judea, was severed from his body because he dared to rebuke a lustful man and woman for their wickedness. Of course the damsel was true to the orders of her mother and delivered this reward of her own immoral actions to the vicious woman waiting for it.

Verse 12. *His disciples* means the disciples of John. They got possession of his body and buried it, then went and told Jesus because they knew that he would be concerned.

Verse 13. *When Jesus heard it* means what the disciples of John had just reported. Hence the whole narrative including the works of Jesus goes back to the time of the death of John and proceeds again from there. Jesus wished some privacy or at least some relief from the presence of the crowds after receiving the sad news, and hence he went into a ship and journeyed to a place not much inhabited. Notwithstanding, the people came in throngs on foot to follow him.

Verse 14. The patience and love of Jesus knew no bounds. He went out to this place for a little relaxation from the press of the multitudes, but when they came on after him his compassion asserted itself and he healed their sick.

Verse 15. It was getting on towards the close of day and the crowds were lingering in the presence of Jesus. Thinking they might not realize the hour and thus would let darkness find

them without provisions, the disciples suggested that Jesus send them into the villages for food.

Verse 16. This situation provided the occasion of one of the most noted of the miracles of Jesus. The faith of the disciples was to be tested, also they were to receive a lesson on the subject of cooperation; Jesus told them to feed the people.

Verse 17. The reply of the disciples indicates they had no miraculous power, and that they thought they were expected to feed the multitudes from their own private stores. Hence they explained how scant was their supply of food.

Verse 18. The amount of supplies the disciples had would not have been even a taste for the crowds, but the lesson was that whatever man has, whether little or much, must be contributed to the cause if he expects the Lord to make the project effective.

Verse 19. *Grass* is mentioned which indicates that the place was not without moisture even though it was called a desert. The word means a territory that was not occupied generally by people. It would be more orderly to serve a large crowd if sitting than while standing. Looking up to heaven was a gesture of recognition of the source of the good things at hand. *Blessed* is from *EULOGEO* and Thayer's first definition is, "to praise, celebrate with praises." The clause means that Jesus took the bread in his hands before serving, then looked up toward heaven and "Praised God from whom all blessings flow." It was orderly to pass the bread out through the hands of the disciples, besides it made them partakers with Jesus in the service of the hour.

Verse 20. Even had the whole multitude been able each person to have tasted of the amount of bread the disciples had, it would not have been a miracle although a remarkable thing. They not only tasted but ate—not only ate but were filled; which could not have been accomplished naturally with five loaves. And to show that *filled* was not figurative there were twelve baskets full of fragments taken up. Why bother with these scraps when it was so easy to obtain bread with Jesus with them? John 6:12 reports the same event and adds the reason given by Jesus was "that nothing be lost."

Verse 21. It may have been only a coincidence that there was one loaf to

each thousand men, but by leaving out the enumeration of the women and children that figure of pro rata was obtained.

Verse 22. Jesus *constrained* or commanded his disciples to enter a ship and go across the sea before him. He wished to dismiss the multitudes which would require some considerable time because of the large number of them.

Verse 23. Before joining the disciples Jesus retired to a mountain to pray, so that by the time evening had come he was alone. That would be a very suitable situation for prayer with his Father.

Verse 24. In the meantime a storm had come up and the disciples were having difficulty with their ship. *Wind was contrary* means the wind was blowing against them or in the opposite direction to that in which they wished to row. Evidently Jesus was expecting such a condition and selected the occasion for one of his great miracles.

Verse 25. The *fourth watch* was the same as our three o'clock in the morning, as the twelve hours of the night were divided into four divisions of three hours each, beginning at six in the evening. Thus the hour that Jesus went toward the disciples was still in darkness although not very far from the time of daylight.

Verse 26. Peering out over the sea in the darkness the disciples saw an object on the surface of the water coming toward them. While it was still in the darkness of night, yet it was not total darkness, so that an object could be discerned but not very distinctly. The sight startled them and they cried out with fear because they thought it was a spirit. Ordinarily a spirit is not supposed to be something that can be seen, but the original for this spirit is *PHANTASMA* which means a phantom or something that appears to exist but which belongs to the unseen world. There is enough of the superstitious in most people to make them have a weird or uneasy feeling in the presence of such an appearance, hence the disciples cried out in their fright.

Verse 27. They did not recognize Jesus from his appearance but did know his voice, hence the Lord spoke to let them realize who was coming to them.

Verse 28. We are not told the motive that Peter had in wanting to walk on the water. If it was from a desire to make a show, the Lord certainly knew how to humble him.

Verse 29. Peter actually got started walking on the surface of the sea and hence had evidence that it was Jesus who was dealing with him miraculously. This should have reassured him that no harm need come to him.

Verse 30. The power of the Lord is not affected by any apparent difficulties. Peter had started on his journey over the sea and had evidence that Jesus was there. He also should have remembered the previous event (chapter 8: 23-27) in which the sea was calmed by the Lord's voice. But his human nature got the better of him and he began to sink. Of course Jesus would not let his disciple perish, but he used the occasion to rebuke him by allowing him to think he was going to sink and perish.

Verse 31. The Lord chastised him at the same time he was rescuing him by accusing him with having little faith. A good lesson may be obtained for all of us from this event. It does not require as much faith to appear firm when everything is favorable. The test comes when it appears that things are against us, and it is then that we should think of the words of Paul in Romans 8: 31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Verse 32. Whether it was the mere presence of Jesus in the ship that quieted the storm we are not told, or that he commanded it to be so as he did in the case referred to above. What we know is that when he entered the vessel the wind ceased.

Verse 33. The circumstance had a deep effect on the men in the ship and caused them to *worship* Jesus. See the comments on chapter 2: 2 for the meaning of that word. The worship in this case took the form of a confession that Jesus is the Son of God. That was one purpose of the miracles that Jesus performed according to John 20: 30, 31, and not merely to gratify the curiosity of idle or disinterested people.

Verse 34. The storm being over, the ship resumed its journey and landed on the western shore of Gallilee at the country of Gennesaret.

Verse 35. The fame of Jesus had become known in this territory. After his arrival the sick were sent for and

brought into the presence of the man who was known as the healer of all kinds of diseases.

Verse 36. Touching the garment of Jesus had no curative effect in itself, but the act showed their faith and they were healed as a reward for it, on the same principle as that of the woman in chapter 9: 20-22.

MATTHEW 15

Verse 1. See the comments on chapter 13: 52 for a description of the scribes. The Pharisees were a leading sect of the Jews who made great pretensions of righteousness. They, with the scribes, were enemies of Jesus and frequently tried to get him into trouble with either the Sanhedrin or the Romans.

Verse 2. The Pharisees and others who stood with them doctrinally placed great stress on the traditions of those who were the elders or forefathers in the Mosaic system. In most cases they held these traditions to be of more importance than the written law of Moses, and where there was a disagreement between them they perverted the written law in favor of the tradition. One of such rules had to do with washing the hands at certain specified times. This was not done as a necessary act of sanitation but was one of the self-imposed rituals of the elders among the Jews. The disciples were busy with the important affairs of their work with Jesus and did not observe such ceremonies. But the critics thought they had a cause for accusation against them and came to Jesus with their complaint.

Verse 3. It was a much worse fault to set the traditions of the elders against the positive requirements of the Mosaic law than it was to ignore the customs of the fathers, and that was the accusation that Jesus made against these critics.

Verse 4. The law of Moses plainly required a man to honor his parents (Exodus 20: 12). The word *honor* in the commandment to which Jesus referred comes from the Hebrew word *KABED* which Strong defines, "In a good sense (numerous, rich, honorable): causatively [as a cause], to make wealthy." The definition of the word which Moses wrote, as well as the reasoning of Jesus on the subject, shows that honoring one's parents included the financial support of them also.

Verse 5. A man's parents are in need of the good things of life and look to their son for help. But he puts them off with the excuse that the money that he would otherwise have spent on them so that they would have profited by it, had been "earmarked" for the Lord's treasury. This was hypocrisy on their part for they never carried out their claim of devoting the money to the cause of the Lord. Besides, the law never intended that money should be put into the public treasury that was needed for dependents.

Verse 6. The Pharisees taught that if a man withheld his support of his parents on the pretense of giving it to the Lord, he would be exempt from the commandment in Exodus 20: 12, thus putting their tradition above the law.

Verse 7. A hypocrite is one who professes to be what he knows he is not. See the comments at chapter 6: 2 for the lexicon definition and other accounts of the word. *Well did Esaias prophecy* means the prophet did well in predicting these characters.

Verse 8. Generally speaking, the lips and mouth pertain to the fleshly or outer man, and the heart refers to the inner man. The Biblical heart is the occasion of so much confusion among religious teachers that I shall give the reader a description of it as will be taken from the lexicon definition of original Greek. With one exception (PSUCHE in Ephesians 6: 6) the word in the New Testament is from KARDIA and I shall quote Thayer's definitions (the part in italics) for it in its various applications: "1. a. the vigor and sense of physical life. b. the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors. Specifically of the understanding, the faculty and seat of intelligence. Of the soul so far forth as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions. 3. used of the middle or central or inmost part of any thing, even though inanimate." This Greek word occurs 158 times in the New Testament and is not rendered by any term but "heart" in the Authorized Version. From the extended definition as well as by the various connections in which it is used, it is plain that when "heart" is not used figuratively it means the mind or intelligence of man. This ex-

plains how a person's mouth or lips can say one thing while the heart does not really mean it, and thus he is acting hypocritically.

Verse 9. *Worship* is from SEBOMAI which Thayer defines, "to revere, to worship." The people of whom Jesus was speaking professed to have great respect for him and that is the sense in which he said they worshiped him. *In vain* is defined "fruitlessly" and means that the pretended reverence they had for Jesus would not bring them any favor from him as long as they taught the doctrine of human authority instead of that of the man they claimed to honor but whose teaching they were rejecting.

Verse 10. *He called the multitude.* This was not for the purpose of explaining a parable of the church, but to show them why he had accused them of inconsistency in their undue emphasis on washing the hands.

Verse 11. Jesus was not ignoring the need for cleanliness, but was teaching the lesson of putting moral and spiritual matters above the physical. If a man permits a particle of dirt to enter his mouth and into the stomach it cannot do him any harm for the system will take care of it. Jesus will explain this subject to his disciples a few verses farther on in the chapter.

Verse 12. *Were offended* denotes that they stumbled at the saying of Jesus, and because of it they were unwilling to recognize him as having the wisdom or authority to make a declaration upon the conduct of others.

Verse 13. Jesus was willing to stake his right to speak and the correctness of what he said on the outcome. Every plant not planted by his Father was to be rooted up. If the work of Jesus was not authorized of God, then it would not stand and he would be exposed as an impostor. On the other hand, if his work holds fast it will prove him to have been a true teacher and one over whom the Pharisees had no reason to stumble. This statement had special reference to the church or kingdom that he was about to set up, for in Ezekiel 34: 29 a "plant" is predicted and the context there (verses 20-31) plainly shows that it has reference to the church.

Verse 14. *Let them alone* is defined by Thayer, "c. to let go, let alone, let be; to disregard." It means for the disciples not to lose any time or spend any efforts on them as it would be use-

less. A further reason for ignoring them was the danger involved in following or associating with them. They were blind leaders and those who would follow them are as blind as they. That would mean that all of them would share the same fate and fall into the ditch or go astray.

Verse 15. Peter called the teaching of Jesus about washing and eating a parable. However, it was not a parable of the kingdom (chapter 13: 11), hence Jesus had called the multitudes to him to give that lesson. But it was somewhat indirect or figurative and the apostles did not understand it.

Verse 16. The expression of Jesus sounds as if he were surprised at the lack of understanding shown by his disciples, when he was supposed to know all about man and not to be surprised at anything. That is not the point, but he said this to them as a mild rebuke for their slowness in thinking out the matter.

Verse 17. Mere filth that is not in the nature of disease germs goes through the stomach and other digestive organs and is separated from food particles the same as the other waste matter, and it is then discharged from the body without having done it any harm. A draught corresponds with our modern sanitary stool.

Verse 18. The things that come out of the mouth originate in the heart, and if they are evil it indicates an impure and a defiled heart. (See chapter 12: 34.)

Verse 19. See again the definition of the heart at verse 8 and it will be observed why the things mentioned in this verse are said to come from it.

Verse 20. Certainly no man can entertain an interest in murder and the other things named in verse 19 and not be defiled. They affect his character while the soil passing from the hands into the mouth has no relation to that.

Verse 21. *Coasts* means region and Jesus went to that surrounding these cities.

Verse 22. *Woman of Canaan* is indefinite because all the land west of the Jordan was generally known as Canaan, and there were both Jews and Gentiles living there. However, the term was used to designate this woman as outside the class recognized as Jews. This woman not only recognized Jesus as Lord but also as a son of

David. The latter term was specific and meant that she believed him to be the descendant of David according to the prophets, for many of the Gentiles were acquainted with the Old Testament. This woman's daughter was possessed with a devil which is explained at chapter 8: 28.

Verse 23. Jesus had his own way of trying out the faith of those who sought favors of him, and he used it here by appearing to ignore the woman. But she was not to be discouraged by this seeming indifference, for she continued crying after him until the disciples became impatient and asked Jesus to send her away.

Verse 24. Instead of directly doing as the disciples requested, Jesus merely gave the woman to understand that she was not in the class to which he was sent. See the comments at chapter 10: 6 for the meaning of *lost sheep*.

Verse 25. This did not entirely discourage the woman for she repeated her plea accompanied with an attitude of worship towards Jesus.

Verse 26. Jesus made his answer much more in the nature of an argument in figurative form. *Dog* is from KUNARION which Thayer defines, "a little dog." No special disrespect was intended to her personally by this term, for it was commonly known that the Jews were regarded as God's children, and the Gentiles would logically be in a lower class. Besides, Jesus knew the heart of the woman whose faith he was drawing out, and purposely furnished her the illustration by which she could make one of the most touching appeals I have ever known. With all this in view, he compared the Jews to God's children, the favors he was bestowing on them to the bread provided by the Father, and the Gentiles to the little dogs that might be playing at the feet of their master.

Verse 27. The woman was not discouraged nor even hurt at the Lord's comparison. Instead, she accepted the classification as a good basis for her persistence. After the children have been abundantly fed, the scraps are generally gathered up and given to the dogs. She would be satisfied with a temporal favor from Jesus in the healing of her daughter, even though it would be like the crumbs compared with the loaves of spiritual blessings that he was daily bestowing on his disciples.

Verse 28. *Great is thy faith.* This was indicated by her patience or endurance. She had full confidence at the start in the ability of Jesus to perform her request, but her persistence showed her faith in his willingness to do so if she did not give up too soon. In this she has set an example for those of us who profess to believe in the goodness and power of God. We are often too apt to "lose heart" and cease looking to the Lord for his grace. This is the subject of one of the parables of Jesus recorded in Luke 18: 1-8. The faith of the Canaanite woman was rewarded with the immediate recovery of her daughter.

Verse 29. The region of Tyre and Sidon where Jesus was teaching and working bordered on the Sea of Galilee but was an area a mile wide and several miles long. He now came nearer to the sea and went up into a mountain where he received the multitudes.

Verse 30. As usual Jesus had a great following because his fame had gone all over the country. Afflicted people who were unable to travel alone were brought to Jesus and cast down at his feet. This word might give us an unfavorable impression as it seems to indicate an act of impatience if not indifference. It is from the Greek word *καθίστημι* and Thayer's definition at this place is the simple phrase, "to set down." He then explains his definition to mean, "(with the suggestion of haste and want of care), of those who laid their sick at the feet of Jesus, leaving them at his disposal without a doubt that he could heal them." They were not disappointed for the text says *and he healed them.*

Verse 31. Again Jesus proved his ability to work all kinds of miracles and did not have to select his cases as do the pretenders of miracle-working today. A remarkable thing about the event is that *they glorified the God of Israel.* Everyone knew that an ordinary man could not accomplish such wonderful works, hence they attributed it to the *God of Israel* (not any of the gods of the Gentiles). That was the main purpose Jesus had in performing his great deeds according to John 20: 30, 31.

Verse 32. Once more the compassion of Jesus asserted itself in behalf of the multitude whose interest had kept them in his presence for three days. Of course there would be no oppor-

nity for procuring food out there in that mountainous area. *Fasting* is from *νηστεύω* and Thayer's definition is, "fasting, not having eaten." The mere fact of being without food during the time necessary to reach a market would not cause them to *faint in the way*, but they would already be weak, having not eaten for three days.

Verse 33. It is strange the disciples seem to have forgotten the event of chapter 14: 15-21; probably they had not forgotten it but took that way of asking Jesus to take care of the case in hand as he did the other time.

Verse 34. The supply of food in the possession of the disciples was nothing compared with the needs of the multitude, but Jesus was still inclined to require his disciples to have a part in the good work.

Verse 35. For the sake of orderliness the multitudes were told to sit down.

Verse 36. In this case Jesus *gave thanks*, in the instance of chapter 14: 19 he "blessed" which was virtually the same meaning as was explained at that place.

Verse 37. *And were filled.* See the comments on this phrase at chapter 14: 20, also John 6: 12 as to why the scraps were taken up.

Verse 38. No disrespect was intended by the writer in giving the number of men and only an indefinite reference to the women and children. In old times it was the custom to list families and other groups of human beings according to the men only.

Verse 39. The multitudes were given sufficient nourishment to overcome the effects of their three-day fast and were dismissed. Magdala was a city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and it is sometimes mentioned by other names.

MATTHEW 16

Verse 1. A full description of these two sects will be given at verse 12. They were opposed to each other in various respects, but often forgot their differences and united in opposing Christ or his apostles. Their motive in coming to Jesus here was to tempt or test him. Had they been honestly seeking for evidence of the might and wisdom of the Lord he would have granted the request, but he never performed a miracle to gratify mere curiosity or to meet a challenge.

Verse 2. Jesus referred them to

their own study of the heaven in which they professed to know how to figure out the future by the present indications.

Verse 3. *The signs of the times* were as clearly portrayed in the Scriptures as were the weather signs, yet they pretended there was nothing on record to indicate the work and purpose of Jesus. Since this was only a pretended necessity for additional evidence Jesus called them hypocrites.

Verse 4. This subject of the sign of Jonas is explained at chapter 12: 40.

Verse 5. The preceding verse says that Jesus departed from the multitude. He and his disciples had been in the vicinity of Magdala which is on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. They then crossed over the sea, and verses later in the chapter show that they were to spend some time in an uninhabited territory where there would be no opportunity to purchase provisions. Jesus knew the disciples had forgotten to attend to that matter (Mark 8: 14 says they had one loaf), and decided to use the fact as a basis for a test of their faith in him as one who could and would care for them.

Verse 6. Without mentioning bread directly, Jesus warned them against the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees whom they knew to be two evil groups of Jews.

Verse 7. There is no logical connection between literal leaven and these sects as far as the disciples were considering it. But a guilty conscience sometimes interprets an unrelated statement as a rebuke and that is what they did about Christ's remark.

Verse 8. Jesus accused his disciples of small faith because they were disturbed over as trivial a matter as a shortage of bread. Had there been no visible prospects for food at all for the present, their general knowledge of past experiences should have given them confidence that nothing serious would be allowed to happen to them.

Verses 9, 10. It seems that man needs to have his faith renewed from time to time on account of his unreliable memory. Moses had seen all the mighty works of God in Egypt and the Red Sea, yet when he was told that nation was to be given an abundance of flesh to eat he wondered where the Lord would get it. (See Numbers 11: 18-23.)

Verse 11. Jesus needed only to state

that he was not considering bread when he used the term *leaven*, for the disciples then concluded rightly that he had used it figuratively.

Verse 12. The disciples made the correct interpretation of the comparison and applied it to the *doctrine* or teaching of those two sects. I shall give the description of these prominent groups of the Jews as may be learned from reliable works of reference. "What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers which are not written in the law of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory [binding] which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers." Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 13, Chapter 10, Section 6.

"In addition to the books of the Old Testament, the Pharisees recognized in oral traditions a standard of belief and life. They sought for distinction and praise by the observance of external rites and by the outward forms of piety, such as ablutions, fastings, prayers, and alms-giving; and, comparatively negligent of genuine piety, they prided themselves on their fancied good works. . . . A Sadducee, a member of the party of the Sadducees, who, distinguished for birth, wealth, and official position, and not averse to the favor of the Herod family and of the Romans, hated the common people, were the opponents of the Pharisees, and rejecting tradition acknowledged the authority of the Old Testament alone in matters pertaining to faith and morals; they denied not only the resurrection of the body, but also the immortality of the soul and future retribution, as well as the existence of angels and spirits." These last two quotations about the Pharisees and Sadducees are the historical remarks of Thayer in his Greek lexicon, the original words being PHARISAIOS and SADDUKAIOS. Having given an extended account of these two sects for the information of the reader, I shall summarize it by saying that the false doctrine of the Pharisees was that the tradition of the fathers was of equal authority with the written Scriptures. That of the Sadducees was that there would be no resurrection of the body and consequently no future life.

Verse 13. Jesus and his disciples having landed on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee they journeyed northward until they came into the *coasts* or vicinity of Caesarea Philippi. This is to be distinguished from the Caesarea that was on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The place got its name by the desire of Herod Philip who wished to honor Caesar and himself both by a twofold name. That was accomplished by the name which we have just read as the double name includes both Caesar and Philip. Jesus concluded it was time to introduce the most serious phase of his own authority and purposes. He opened the subject by inquiring about the current opinions concerning himself; not of his doings but of his identity. He had been out among the people long enough for them to have formed some kind of ideas as to his real standing as a public teacher. He could not have asked this question for information for he already knew what was in man (John 2: 24, 25). Hence it was asked to bring out the contrast that should be existing between the opinions of the common people and that of the men who had been chosen to be the apostles after Jesus was ready to leave this world.

Verse 14. All of the persons named had died, hence the reference to them in connection with Jesus was on the theory of the transmigration of souls. See the explanation of that subject with the comments on chapter 14: 2.

Verse 15. Jesus then came out with the climax of the conversation. The answer to the question he was going to ask would be read by future generations. The apostles had been with him and seen his work and heard his teaching. It remained to be shown by the answer whether that association had made any better impression on them than was expressed by the common people. Jesus asked *them* (all of the apostles) for their estimate of him regarding his identity.

Verse 16. Jesus had addressed his question to all of the apostles, but it would not be expected that all of them would speak at once in answering the question. Peter was generally the spokesman for the others, and if what he said did not agree with them they would have made it known. The reply that Peter gave to the question embraced all that Jesus claimed to be. The word *Christ* means "anointed" and as it applied in this case it meant

that Jesus was *the* one that God would recognize as a ruler in the kingdom. *The Son* is equivalent to the phrase "only begotten Son" in John 3: 16. God has numerous sons from a spiritual standpoint, but Jesus is the only one who is the offspring of the person of God. The *living* God signifies that he is not the offspring of the idol gods for they are lifeless objects.

Verse 17. Bar-jona means son of Jona, and the full name is given to distinguish him from others who were named Simon. *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it.* Peter could not have received this information from any human source, hence it had to come from the Father in the way of divine inspiration.

Verse 18. I do not believe it is necessary to trouble ourselves about a grammatical basis for arguments that are frequently made over the original Greek words for *Peter* and *rock*. It is true that they are different from each other to some extent. But if we should consider them only in their literal meaning they are similar. But we know that Jesus did not mean to tell Peter that he was to be "the rock" on which the church would be built. It is also clear from other passages that Peter is in the foundation of the church but so are all the apostles (Ephesians 2: 20). Then we cannot single out this one apostle and say that he is the foundation rock as the Romanists teach. The rock on which Christ intended to build his church was his own divinity that was embodied in the confession that Peter had just made. Much questioning also is done as to the antecedent of *it*; but that, too, is needless for we know that Jesus meant everything that would be necessary to accomplish his purpose of building his church. *Gate* is from *PULE* and Thayer defines it, "access of entrance into any state." *Hell* is from *HADES* and means the state or place of the soul after death. Jesus knew he must die and that his soul would go through this entrance to Hades, but that those gates would not be able to retain him, for he would come out from within them into life again so that he could perfect his work of setting up his church.

Verse 19. *Keys* is from *KLEIS* which Thayer defines, "a key. Since the keeper of the keys has the power to open and to shut, the word is figuratively used in the New Testament to denote power and authority of various

kinds." There is nothing significant about the plural form of the word, but it is a part of the same figure that Thayer uses in his definition. The man who has charge of a building carries a group of keys, hence the word is used in the plural form; literally there is but one key to the kingdom of heaven and that is obedience to the requirements of the Gospel. Jesus was speaking directly to Peter because he was the spokesman for all the rest. We know it was not meant that Peter alone was to have the keys, for Jesus said virtually the same thing in John 20: 21-23 and he was talking to all of the apostles. *whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, etc.* This is Christ's own comment on the *keys of the kingdom*. He intended to send the Spirit upon the apostles to "guide them into all truth" (John 16: 13), so that they would make no mistake in telling men what they must do to be saved. Being thus inspired, their teaching to men would be according to the will of heaven and hence it would be ratified there. *whatsoever thou shalt loose, etc.,* means the like thought on the negative side of the subject. No one has the right to bind any doctrine on men that was not required by the apostles. While on this verse it should be observed that in this conversation with the apostles, Jesus speaks of the church and the kingdom of heaven in the same sense, showing that no distinction is to be made today, for the kingdom is afterwards spoken of as being in existence (Matthew 26: 29; Romans 14: 17; Colossians 1: 13; 4: 11; 1 Thessalonians 2: 12; Hebrews 12: 28; Revelation 1: 9).

Verse 20. A command similar to this one is in chapter 17: 9, except that a certain time was set before which the disciples were not to make the specific announcement of the divinity of Christ. The crowning fact that was to prove that great claim of Jesus was to be his resurrection after three days. The public ministry for the general teaching about the kingdom that was at hand was drawing nearer to its close, and Jesus did not wish to release this fundamental truth unto the world prematurely.

Verse 21. See the remarks of the preceding paragraph about the progress of the ministry of Jesus. Since it was in that stage, it was time to begin preparing the minds of the apostles for the tragic events not far

ahead, including the death and resurrection of their Lord with whom they had been so closely associated in the work.

Verse 22. The idea that Peter had in this impulsive speech was that something certainly would be done to prevent the thing Jesus had predicted. His own action recorded in John 18: 10 indicated that he was willing to help prevent the tragedy.

Verse 23. The primary meaning of Satan is "adversary," and when Peter intimated that he would try to prevent the thing that Jesus declared would be done he became an adversary to him. *Savourest* means to be thinking about some subject of personal interest, and in this case it was the idea of an earthly kingdom that occupied the mind of Peter. He wanted such a kingdom to be set up because of what it would mean to him, and certainly such an event would require the living presence of the king. A part of Thayer's definition of the original for *offence* is, "an impediment placed in the way." Were Peter to have his wishes carried out in this matter it would have been an impediment to the great plan that Jesus had in view.

Verse 24. *After* is from *opiso* and Thayer explains the word at this place to mean, "to follow any one as a guide, to be his disciple or follower." *Deny* is from *aparneomai* which Thayer defines, "to deny," and explains the definition to mean in this passage, "to forget one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests." Figures of speech are based upon some literal fact. *Take up his cross* is a reference to the rule of compelling a condemned man to carry his own cross to the place of execution. If the victim became unable to bear it alone, someone would be made to take up the rear part and help carry it, walking after the other to the place of execution. (See Luke 23: 26.) The present verse means that a professed follower of Jesus must be willing to help bear the trials and self-denials that were practiced by him.

Verse 25. This verse is explained at chapter 10: 39.

Verse 26. *World* and *soul* are used in the same sense as the two kinds of life in the preceding verse. The thought is that the things of this world are altogether not as valuable as the soul of man, and that if one were to exchange his soul to gain this world it would be a transaction without profit.

Verse 27. It has been nineteen centuries since Jesus uttered the words of this verse, but he wished his disciples to have something to look for as a reward for their sacrificing everything necessary to save their soul and gain that which is worth more than all this world. They were expected to rely on the promise of Christ because of their faith in him, because the reward would not come in their lifetime.

Verse 28. The preceding verse gives the promise of reward for faithful work at the second coming of Christ. As a guarantee of the surety of that promise, Jesus told them that some of them in his presence would live to see the great event that was to prepare men for that last day of accounts. They were promised the honor of seeing the Son of man in another manner; he was to be seen spiritually in his kingdom. We incidentally may obtain an important truth by this statement. The kingdom was set up in the time of those apostles, and that disproves the heresy taught by some today that the kingdom is still in the future.

MATTHEW 17

Verse 1. *After six days* means after the last conversation Jesus had with his disciples. There seems to have been a peculiar nearness between Jesus and these three apostles, for they are mentioned as a sort of trio a number of times (Mark 5: 37; 14: 33). Jesus selected them to be witnesses of the unusual scene that he knew was coming, and took them with him into a high mountain.

Verse 2. *Transfigured* is from *METAMORPHOO* which Thayer defines, "To change into another form, to transfigure, transform," and he comments on the word as follows: "To be resplendent with divine brightness; used of the change of moral character for the better." It is the word for "transformed" in Romans 12: 2, and for "changed" in 2 Corinthians 3: 18. It is the source of our English word "metamorphosis" which Webster defines, "2. A striking alteration in appearance, character, or circumstances." With all this authoritative information before us, we understand the meaning of our verse is that Jesus underwent a change in his appearance so that his face shone, and even his raiment was glistening white. However, his body was not replaced literally, and the change in his appearance did not

prevent the apostles from recognizing him.

Verse 3. We have a very interesting assemblage here. The apostles had not died and hence represented the fleshly state. Elias (Elijah) had been transferred to heaven without death and represented the eternal state. Moses had died and represented the intermediate state. There were good men from each of the three states of intelligent creatures, thus representing the whole universe of beings responsible to God for their past or present conduct. A person in the flesh cannot see spiritual beings ordinarily, but God can adapt all circumstances to whatever purpose the case demands. He wished the apostles to see these men from the intermediate and eternal states and performed such miraculous changes as were necessary. That was done either upon the eyes of the apostles or the form of the other men.

Verse 4. In Mark's account of this event he states that Peter "wist not [knew not] what to say." He was overcome by the scene, yet had a feeling of reverence towards the three great persons in the group; Jesus, Moses and Elias, and proposed providing a suitable housing place that they might be retained longer.

Verse 5. This announcement was like the one that God made at the baptism of Jesus with the additional word *hear ye him*. (See chapter 3: 17.) At the time of his baptism Jesus had not performed any of his great works nor done any of his teaching. He now was nearing the close of his earthly work and the apostles were supposed to be ready for an authoritative declaration concerning the rank and position of him with whom they had been so closely associated. The setting of the conversation was significant due to the importance of the main characters in the scene. Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament system and Elias (Elijah) was one of the great prophets who lived under that system. Those men were not to be regarded as the authorities under whom the apostles will be expected to work, but instead they were to take their instructions from the Son in whom the Father was well pleased; they were to *hear him*.

Verse 6. *Afraid* is from *PHOBEO* and Thayer says the word in this place means, "to be startled by strange sights or occurrences." The appearance of the two men from the other states did

not overcome them, but this mighty voice and its announcement struck them with a feeling of awe so that they prostrated themselves on the ground.

Verse 7. Jesus assured his apostles that nothing would harm them.

Verse 8. The purpose of the great scene was accomplished and Moses and Elias returned to their proper places. *They saw no man.* The last two words are from *ouden* which Strong defines, "Not even one, i. e., none, nobody, nothing." This indefinite form of speech was appropriate in view of the unusual manner in which Moses and Elias had appeared, for they were evidently not just like other men except to such a degree that they could be recognized by the apostles.

Verse 9. For the explanation of this verse see the comments at chapter 16: 20.

Verse 10. The disciples mistook the Elias spoken of by the scribes to be that prophet literally, who was to announce the mission and divinity of Jesus. Now they were forbidden to make a like statement until after that divinity has been proved by the resurrection. If they were not allowed to make statements on that subject, why should Elias be permitted to do so.

Verse 11. *Shall come* is future tense in form but Jesus was only quoting the prophecy of Malachi. To *restore* means to bring about a reformation in the lives of the people of Israel (Malachi 4: 6; Luke 1: 16, 17).

Verse 12. Jesus then explained that it was not in person that Elias was to come. In other words, by describing the treatment that "Elias" received from the people who did not recognize his place in God's plan, the disciples perceived the point of the Lord.

Verse 13. The disciples did the proper kind of reasoning and it gave them the correct conclusion, and was a demonstration of the thoughts offered at chapter 13: 16, 17.

Verse 14. The act of the man kneeling down to Jesus was one form of worship. The reader should see the various meanings of the word in the comments at chapter 2: 2.

Verse 15. Being possessed with a devil did not affect all people alike. That could be caused by either of two things; the peculiar condition of the victim at the time or the kind of devil that had entered into him. In

the present case it caused the son to become a *lunatick* according to the Authorized Version. This word is from *SELENIAZOMAI* which Thayer defines, "To be moon-struck; to be epileptic," and in commenting on the word he says, "epilepsy being supposed to return and increase with the increase of the moon." Of course the people named the condition according to their theories as to the causes of disease, not knowing that it was the presence of the devil.

Verse 16. *Could not cure him* denotes the belief that the son had some serious disease as was explained in the preceding verse. It is true that the being possessed with a devil would sometimes result in a disease, in which case the casting out of the devil would be equivalent to performing a cure.

Verse 17. This criticism concerning the lack of faith was meant for the disciples as we shall see at verse 20. *How long*, etc., was an expression of displeasure at the amount of long-suffering he was called upon to show towards them. Then addressing the father of the child he told him to bring the afflicted one to him.

Verse 18. When anyone is being dealt with because of some condition brought on by his own sin, he is the person who is rebuked. Being possessed with a devil was not a sin but an affliction, hence the Lord rebuked the devil. The child was cured *from that very hour* which was unlike the performances of professed miracle workers today who insist on having "plenty of time."

Verse 19. When Jesus chose his twelve apostles and sent them out to preach, he told them also to perform certain miracles. Among them was that of casting out devils (chapter 10: 8), hence it was natural for them to be concerned about their failure.

Verse 20. The charge of their *unbelief* means their faith did not go far enough; it did not grow as it should. Jesus then used the mustard grain for an illustration of that subject. It will help us to grasp the meaning of the comparison if we consider the same event as recorded in Luke 17: 6. The apostles asked the Lord to "increase" their faith, and in answer to the request he made the comparison to the grain of mustard seed. We also should remember the comparison between this grain and the kingdom of heaven in Matthew 13: 31, 32. It is clear, there-

fore, that the reference to the mustard seed was on the principle of growth. Their faith should have grown instead of their expecting Jesus to "increase" it by some special means independent of their own part in the matter. Of course a grain of mustard seed or any other seed could not grow had not the Creator furnished it with the materials necessary for that growth in the earth and air. And likewise, Jesus had given abundance of evidence by his miracles and teaching to have caused them to have increase in their faith to the point where they could not only cast out this devil, but also remove a mountain if such needed to be done.

Verse 21. *Howbeit* is an obsolete word meaning "nevertheless," indicating that some special point is about to be made. *This kind* is from *GENOS* which Thayer defines, "The aggregate of many individuals, of the same nature, sort, species." *Goeth out* is from *ΕΚΠΟΡΕΥΟΜΑΙ* which Thayer defines, "To go forth, go out, depart." He explains the definition to mean, "demons, when expelled, are said to go out (to wit from the human body): Matthew 17: 21." Robinson defines the word, "To go out of, to go or come forth," and he explains it to mean, "Spoken of demons, absolutely Matthew 17: 21." We do not know why this class of devils required the special performance of prayer and fasting before yielding and coming out of human beings. We are certain, however, that at some time Jesus had given his apostles the instructions that should have induced them to show the faith necessary to be patient and use the weapons of prayer and fasting against the devil. Their faith had not led them that far and hence they failed to overcome the devil.

Verse 22. Before leaving Galilee Jesus predicted his betrayal.

Verse 23. Not only was Jesus to be turned over to wicked men of the world, but he was to be killed and raised the third day. The apostles were *exceeding sorry* because of the prediction of his death, and that sorrow seemed to blind their minds to the other prediction of his resurrection. When the sad affair had taken place the disciples showed such forgetfulness as we may learn in Luke 24: 13-27.

Verse 24. Capernaum was a city of Galilee and the chosen residence of Jesus (chapter 4: 13). When he and

his apostles entered this city Peter was approached by those who collected the tax that was for the upkeep of the temple. Robinson says this was "the yearly tribute to the temple paid by every Jew," hence Peter was asked if his master did not pay that tax.

Verse 25. Peter answered in the affirmative and intended to speak to Jesus about it. But when he came into the house where Jesus was he *prevented him* which means he could read his mind and hence anticipated what he was going to say. But the Lord changed the subject somewhat and the *tribute* he mentioned is from a word that means custom or taxes that should be levied upon foreigners.

Verse 26. Jesus and his apostles were citizens of that nation and would not rightly be under obligation to pay such a tax.

Verse 27. While not strictly bound to pay this tax, Jesus decided to pay it rather than offend the collectors, and enabled Peter to get the money by a miracle.

MATTHEW 18

Verse 1. The apostles believed that the kingdom of heaven that Jesus had been announcing was to be a restoration of the old Jewish government with perhaps some additional features suited to the times. They maintained this idea even after the resurrection (Acts 1: 6). With such a system in mind it was natural for them to ask the question of this verse, for in earthly governments there are men of superiority in rank.

Verse 2. *Little child* is from *ΠΑΙΔΙΟΝ* and according to Thayer it means a young child somewhat advanced in age beyond infancy; and old enough to have developed some traits of character. Jesus used this child for an illustration of the kind of temperament that would be of the greatest esteem in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 3. *Be converted* has reference to the general rule that was to apply after the kingdom of heaven was set up, and not especially to these apostles. They had been baptized by John upon repentance and had been converted from their past course of life. But even they were in need of a change of mind on the subject of true greatness, otherwise they would not be fit to become members of the kingdom when the time came. But the verses on this matter state the subject

as it was to apply to all people in their attitude towards Jesus and his followers. *Become as little children* refers to the humility that must accompany any professed belief in Christ and desire for his kingdom.

Verse 4. The comparison is made directly in this verse. Literal children were not to become members of the kingdom, for they do not need it, but men and women must become *as* these children on the matter of humbleness.

Verse 5. *Such little child* means the same as the *little children* of verse 3. To *receive* such a person means to be friendly with him or show hospitality because of his humble character. This is to be done in the name of Christ or because he is a humble disciple of his and is trying to mold his life after his teaching.

Verse 6. To *offend* means to cause to stumble or go wrong, which indicates it has reference to those old enough to be responsible for their conduct and also liable to temptation. Such a person is called a *little one* figuratively because he has complied with verse 3. Physical death by drowning would be a mild fate in comparison with that awaiting one who has caused a humble disciple of Christ to stumble and fall.

Verse 7. *Offences* means causes of stumbling or occasions in which a person meets with temptation. *Needs be* is from ANAGKE and the simple definition of Thayer is, "necessity," and he explains his definition to mean, "imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty, regard to one's advantage, custom, argument." In a world as large as this with its multiplied hundreds of activities and other circumstances, it would be unreasonable to expect it ever to be free from these temptations. However, that does not justify any man who is responsible for some specific case of offence.

Verses 8, 9. Since each man is responsible for his own conduct, he should overcome the cause of stumbling whatever it may be in his particular case. The lesson taught by the discarding of the hand and eye is explained at chapter 5: 29, 30. *Everlasting* is from AIONIOS which Thayer defines, "without end, never to cease, everlasting." *Hell* is from GEHENNA and is explained at chapter 5: 30.

Verse 10. To *despise* means to belittle or treat with disrespect, espe-

cially to do so because of the humble position in life that the person has. *These little ones* are the same as are described in verse 3. *Their angels* means the guardian angels that God employs in His care for his children. In Acts 12: 15 mention is made of "his angel" when the disciples at a prayer meeting were told that Peter was at the gate. Thayer defines the original word, "angel, messenger of God," and he comments on the word as follows: "Guardian angels of individuals are mentioned in Matthew 18: 10; Acts 12: 15." We have other evidence that God uses his angels in the care and watchfulness necessary for the welfare of righteous people (Psalms 91: 11; Hebrews 1: 13; Acts 27: 23). We do not know how or when these angels work, for that is entirely in God's part of the divine providence. It is enough for us to have the assurance that such holy creatures are serving God in our behalf.

Verse 11. The American Standard Version and some other translations omit this verse on the ground that it is not in the early Greek manuscripts. But the same thought is contained in chapter 9: 13, so we lose nothing either way we consider the passage.

Verse 12. I believe this verse indicates the preceding one is genuine, for it is directly in the same line of thought. If Jesus came to save that which is lost it would be like a shepherd who would leave the sheep that were safely in the fold and go in search of the one that had gone astray.

Verse 13. We should observe that it is *rejoicing* and not merely love that the shepherd manifests over the sheep when it is found. He still esteems the 99 as highly as ever, but there is not the occasion for joyous demonstrations over them that there is for the one just recovered.

Verse 14. This verse goes back to all of the others that speak of the *little ones*. We are sure they mean the humble disciples and not literally the small boys and girls for they are not in any danger, not being responsible for their conduct.

Verse 15. When Jesus was on earth he taught many things that could apply only while he lived, and others that were to become a part of the permanent law of his kingdom. The passage starting with this verse is one of the latter, for it includes mention of the church (verse 17) and that would

have to be after he had gone back to his Father. Furthermore, there is nothing in the teaching of the apostles that disagrees with this passage, hence we are bound to conclude it is a law of the Lord today. The first thing a brother should do if another does him wrong, is to tell him to his face in the absence of any other person, and without having said a word to anyone else. It may be that the brother does not realize what he has done and will gladly adjust the difficulty. In such an event the trouble will be settled and it should never be made known to another one.

Verse 16. If the conversation fails to bring a reconciliation it will be evident that a more public knowledge of the affair will have to come. As a protection against any misunderstanding, the next meeting should have one or two witnesses that all things that are said may be proved in case further dealing becomes necessary.

Verse 17. These witnesses are to be intercessors also, for this verse speaks of the possibility that the offender will not hear them. This denotes that it will be proper for them to have something to say in this second meeting as well as being witnesses in case further controversy is necessary. If this meeting is a failure, the matter will have to become a public affair and the offended party should take his case to the church. The church has the right to hear the complaint and the report of the witnesses, and if it concludes the accused is guilty he should be required to make proper amends. If he refuses to do so he should be excluded which is equivalent to placing him in the same class as the heathen (people of the world) in that he will be put into the realm of Satan (1 Corinthians 5: 5).

Verse 18. This verse is explained at chapter 16: 19.

Verse 19. One important function of the church is shown in verse 17 and that was still in the mind of Jesus when he spoke the words of this verse. The apostles are given special attention because they were in the church first (1 Corinthians 12: 28). But some things can be done without the presence of an apostle; the assurance of this verse comes under that class. We know that an apostle could perform his special function without the presence of another (Acts 19: 6), yet this verse requires at least that two shall

be present, hence this passage applies to disciples generally. The reason that two of the disciples is mentioned is that is the minimum of them that can compose a unit of the church referred to in verse 17. *Agree* is from *ΣΥΜΦΩΝΩ* which Thayer defines, "To be in accord, to harmonize, i. e., to agree together." It should be understood that they must agree in the things that are right, which were to be taught in other portions of the law of Christ. In other words, the Lord wishes his church to be united in its activities and perform as a whole while in the doing of things pertaining to the spiritual welfare of all. (See 1 Corinthians 5: 4 and 2 Corinthians 2: 6.)

Verse 20. *For* is from *ΓΑΡ* which Thayer defines, "Truly therefore, verily as the case stands," which indicates that the conclusion of this verse is based upon the truth stated in the preceding one. *In* is from *ΕΙΣ* and the passage means for them to gather into the name of Christ. But the name of Christ is confined to his church since all authority and glory must be given him through that body (Ephesians 3: 21). Jesus will always be present in spirit when any group of two or more disciples is assembled according to verse 19 and 2 Corinthians 2: 10.

Verse 21. *Seven* is a prime number and in figurative language means completeness. The question of Peter was equivalent to asking if he should go to the limit in forgiving.

Verse 22. If seven means completeness then it would not be possible to go any further in the extension of mercy. We therefore understand the statement of Jesus here to have been spoken figuratively for the sake of emphasis.

Verse 23. See the comments at chapter 13: 3 on the scope and subject matter of the parables. No one of them was intended to cover everything pertaining to the scheme of human redemption. Some of them were suggested by a special circumstance, and then Jesus spoke a parable to compare the incident or conversation that called for it. The subject of selfishness toward those who have done us wrong, while forgetting our own sins, was suggested by the question that Peter asked of Jesus. The sins of one brother against another are illustrated by a commercial relationship, evidently because that would make the point easier to see. Yes, this parable was spoken

to make the subject easier to understand, but Jesus was talking to his disciples and not to the multitude.

Verse 24. With the material subject as an illustration we would realize that ten thousand talents (\$2,000,000) would constitute a great obligation.

Verse 25. According to ancient laws a debtor and his family could be sold into slavery by his creditor to recover the debt; this master threatened to use that law.

Verse 26. The servant *worshiped* his lord by falling down and humbly asking for mercy. See the long note at chapter 2: 2 for the various meanings of that word.

Verse 27. It was compassion and not financial justice that caused this lord to forgive the debt. He did not deny the existence and justice of the debt his servant owed him, but was willing to forget about it because it was so great.

Verse 28. Gratitude should have prompted this man to show kindness to all others with whom he would have any dealings. Instead, he found a man who owed him a hundred pence (\$1,600) and demanded payment, at the same time handling him brutally.

Verse 29. This servant prostrated himself and made the same plea that the creditor had made to his lord, assuring him of making payment as soon as possible.

Verse 30. Another ancient law permitted a debtor to be put into prison if he failed to make payment. While there he would be induced in some way to make arrangements to pay his debt.

Verse 31. The ungrateful servant may have thought he would not be exposed to his kind master, but fellow-servants were aware of his conduct and reported it to him. Likewise man often thinks he can elude the eyes of the Lord but all things are known to Him.

Verse 32. The only reason the lord of this servant forgave his debt was that he *desired* it, not that it was a favor he had earned. In like manner we are taught that our Master is pleased for us to ask Him for the favor we seek (chapter 7: 7-11).

Verse 33. A simple request brought the remission of a vast obligation in favor of this servant. That fact should have induced him to grant this comparatively small favor that was so

earnestly requested by his fellow-servant.

Verse 34. *Tormentors* is from *BASANISTES* and this is the only place where the word is used in the Greek New Testament. Thayer defines it, "One who elicits [obtains] the truth by the use of the rack, an inquisitor, torturer." It is used here to mean an officer who uses strong pressure to force the debtor into the acknowledgment of his debt and to take some action necessary to meet it.

Verse 35. If unworthy man will not forgive his fellow being, he need not expect the Father to forgive him, but instead to deliver him into a place of endless punishment where he will be "tormented" (Matthew 25: 46).

MATTHEW 19

Verse 1. Jesus had been in Galilee for some time and then moved into the region on the east side of Jordan. Just across the river was the territory of Judea which is the meaning of the words *coasts of Judea beyond Jordan*.

Verse 2. As usual, great crowds followed him and he healed them *there*. That was different from the way it is done or professed to be done by the false workers of miracles today, who require that the patient have faith and come back for more help.

Verse 3. Jesus answered all questions that were put to him that were of importance, and that of divorce was certainly in that class. The Pharisees were not sincerely seeking information when they asked this question, for the writer says they asked it *tempting him*. But for the benefit of others who could hear him and for those who would read it in the record, the Lord gave his explanation of the delicate subject.

Verse 4. Jesus went back to the beginning of man, and all discussions of this subject should go there for the proper basis of whatever is said. It should be observed that both words *male* and *female* are singular, showing that the Lord intended that one partner only should be engaged with another in this union.

Verse 5. *For this cause* means because God made one man for one woman to reproduce the race. That being true, they must be free from all other human beings in this relationship. That will make it necessary for the man (he being the aggressor and head in all of the social affairs of life

as is evident all through the Bible) to leave his parental home in order to form a union with a female and thus establish another family. *Leave* is from KATALEIPO which Thayer defines, "To leave behind; to depart from, leave; to forsake, leave to one's self," etc. Certainly it does not mean that he must desert his parents in other respects, but in the matter of forming a union for the perpetuation of the race, a man must act independently with regard to this physical relationship. Most human laws regarding the "age of consent" have ignored this Biblical law of God. When a male is old enough to perform the marriage act he is instructed that he may leave his parents and contract marriage with a female. *Cleave* is from KOLLAO which Thayer defines, "To glue, glue to, glue together, cement, fasten together; join one's self to, cleave to." This "joining" is accomplished by the act that makes them one flesh according to the closing statement that *they twain shall be one flesh*.

Verse 6. *Are no more twain* is a positive proof that the fleshly union that is formed by the first intimate relationship is permanent, and not that the fact of being *one flesh* applies only at the time the act is being performed as some people teach. It is stated that God has joined this man and woman into one flesh, and the only "ceremony" that was used was the fleshly act. Were there no human laws on the subject, the fleshly act would be the only thing that would constitute marriage in heaven's sight. But as man began to multiply on the earth and social conditions became more complex, the need for laws of regulation to keep the relation between the sexes pure was recognized by human leaders and such laws were enacted. The only thing God has to do in such laws is to recognize them and to require His creatures to obey them. *What God joined . . . no man put asunder*. The Lord would not make a ruling against a sin that could not be committed. The fact that He did forbid *man* to sever this union which He alone had formed by the intimate relation proves that such a putting asunder can be committed. The only conclusion that is possible, then, is that the union will be put asunder when either party to it has relation with another; that act will form another union which will sever the preceding one.

Verse 7. It was natural for them to ask this question, for they knew that

the law which Moses gave did not hold strictly to the foregoing requirements.

Verse 8. Jesus did not say that the original law of marriage had been repealed. Neither did he say that Moses ignored it and "permitted" them to divorce their wives as it is so frequently stated. There is a vast difference between permitting a thing and suffering it. The first is equivalent to an endorsement but the second means only to tolerate something under protest. The people had become so hardened in worldliness that the original law was held off for the time being. But that period of indulgence was over when Jesus spoke and man was to be held to the law of marriage as it existed from the beginning and as Jesus stated it in verses 4 and 5.

Verse 9. This verse names the only ground on which a married man or woman may be divorced and remarry lawfully in the sight of God. Fornication forms another fleshly union and automatically breaks the previous one. By that same token the innocent one is free and may remarry without committing adultery. To say that there is no exception to the law of marriage and divorce is to contradict Jesus, for he plainly says that fornication is an exception. Let it be noted that it is the remarriage where no guilt of fornication exists that constitutes the sin of adultery. There are cases where a person may need a divorce other than because of fornication on the part of the companion. In such instances the legal separation may be obtained but the said person would not have the scriptural right to remarry as long as the other one remained clear morally.

Verse 10. The disciples had heard the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees and doubtless were given information that was very new to them. See the comments at verse 3 about answering questions for the benefit of the hearers besides those who asked them. This explanation about the strictness of the marriage relation gave the disciples a feeling of hesitancy about contracting marriage. They expressed that feeling with the saying *it is not good to marry*. They meant that the best thing for a man to do is to abstain from marriage altogether.

Verse 11. That was too strong a saying for more than one reason, and Jesus replied that not all men could

receive or adopt *this saying*, meaning the words in italics in the preceding verse. Jesus meant that it would not be a good thing for men generally to adopt that rule of life, and that only certain men could safely refrain from entering the marriage relation and he proceeded to describe them.

Verse 12. The only means God created for the perpetuation of the human race was the fleshly union of the sexes. As an inducement for man to cooperate with Him in this he established the mutual attraction of the male and female for each other. Like most blessings from God, this one was subject to misuse and unlawful enjoyment. For this reason the institution of family relationship was given so that human beings could have a lawful means of gratification and at the same time accomplish the divine edict to "multiply and replenish the earth." From the foregoing truths we may understand that it is a moral risk for a man to decide against entering marriage, for he will be tempted to yield to his sexual inclinations unlawfully. But a eunuch may safely refrain from it and thus adopt the saying of the disciples "not to marry," because such a person is free from this fleshly tendency.

The Lord then named three classes of these eunuchs. The one is a person who was born without this normal function and hence would not have any inclination toward the opposite sex. Another is a man who has been mutilated by others for whatever reason, and by such action has been robbed of his manly powers. The third one is a man who has been able so to subdue this fleshly tendency that the opposite sex makes no appeal to him. The apostle Paul was one of such characters (1 Corinthians 7: 7). Outside of these three classes of eunuchs the only divine safeguard against unchastity is the institution of marriage, and the proper exercise of the function in that relationship of husband and wife. (See 1 Corinthians 7: 5.)

Verse 13. *Little children* is not figurative but means literally a small child. The parents recognized Jesus as an individual who could bestow a blessing according to his own wisdom on these helpless creatures. The disciples were still somewhat confused as to the nature of the work that Jesus intended to accomplish. With this erroneous view of it, they considered this act on the part of the people as

an interruption and rebuked them in the hearing of Jesus.

Verse 14. The key word in this passage is *such*, and if the disciples had recalled the lessons of chapter 18: 1-5 they would not have uttered their rebuke. Jesus did not say that the kingdom of heaven would contain little children, but it was to have men and women who had become *such* persons by repentance and humility.

Verse 15. The Son of God would not have to make a physical contact with a person in order to bestow a blessing. The act of putting his hands on the little children was a form of caress or endearment.

Verse 16. The man who came to Jesus was evidently a Jew in good standing and understood what the law required of its followers. But he also must have learned something about Jesus and his teaching (*Master* is from a word that also means teacher), and had the idea that something very different would have to be done to obtain what he was offering to the world, hence the question stated in this verse.

Verse 17. *None good but God*. Jesus did not deny being a good person, for in John 10: 11 he even affirmed that he was the good shepherd. Since he was a member of the Godhead, he wished this man to know that in calling him good it was equivalent to calling him God, since all goodness comes from Him. He then gave the young man an answer to his question which was doubtless different from what he expected. When he told him to *keep the commandments* he did not understand to what he could have reference since the regular commandments of the law had already been his rule of life.

Verses 18, 19. He asked Jesus to specify the commands that were meant and he repeated the six of the decalogue that pertained to dealings between man and man.

Verse 20. Jesus did not question the statement of the young man that he had kept all of those laws, hence we may conclude that this claim was true. But Jesus was here to set up another kingdom with other laws, and perhaps something would need to be added to the life of this young man who had lived up to the letter of the law. He doubtless asked confidently *what lack I yet?*

Verse 21. We need not think this man was merely pretending to be in-

terested, for there is nothing in the conversation of Jesus that indicated that he had an unfavorable feeling toward him; instead, as Mark's account gives it (chapter 10: 21) he loved the young man. But he could read the minds of men and he knew this man was a rich Jew and that he was devoted to his wealth. It is not necessarily wrong to be wealthy, but it is so when one is attached to his riches as this man was. That would constitute an "emergency" that required special legislation, hence Jesus told him the thing he lacked was the separation of his wealth from personal use and devotion of it to others.

Verse 22. This shaft "hit its mark" for the young man went away sorrowing because of his great possessions. What he ever did about it we are not told.

Verse 23. *Hardly* is from *DUSKOLOS* which Thayer defines, "with difficulty." The sacrifices that a rich man is called upon to make enter so deeply into his devotion to the business of getting more money, that it is difficult for him to bring about that change in his manner of life.

Verse 24. *Needle* is from *RHAPHIS* which Thayer defines, "a needle," and he shows that the word comes from *RHAPTO* which means, "to sew." Donnegan defines *rhaphis*, "a needle, awl, or other instrument for sewing." The Authorized version renders this verse correctly, for the words are so defined in the lexicon of the Greek language.

Verse 25. The disciples knew that a camel could not naturally go through the eye of a needle, and they took the comparison to mean that few if any persons could be saved.

Verse 26. Jesus supplied the point the disciples overlooked, namely, that a thing impossible with men does not have to be so with God. He could actually take a camel through the eye of a needle, but in doing so there would be some kind of change made in the camel's body that its earthly master could not cause it to make. A rich man can be saved, but it cannot be if he continues in his devotion and trust in his riches.

Verse 27. The apostles then saw the point and understood that the illustration of the camel and needle meant that one must go to the utmost in sacrificing his personal interests in order to secure the favors that the kingdom of heaven offers to the world.

Peter spoke to Jesus on behalf of the other apostles as he was generally the spokesman for them. He stated that they had *forsaken all* to follow Jesus and asked what it would bring to them. We should bear in mind that following Jesus as he meant it was to leave their homes bodily so as to travel over the country *with him*. (See Mark 3: 14 on being "with him.")

Verse 28. *Regeneration* is from *PALIGENESIS* which has a very extensive meaning in Greek literature, but its proper definition is, "new birth, reproduction, renewal, recreation."—Thayer. It occurs only twice in the New Testament and the other place is Titus 3: 5 where it is used in connection with "washing." Hebrews 10: 22 says that it is our bodies that are washed and the connection there also shows that it applies to persons who have been regenerated by obedience to the Gospel. Hence it is clear that Jesus was speaking of the Christian Dispensation, after the kingdom of heaven was set up and he would be its king, sitting in glory at his Father's right hand. But he arranged his rule of government by delegating the writing of the law to his twelve apostles. That law was to be in force unto the end of the world (chapter 28: 20), and in that figurative way they would be occupying the twelve thrones. *Twelve tribes of Israel* is a figure of speech based on the fact that under the Jewish system God's people were grouped into that many tribes. Under the Gospel system there is only one tribe but the law is administered by the twelve apostles, hence Christians are referred to as twelve tribes. (See Acts 26: 7; James 1: 1.)

Verse 29. These apostles had forsaken all of their earthly interests for the time being that they might be with Jesus literally in his journeys among the people. But it was not to be permanent, for, when the personal ministry of Christ was completed, they could resume their former manner of life, at least to some extent. But even that temporary self-denial was to be rewarded with such good things (Mark 10: 30 adds "now in this time"), and after the judgment it was to bring eternal life.

Verse 30. This verse is a statement of general principles. The words *first* and *last* do not always mean chronologically but sometimes are used with reference to importance. If any specific sense is to be attached to them in

any case, the connection will have to be considered in determining the meaning. But the words usually mean that persons who are expected to be foremost in accepting the truth are often the least concerned, and vice versa.

MATTHEW 20

Verse 1. Jesus was still talking to his disciples when he spoke the following parable. It was to illustrate the principle mentioned and commented upon in the last verse of the preceding chapter. The application of the parable will come in verse 16, but the whole story had to be told to bring out the point. A vineyard means usually a place where grapes are grown, but the word could be understood to denote any place where plants are cultivated. *Early in the morning* means the beginning of the day, for the next time he went out it was still only the third hour of the day.

Verse 2. The penny was equivalent to about 17 cents in our money. The value of the wages is not important in the parable as it was spoken for another purpose.

Verse 3. The householder found he needed more workers and went out about the third hour (9 A. M. our time) and found *others* unemployed which indicates he had secured the first laborers in this place. *Marketplace* is from AGORA and it is defined in the lexicon of Thayer as follows: "In the New Testament the forum or public place,—where trials are held, and citizens resort, and commodities are exposed for sale." It is easy to see why a man would go to such a place to hire workmen.

Verse 4. No stipulated amount was stated but the laborers were promised whatever was right. They evidently agreed with the terms for it states *they went their way*.

Verse 5. The householder went back for more men at noon and 3 P. M. and made the same bargain for it says *and did likewise*.

Verse 6. The last time he went was about the *eleventh hour* which would correspond with our 5 P. M., an hour before quitting time at least, depending on what part of the eleventh hour it was when he hired them.

Verse 7. He asked them why they were idle and they said that no man had offered them any work. That being a valid explanation, the house-

holder engaged them to work with the same promise he made the ones hired from the third hour and on through the day. The use that is made of the "eleventh hour" item is entirely off of the purpose of the parable, but because of the widespread idea existing concerning it, I think it will be well to give some notice to it. The error to which I refer is the doctrine that a person professing repentance on his deathbed should be compared to these men in the *eleventh hour*. There is no comparison for these men went to work as soon as they had an opportunity while the deathbed man had been offered work by the Gospel ever since he was of responsible age. Also, these men had whatever was left of the eleventh hour and all of the twelfth to work, while the deathbed man has let the whole day of life go by and he has no opportunity to work at all.

Verse 8. There is no special rule in business that caused the paymaster to begin with the ones hired last. However, by telling the parable in that order Jesus brought out the idea of the lesson which is in verse 16. These men were last as to time and the chronology of events but they were first or foremost in receiving the Lord's estimation.

Verse 9. These "eleventh-hour" men did not know how much they were to receive, only that it was to be "whatever is right." They made no complaint and hence showed a willingness to be fair and agreeable.

Verse 10. *They supposed* expresses the basis on which most of the erroneous doctrines of men are formed. There is no scripture for the theories hence they rely on their own judgment and it is usually along the line of what they were wanting to begin with. These "early" laborers did not complain when the wage rate was stated, and neither was the paymaster cutting it short at the end of the day. But they were measuring themselves by others in the laboring group which is an unwise principle to act upon according to Paul in 2 Corinthians 10: 12.

Verse 11. They complained to the very man who made the bargain with them in the morning and with whom they found no fault when they hired to him.

Verse 12. *Made them equal with us* was a false accusation. The householder was only carrying out his con-

tract as he had done with them. The "eleventh-hour" men had gone to work at the first opportunity and the others had done no better than that. When they accepted the offer of employment they knew they would have to do a full day's work which would extend through the hottest part of the work period.

Verse 13. *I do thee no wrong* was a truthful statement for the householder was living up to his contract made at the time of employment.

Verse 14. *That thine is* denotes that these men wanted more than was coming to them. When the paymaster put the penny into their hands he gave them all that was rightfully theirs. That means that had they obtained more than the penny they would have gone home with property that did not belong to them.

Verse 15. This householder could have given his money to anyone he chose regardless of all others and been within his rights since it was his own. *Eye evil because* means they had an envious eye when they saw the good favor bestowed upon the others.

Verse 16. This verse shows the point intended to be made by the parable. The ones who were first in point of time were the last (or least inclined) in showing an attitude of appreciation towards the householder, and Jesus made that application of the circumstances. While on the subject he added a statement that is not always made when the first clause is used. Many called, few chosen. The governments of the world call many men to appear for possible induction into the armed services, but when they are examined only a few pass the test and are chosen. All men are called by the Gospel and many accept the call. But only a few out of that group will qualify themselves for the final test at the judgment by a righteous life. That is why 2 Peter 1: 10 exhorts Christians to "give diligence to make their calling and election [choosing] sure."

Verse 17. *The twelve disciples* always means the twelve apostles.

Verse 18. This is the second time that Jesus made this sad prediction (chapter 16: 21). No reply was made by the apostles this time, the rebuke from Jesus to Peter on the other occasion evidently not being forgotten.

Verse 19. The Jews could condemn a man to death but they did not have

the authority to execute it (John 18: 31). That is why they had to take their cases to the Roman or secular courts (here called *the Gentiles*) to get such a sentence carried out.

Verse 20. In Mark 10: 35 these brethren are identified simply as the sons of Zebedee as they would also be recognized to be in our verse. The reason for the seemingly unnecessary phrase *mother of Zebedee's children* is that she spoke for her sons, whereas the account in Mark tells us only of their desire. The woman first worshiped Jesus before asking her favor. (See the long definition of "worship" at chapter 2: 2.)

Verse 21. Since Jesus knew what was in man's mind it was not necessary for him to ask this question for information. However, it is the will of the Lord for his creatures to show their confidence in Him by asking, although he knows what they need before they ask (see chapter 6: 8). The woman's request was based on the same erroneous idea of the kingdom of heaven that people generally had while Jesus was on earth. She thought it was to be in the nature of an earthly kingdom, and that the persons who were permitted to occupy seats nearest the king would have some special advantages.

Verse 22. There was more than one reason for saying they did not know what they were asking for, one of them being their ignorance of what was in store for Jesus. But they thought they were prepared in mind to take whatever might come in their association with the king and doubtless they were sincere in their answer. While they had not asked for that experience, Jesus asked them the question and got an affirmative reply.

Verse 23. *The cup and baptism* are used figuratively and refer to the persecutions that were destined to come upon Christ and his followers. They indeed were to have that experience as Jesus informed them. Since Jesus was to be the king it would naturally fall to someone else to do the seating of him on the throne. That is why he said of it that it is *not mine to give*. However, he did say that the Father would give the honor to them for whom it is prepared.

Verse 24. This conversation between Christ and the two brethren was heard by the ten other apostles. We are not told why they were indignant,

but evidently it was because of the ambition of the two in wanting to be seated above the others in places of authority. Jesus had already told them (chapter 19: 28) that all of them would have important positions in the kingdom which should have made them grateful and satisfied.

Verse 25. It was necessary so often for the apostles to be corrected in their erroneous notion of the kingdom of heaven, because they thought of it in the same light as the governments of the world. Jesus reminded them that in such kingdoms a person who is great is the one who has the most authority, and such a man often uses that greatness to impose upon his fellow citizens.

Verse 26. In the kingdom that Christ was going to set up, phases that would involve greatness and popularity were to be opposite those in worldly kingdoms; in the institution of Christ true greatness was to consist in service to others. *Minister* is from *DIAKONOS* and one meaning of the word in the lexicon is "servant."

Verse 27. *Servant* is from a different word than *minister* in the preceding verse. It is a stronger term and is compared to a slave. Such a word was used because the apostles were so much in the dark as to the character of the coming kingdom that it took unusual language to get them to see the point.

Verse 28. As a proof that the kingdom of Heaven was to be different from others, Jesus cited his own example of condescension. Although he was to be its king, he came among men as the greatest of servants, and crowned that service by giving his life.

Verse 29. As a rule there were many people following Jesus as he went from place to place but they were not all going with the same motive. Some were sincerely seeking for more teaching, some were interested in his miraculous cure of their diseases, and others were following with selfish interests in the temporal favors (John 6: 26).

Verse 30. For the significance of *son of David* see comments at chapter 15: 22.

Verse 31. The multitude did not want the journey interrupted. *Because*, etc., expresses the motive of the multitude and not the opinion of the inspired writer. The persistence of the blind men was like that of the

woman of Canaan in chapter 15: 22-28 and it showed their great faith as Jesus said about the woman.

Verse 32. Jesus halted and asked the blind men what they wanted. He did not ask them to come in to him since they were blind and that would have been a hardship on them.

Verse 33. A man's eyesight is one of the most precious faculties he possesses, and it was the one thing that was uppermost in the minds of these unfortunates.

Verse 34. When Jesus so willed it he made bodily contact with persons he wished to favor. These men showed their appreciation by joining the group following Jesus.

MATTHEW 21

Verse 1. Jesus usually traveled on foot, but he was now to make a change in his mode of going and sent two of his disciples to secure the means of doing so.

Verse 2. Jesus knew all things that pertained to his activities and hence could tell the disciples what they would find in the nearby village.

Verse 3. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (1 Corinthians 10: 26), therefore it was right for Jesus to "commandeer" these beasts. It was not an act of taking them just because he had the authority to do so, but it was because they were needed. Take note that he needed *them* and not the mother or colt only.

Verse 4. Matthew explains that what is about to take place had been prophesied in the Old Testament and it is recorded in Zechariah 9: 9.

Verse 5. Any statement of an event may include more than is specifically mentioned but it will never take in less than is named. Verses 3 and 4 clearly stated that the mother and the colt were to be loosed and brought to Jesus. Also in verse 7 both colt and mother were brought and the people put their clothes on *them*. And now our present verse cites a prophecy which definitely predicts that Jesus was to ride on an ass *and* its colt. Most commentators believe that Jesus rode the colt only, and that the mother was taken along because of a humane feeling for the mother and her young offspring. It is true that neither of the other three accounts says a thing about the mother, but that could be accounted for by the fact that the use of an unbroken colt was the unusual

feature of this event and hence it only is given notice by them. If it should be questioned how one man could ride two beasts, the explanation is that he would sit on the back of the mother and place his feet on the colt in the place of stirrups. This would identify the rider as the one foretold by the prophet, while the fact of riding only one would not be so rare as to attract attention. Even the riding of an unbroken colt would not be so unusual because somebody had to ride it for the first time, and besides this, the public crowd would not know it was an unbroken animal since it would be under control of this supernatural rider.

Verses 6, 7. This paragraph merely records the doing of the things commanded.

Verse 8. It was an ancient custom to honor an approaching dignitary by making a carpet of garments and the foliage of trees on which he might proceed. It says a *very great multitude* made this display of honor. It was at the season when the Passover was soon to be observed by the Jews, and great numbers were at Jerusalem from all over the world to attend that feast in obedience to the law of Moses.

Verse 9. *Hosanna* is a Greek word and Robinson defines it, "Save now, succor now, be now propitious." He says further that it is from a Hebrew word that means a joyful acclamation." Thayer's definition agrees with this but is more condensed. The passage means an expression of good will to him who is able to save others because he is a descendant of David. *Blessed is he*, etc., is an acknowledgment that Jesus was coming to their city in the name of the Lord.

Verse 10. The foregoing conversation was taking place as Jesus was entering the city. When he reached the inside the people were *moved*. That word is from *sero* which Thayer defines, "to shake, agitate, cause to tremble; to quake with fear." This means the citizens of the city in general who were not informed upon the state of affairs nor upon the prophecies that were being fulfilled; they were the ones *moved*. In their agitation and fright they asked *who is this?*

Verse 11. *The multitude* means the group that had been witnessing the entrance of Jesus into the city. They were aware of what was going on and what connection it had with the iden-

tity of Jesus, and they gave the information to the citizens.

Verse 12. The reader should see my comments on Deuteronomy 14: 24-26 in Volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. It was right to sell doves and other creatures to be used in the services at the altar, and it was necessary to have an exchange table to trade local money for the foreign, because the money brought in by foreigners was not good in the markets of Judea. But it was wrong to transact that business in the temple because it was intended for the religious services only. They having committed an outrage against the sacred temple, it was proper for Jesus to treat them as outlaws and force them out of the place they were desecrating.

Verse 13. It is *written* is cited from Isaiah 56: 7 where the prophet was writing about the restoration of the Jews after the captivity, but where he also included some words that referred to the age of the church. Jesus called the temple as it was used then a *den of thieves* because they were taking advantage of the situation to charge undue fees for their transactions; they were profiteering.

Verse 14. This work that Jesus did was far different from that of the "thieves." They were in it for unrighteous gain while Jesus was doing good to the unfortunate people by healing their infirmities.

Verse 15. The original word for *crying* is defined in the lexicon, "to speak with a loud voice," and means the children let themselves be heard in shouting their good wishes for Jesus. The chief priests and scribes were *sore displeased* evidently because they were envious of the attention that he was receiving.

Verse 16. These envious men called the attention of Jesus to the cries of the children as if to suggest that he stop the disturbance, but in reality as an expression of their displeasure caused by their envy. The quotation Jesus made is in Psalms 8: 2, and in both places the words *babes* and *sucklings* have about the same meaning. Both mean small children but the first denotes those who are somewhat the older of the two. The simple, childlike trust that a little one shows in the existence and goodness of God is one of the sweetest things that can be seen in this world. Even those still young enough to be feeding at the breast will

manifest characteristics that can be explained only by the fact that they are the handiwork of a gracious Creator.

Verse 17. Bethany was a small village about two miles from Jerusalem. Although it was an unimportant town from the standpoint of size, it was very noted by the things that took place there. It was the home of Lazarus and his two sisters where Jesus was always a welcome guest. On the present occasion we are merely told that Jesus left the presence of this envious crowd and spent a night in the quiet little village.

Verse 18. The body of Jesus was both human and divine and subject to the needs of bodily maintenance the same as other men. At this time he sought to satisfy his hunger by the use of the fig which is indeed a wholesome food.

Verse 19. In the account given at Mark 11: 13 the statement is added: "For the time of figs was not yet." Our verse says that Jesus found only leaves on the tree when he expected to find fruit also. If it was not the time for figs why would Jesus curse the tree for not having the fruit as well as the leaves? This matter is explained by the editor's note on Josephus, Wars, Book 3, Chapter 10, Section 8, as follows: "It may be worth our while to observe here, that near this lake of Gennesareth grapes and figs hang on the trees ten months of the year. We may observe also, that in Cyril of Jerusalem, Cateches, 18, section 3, which was delivered not long before Easter, there were no fresh leaves of fig trees, nor bunches of fresh grapes in Judea, so that when Mark says (11: 13), that our Saviour, soon after the same time of the year, came and 'found leaves' on a fig tree near Jerusalem, but 'no figs,' because the time of 'new figs' ripening 'was not yet,' he says very true; nor were they therefore other than old leaves which our Saviour saw, and old figs which he expected, and which even with us commonly hang on the trees all winter long."

Jesus cursed the fig tree for having leaves but no fruit, since its opportunity for bearing the one was as good as the other, regardless of whether it was the old or new crop that was expected. Many people have moralized on this circumstance and compared the leaves to the empty profession of righteousness that men make and the

absence of fruit to the failure of doing one's duty to the Lord. We may make our own comparison to it for the purpose of an illustration, but nothing in the text indicates that to have been in the mind of Christ. Rather, it was just another opportunity to perform a miracle for the instruction of the disciples, for that was the only subject they discussed about it afterward. *Presently* is from PARACHBEMA which Thayer defines, "Immediately, forthwith, instantly," and Robinson says, "On the spot, forthwith, straightway."

Verse 20. This verse indicates that the disciples made their remark at the time when Jesus pronounced the curse upon the tree, but according to Mark 11: 20, 21 it was the next day. However, our verse does not disagree with that for it only says "when the disciples saw it," meaning the complete withering away of the tree, and that could have been the next day. Hence we should understand the word *presently* in the preceding verse to have been used in a figurative or comparative sense.

Verse 21. For comments on the extent of faith here see chapter 17: 20.

Verse 22. In *prayer, believing* corresponds in thought with chapter 17: 21. In that passage the faith was to be connected with a season of "prayer and fasting." The part that was performed by the disciples in each instance was an evidence of their faith.

Verse 23. *When he was come into the temple* was the day after Jesus had driven the moneychangers out. It was that act the chief priests and elders meant when they called upon him for his authority to perform it.

Verse 24. Jesus never evaded any proper question that was asked of him. However, rather than directly accuse them of insincerity he chose to expose them by a counter inquiry. He promised to answer their question if they would do likewise to his.

Verse 25. The fact of John's baptism was not denied by anyone, the only question being his authority for teaching and practicing it. John either was doing so by the authority of the Lord of heaven or merely as a work of man, and they were asked to say which they thought it was. But the question, although a perfectly fair one, put them in an embarrassing position because of the inconsistency of their general conduct. If they were to admit that John's baptism was from

heaven they could not explain why they did not endorse it.

Verse 26. They were afraid to accuse John of acting on man's authority because of the pressure of public opinion that was favorable to his work. These hypocritical leaders of the Jews did not have much love for the common people, yet they wanted to hold on to their esteem for the sake of popularity.

Verse 27. They refused to answer and falsely stated that they *could not* tell, for they had an abundance of evidence that John was a man of God. Jesus also refused to answer their question but did not misrepresent his position as did the Pharisees; he simply said *neither tell I you*.

Verse 28. This is a parable of two brothers and hence refers to people of the same family group. The contrast, then, is not between Jews and Gentiles as some of the parables apply. The first son was the publicans and harlots of the 31st verse, and the second was the chief priests and elders of verse 23. Both sons were asked to work for their father, likewise all ranks of Jews were invited to accept the work of preparation for the kingdom of heaven soon to be set up.

Verse 29. The publicans and harlots did not actually refuse the favors offered them, but that action of the son was supposed in order to show the better disposition in that they thought better of the offered favors than did the others.

Verse 30. This verse was virtually carried out as stated, for the chief priests and elders made great pretensions of being interested in the work of John and Jesus, but in the final test they refused to work at it.

Verse 31. The kingdom of heaven was not set up in fact in the earth lifetime of John, but his work was that kingdom in preparation, and whatever attitude anyone showed toward his work was counted for or against the kingdom.

Verse 32. *In the way of righteousness* means the way of life that John taught was righteous. But the self-righteous Jews only pretended to accept his teaching and did not actually do so (chapter 3: 7, 8; 21: 25). But the publicans accepted the teaching of John and came to his baptism and so fulfilled the parable.

Verse 33. Unlike the preceding parable, this one has to do with the Jews

and the Gentiles. The Jews were God's exclusive people for 15 centuries but did not appreciate their good fortune and even mistreated the righteous prophets and other teachers who were sent among them. Finally the Gentiles were admitted into the family of God on an equal basis with the Jews. The story of the householder was told in detail to bring out these truths, some of which were still future when Jesus spoke. God was the householder and the services and benefits of the Mosaic system were "hedged" about with the Lord's oversight (Isaiah 5: 1-7).

Verse 34. It takes time to produce fruit, hence the householder did not expect any products until the proper time and then he sent special servants to get them.

Verses 35, 36. This refers to the mistreatment that the Jews showed to the prophets and other righteous teachers who were sent among them by the Lord.

Verse 37. Jesus was a Jew and was sent to that nation as the rightful heir of all that his Father possessed, and he should have been received with great respect.

Verse 38. Being the heir, if he could be removed there would seem to be no one to claim the property, hence the workers planned to make away with him.

Verse 39. The wicked workers carried out their plot and slew the son of the householder. It refers to the treatment that Jesus was soon to receive at the hands of the wicked Jews in thrusting him into the hands of the Gentiles to be killed.

Verses 40, 41. Jesus asked the hearers for their opinion of the case. Still thinking of some literal case of earthly relationship, they answered correctly as to what would happen to such husbandmen.

Verse 42. Jesus began opening their understanding of the parable by referring to a prediction in the Old Testament. They doubtless were aware of this statement and must have begun to see the light that was exposing them.

Verse 43. The Lord made a literal application of the parable to the Jewish nation of which his hearers were members. The nation that was to be given the kingdom was the Gentiles. This does not mean that the Jews would be barred from the kingdom of heaven, but they no longer would be

the sole workers in the Master's vineyard.

Verse 44. *This stone* means Christ who is the stone of verse 42 that had been rejected by the builders, meaning the leaders in the Jewish nation. There are two applications of the illustrations about the *falling* upon the stone and its *falling upon* the victim. It would be bad enough to fall down on a stone for one would be hurt thereby, but it would be far worse for that stone to be elevated and then fall upon that same one. So the Jewish nation had stumbled over this stone and it was complaining about it. The leaders had even tossed it aside as unfit even to be used at all in the building. But it was to be elevated to be the head stone in the building and from that position was to fall (figuratively speaking) upon the nation and demolish it. That event took place in A. D. 70 when the Romans overthrew Jerusalem and disorganized the Jewish commonwealth. The illustration applies also to individuals in general. Those who "stumble at the word" (1 Peter 2: 8) will be offended in this world, and at the judgment they will be crushed by the weight of Christ's authority and sent into eternal ruin in the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels (chapter 25: 46).

Verse 45. The Jewish nation as a whole was to suffer in the fate predicted by the parable, but the *chief priests* and *Pharisees* were especially responsible which truth they realized when they heard the parable.

Verse 46. *Sought to lay hands* means they tried to think of some way they could use to overpower Jesus. *Fear'd the multitude* is to be understood in the same light as was their fear over John the Baptist in the 26th verse.

MATTHEW 22

Verse 1. Mark reports the parable of the wicked husbandmen which we have just studied in the preceding chapter. He also tells us (chapter 12: 12) that after the parable the chief priests and Pharisees left the hearing of Jesus, hence the present parable was spoken to the multitudes in general.

Verses 2, 3. This parable was to show the attitude of the Jews toward the kingdom of heaven as it contrasted with that of the Gentiles. The Lord chose a very familiar subject for the illustration, that of a marriage

and the feast that was given to the guests. *Call them that were bidden.* Invitations were sent out some time before the date of the wedding, and as that time approached the invited guests were notified that the date of the wedding had arrived and for them to be present. The Jews were told in the Old Testament that the kingdom of heaven was going to be set up but no definite date was stated to them. *They would not come.* The Jews were not very responsive to the invitation offered to them to partake of the good things provided by Jesus.

Verse 4. Perhaps the invited guests did not take these servants seriously, or they thought there was no need to hurry as the time was not so near. So the king sent out more servants who told the guests that even the animals intended for the wedding feast were killed and prepared for the occasion and that they should come on. Many of these details have no direct bearing on the application but needed to be told to make the story complete. The point is that the Jews were pleaded with to accept the kingdom of Christ but they did not show the interest they should.

Verse 5. Some were more interested in their worldly possessions than in the things that pertained to their spiritual welfare.

Verse 6. Others were more active in their opposition to the work of the King and persecuted the servants. They went so far as to put to death the most prominent ones which included John the Baptist, the apostles and even the son (Jesus).

Verse 7. This verse was literally fulfilled by the wars between the Jews and the Romans. That conflict ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. I shall quote from Myers Ancient History, page 499, which shows the fulfillment of this prediction: "The accession of Flavius Vespasian marks the beginning of a period, embracing three reigns, known as the Flavian Age (A. D. 69-96). Vespasian's reign was signalized both by important military achievements and by stupendous public works undertaken at Rome. After one of the most harassing sieges recorded in history, Jerusalem was taken by Titus, son of Vespasian. The temple was destroyed, and more than a million Jews that were crowded in the city are believed to have perished. The miserable rem-

nants of the nation were scattered everywhere over the world. Josephus the historian accompanied the conqueror to Rome. In imitation of Nebuchadnezzar, Titus robbed the temple of its sacred utensils and bore them away as trophies. Upon the triumphal arch at Rome that bears his name may be seen at the present day the sculptured representation of the seven-branched golden candlestick, which was one memorial of the war."

Verse 8. *They which were bidden* means the Jews who were first called to the honors of the kingdom of heaven. Were not *worthy* or deserving on account of the way they treated the notice that it was time to come to the wedding feast.

Verse 9. When the Jews had been given the first opportunity of accepting the Gospel and they rejected it, the servants of Christ turned to the Gentiles. This is clearly taught in Acts 3: 26; 13: 46; 28: 27, 28.

Verse 10. *Highways* means the world in general whereas the first invitation was restricted to the Jews. (chapter 10: 5, 6.) *Bad and good*. Even in the world there is a difference between men both socially and morally. But no man is so bad but the Gospel can purify and redeem him, and no one is so good that he does not need its saving qualities in order to be worthy of attending the wedding feast.

Verse 11. The date setting of the parable has been changed and the time is at the end of the world when Jesus will come to claim his bride. (See Revelation 19: 7.) In the Bible an espousal or engagement for marriage is spoken of in the same sense as the actual marriage in many respects (Genesis 19: 14; Matthew 1: 20). The reason is that when two persons have pledged themselves to become husband and wife they are as bound morally as if they had entered into the relationship. In other words, an "engagement ring" would be as much of a bond morally as the "wedding ring," so that if while the first only has been offered and accepted, either party should be intimate or even familiar with a third, it would be considered as an act of unfaithfulness. That is why Paul wrote what he did about the "espousal" of the Corinthians to Christ, in the second epistle, chapter 11: 1, 2. Hence the portions of the parable we have considered thus far pertain to the courtship and engagement only, but

this verse transfers the story to the time of the actual marriage. *Had not on a wedding garment*. For the sake of unity in appearance all the guests were expected to have on a uniform especially appropriate for the occasion.

Verse 12. *And he was speechless*. It was customary for a man arranging a wedding to provide garments for the occasion so that all would be in orderly appearance. It would therefore not be on account of poverty or lack of opportunity to procure the garment that this man was not wearing one, hence he was *speechless* because he had no excuse. The garment to be worn by the guests at the marriage of the Lamb is "the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19: 8). This robe has been provided by the Lord and offered to the espoused bride without money and without price (Isaiah 55: 1; Romans 13: 14), hence there will be no excuse for any professed Christian to appear at the day of judgment not properly adorned.

Verse 13. The figurative or illustrative part of the parable is now dropped and the direct application is made. Those who are found wanting at the day of judgment will be cast into the place of punishment spoken of in chapter 25: 46.

Verse 14. See the comments at chapter 20: 16 for the explanation of this.

Verse 15. *Took counsel* means the Pharisees consulted together to decide upon some plan to *entangle* Jesus in his talk. The word is from ΠΑΡΕΔΕΥΟ which occurs in no other place in the New Testament. Thayer defines it, "to ensnare, entrap," and he explains the definition to mean, "of the attempt to elicit [draw out] from one some remark which can be turned into an accusation against him."

Verse 16. *Herodians* is from the Greek word ΗΕΡΟΔΙΑΝΟΙ. Thayer and Robinson define it the same, but the latter gives more information in his historical comments and I shall quote his definition and the comments as follows: "Herodians, partisans [those who take sides] of Herod Antipas, and therefore supporters of the Roman dominions in Palestine; which the Pharisees were not. It was consequently a political rather than a religious party; though it would seem to have embraced many Sadducees." This information explains why the Pharisees sent the Herodians to Jesus. They had no particular love for those people,

but as they (the Herodians) were in sympathy with the political interests of the Romans of whom Caesar was king, they would try harder to get Jesus to say something that would get him into trouble with the government. They made their approach with a series of compliments that were pure flattery as verse 18 shows.

Verse 17. In their ignorance of the nature of the kingdom of heaven they thought that Jesus would be opposed to all other governments. Were that the case he naturally would oppose giving them financial support. Had he answered them to that effect it would have been ground for accusing him of disloyalty to the "powers that be."

Verse 18. Jesus called these men *hypocrites* because they pretended they wanted information, when they knew that was not the case as verse 15 plainly indicates.

Verse 19. Jesus met the situation in a manner that was doubtless unexpected. Instead of answering their question with a direct yes or no, he asked for a piece of the very kind of money that was being used in paying for the government's finances.

Verse 20. *Image and superscription* means the human likeness on a coin, and the words that are stamped on it in connection with the image. The coins of all nations are made with the likeness either of their rulers or other important persons in the government. The key to the difficulty which confronted these hypocrites is in the words of Christ after they handed him the coin, *whose... is this?*

Verse 21. In their answer they committed themselves beyond recall, for they directly said the whole thing belonged to Caesar, the very article that he was asking people to give to him as tribute. No one would say it is not "lawful" to give to a man what belongs to him. They had said this money belonged to Caesar, hence it would be lawful to give it back to him. And by the same token it would be right to give to God what belongs to him, namely, their religious devotion.

Verse 22. Robinson defines the original for *marveled*, "to wonder, to be astonished, to be amazed." Hence we are not to get the idea these hypocrites had any great respect for Jesus, but they were so defeated in their attempt to entrap him that they were capable only of silent astonishment.

That is why they *left him and went their way* with nothing more to say.

Verse 23. See at chapter 16: 12 for more complete details on the doctrine of the Sadducees. *The same day* was the day the Herodians failed in their attempt to entrap Jesus, and the Sadducees thought they would try it. It is a proper argument to confront a man with an actual inconsistency that comes from his teaching, for whenever a man is inconsistent he is bound to be wrong, but the Sadducees either misunderstood or wilfully misrepresented the Lord's position concerning the resurrection. He did not teach that men would resume their earth life after they came from the grave. Neither did he teach that the resurrected righteous (and they are the only ones being considered here) could engage in such a manner of life even if they desired.

Verse 24. They correctly repeated the law of Moses on this subject which is recorded in Deuteronomy 25: 5, which also was a ruling of Judah in Genesis 38: 8, 9 in the Patriarchal Dispensation.

Verses 25-28. The Sadducees described a case (whether supposed or actual does not matter) in which they thought the position of Jesus would find great difficulty. It is evident that if a woman should meet seven men alive, each of whom had legally been her husband, she would be embarrassed to say the least as also would the men. But their supposed problem was based on the theory that human beings were to recognize each other after the resurrection in the same way they did when they lived on the earth. There are some Sadducees now with reference to this matter of future recognition. Such a theory is fathered by the wish which is based on a fleshly desire, and which has to deny the teaching of 1 Corinthians 15: 42-54; Philippians 3: 21; 1 John 3: 2.

Verse 29. *Err, not knowing the scriptures.* At the time Jesus was speaking the New Testament had not been written, hence he had reference to the Old Testament. That book does not say much about the future state, yet had the Sadducees been as familiar with it as they pretended to be they would have understood that in the next world the marriage relation will not be continued because it will not be needed. The beginning paragraphs of Genesis reveal the command given

to the first man and woman to multiply and replenish the *earth*. After the earth ceases to be there will be no need for the marriage relation. *Nor the power of God*. The Sadducees supposed they could disprove the truth of a resurrection by describing a situation that would make it impossible without causing great domestic trouble. They should have understood that nothing is "too hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18: 14).

Verse 30. Note it does not say the saved of earth will become angels, but they will be *as* angels, and that only as regards the marriage relation for they are without sex. It is true that whenever the Bible makes any reference to the gender of angels it is always the masculine. That is due to a rule of language that when reference is made to intelligent creatures by a pronoun, if the gender is not specifically known the masculine is always used.

Verse 31. Jesus was going to make a reference to the Scriptures (which he said they did not know) to prove that another life is taught in them. The Sadducees professed to believe that writing, so they should be impressed with what will be shown to them.

Verse 32. The passage referred to is in Exodus 3: 6. The argument Jesus made was based on two great truths. God is not the God of the dead as the Sadducees would admit; yet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had been in their graves for centuries. The conclusion is, then, that although the bodies of these patriarchs were dead, something else about their beings was still living. And if their spirits can live outside of their fleshly bodies, there should be no difficulty in believing that they could be reunited with those bodies and thus be resurrected.

Verse 33. No wonder the multitudes were astonished at the doctrine (teaching) of Jesus, for it put the Sadducees to silence.

Verse 34. The Pharisees *were gathered together* for the purpose of consultation as in verse 15. Their object was to plot some way of entrapping Jesus in his talk.

Verse 35. Thayer defines the original for *lawyer* as follows: "One learned in the law, in the New Testament an interpreter and teacher of the Mosaic law." Because of his profession this man could pretend to be interested in

the law, and hence his approach to Jesus would have an outward appearance of being an honest one. However, the inspired writer says his purpose in asking the question was to tempt Jesus.

Verse 36. The question would seem to be prompted by a good motive since it pertained to the law. But it was unfair because the Lord never put any more of His authority behind one commandment than another. (See James 2: 10, 11.) Had Jesus specified one command as being greater than another, the lawyer would have accused him of showing discrimination between things that were equal as to their divine origin.

Verse 37. Jesus stated to him the commandment that requires wholehearted love for God, against which even this lawyer could not have any objection.

Verse 38. The Lord did not say that even this was the greatest, only that it was great. And it was great because it was the *first* one, which was proper since it pertained to God, and everyone would agree that God comes before all other beings.

Verse 39. If the lawyer thought he had caught something by the word *great* on which to make an ado, he was soon deprived of that motive because Jesus said the next one was *like* it. He then stated the commandment to love one's neighbor as one's self.

Verse 40. The first four commandments pertain especially to man's attitude toward God, and the other six have to do with man to man. (See Exodus 20: 1-17.) If a man loves God with all his heart he will observe the four commandments that pertain to Him; and if he loves his neighbor as himself, he will observe all of the six that pertain to that neighbor. That is why Jesus said that the whole law and prophets *hang* on these two. That word is from *KREMANNUO* which Thayer defines, "To be suspended, to hang," and he explains it as follows: "The meaning is, all the law and the Prophets (i. e., the teaching of the Old Testament on morality) is summed up in these two precepts."

Verse 41. The Pharisees had been trying to entrap Jesus with questions they thought could not be truly answered. That is, could not without contradicting something in his teaching, but they failed as we have seen. Now the Lord turned and put a ques-

tion to them that was fair, and yet which would be impossible to explain without exposing some of their opposition to him.

Verse 42. The Pharisees did not profess to dislike Jesus (they dared not because of public opinion, chapter 21: 46), but pretended to regard him only as a good man and not divine. When they answered the question of Jesus by saying he was the son of David they only recognized his blood relation to the great ancestor, not that he was anyone higher than a human being.

Verse 43. If Christ was no more to David than an earthly descendant why did he call him Lord. This question was based on a statement in Psalms 110: 1 which the Pharisees would have to accept unless they denied the Scriptures which they would not do.

Verse 44. The first *Lord* is God and the second is Christ. The pronoun *my* in the first instance refers to David and the second to God. Using names instead of pronouns, the verse means that God invited Christ to sit on His right hand until He had made Christ's enemies his (Christ's) footstool. The point at issue is that in this statement David acknowledged Christ to be his Lord.

Verse 45. The argument of Jesus was, how could David recognize Christ as his Lord if he was only his son as the Pharisees claimed.

Verse 46. The verse says that no man could answer the question. The reason is that they either did not know or were unwilling to acknowledge the divine-human character of Christ's being. This put an end to the tempting questions of the multitude, for they were completely defeated in their hypocritical attacks on the great Teacher.

MATTHEW 23

Verse 1. The audience that heard this remarkable chapter was composed of the *multitude* and the *disciples*. The first 12 verses were addressed to that part of the multitude designated *scribes and Pharisees*, and what should be the attitude of the disciples toward that group.

Verse 2. Moses wrote the law that was to regulate the Jews during that dispensation. After he died it was the duty of others to teach and enforce it upon the nation, and that was a work done by the scribes and Phari-

sees which is the meaning of their *sitting in Moses' seat*.

Verse 3. The scribes and Pharisees had no authority on their own account, but the law which they enforced was just as binding as was the personal teaching of Moses while he was living. The inconsistency of a teacher does not lessen the force of what he teaches if it is according to the law. These scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites and failed to "practice what they preached," yet the disciples were told to obey the law regardless of the unfaithfulness of these teachers; that was because the law of Moses was still in force at the time Jesus was speaking. Note the two words *observe* and *do* that were to be recognized by the disciples. A truth or declaration should be *observed* or respected although it may not contain any direct command for action. But a practical commandment must be not only observed but also must be *done*.

Verse 4. The scribes and Pharisees would apply the duties taught in the law in a severe measure when concerned with others. *With one of their fingers* is a figure of speech, for a burden that could be moved with one finger would not be very heavy. It means they were not willing to exert themselves in the least toward practicing the commandments of the law. One reason they took such an attitude was the fact that they exaggerated the duties actually required by the law in order to oppress the common people.

Verse 5. *Their works* refers to the things these hypocrites did, which were done with a vain motive and that they might be seen of men. "Make broad their phylacteries" may be explained by a quotation from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "Phylacteries were strips of parchment, on which were written four passages of Scripture, Exodus 13: 2-10, 11-17; Deuteronomy 6: 4-9, 13-23, in an ink prepared for the purpose. They were then rolled up in a case of black calfskin, which was attached to a stiffer piece of leather, having a thong one finger broad and one and a half cubits long. They were placed at the bend of the left arm. Those worn on the forehead were written on four strips of parchment, and put into four little cells within a square case on which the letter . . . was written. The square had two thongs, on which Hebrew letters were inscribed. That phylacteries were used as amulets [charms]

is certain and was very natural. The expression 'they make broad their phylacteries,' Matthew 23: 5, refers not so much to the phylactery itself, which seems to have been a prescribed breadth, as to the case in which the parchment was kept, which the Pharisees, among their other pretentious customs, Mark 7: 3, 4; Luke 5: 23, etc., made as conspicuous as they could. It is said that the Pharisees wore them always, whereas the common people only used them at prayers." *Borders* is from KRASPEDON which Thayer defines. "A little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak." He explains his definition, "The Jews had such appendages attached to their mantles to remind them of the law, according to Numbers 15: 37." For more detailed comments on this curious subject, see those at Numbers 15: 37-41 in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. *Rooms* means places at the table while eating, some of them being regarded as more honorable than others. *Chief seats* means the first or front seats in the synagogues that gave the occupants a prominent view of the audience.

Verse 7. *Markets* were places of general interest where men gathered either to buy or to sell their wares, or to converse on various topics. It was usual to see large crowds in such places and they were so public that no one was of any special importance; but these scribes and Pharisees wished to receive special notice by the crowd. The Mosaic system had no officials with the title of *Rabbi*; the term was created by the Jews to mean one of dignity and respect. It carried with it the idea of some great one deserving special attention. Thayer defines the original, "My great one, my honorable sir." The Pharisees wanted it repeated to give it more emphasis.

Verse 8. The titles of distinction could be used with various intent, hence that of *Rabbi* could denote a great leader which was not to be ascribed to private disciples.

Verse 9. By the process of elimination we know this verse does not mean our fleshly father for that is a respect all men are commanded to show. Nor can it mean in the sense of one who leads us to be born into the kingdom, for Paul claimed that relationship to Timothy (1 Timothy 1: 1). The conclusion is clear, then, that this verse

means not to call any man *father* as a religious title or one of authority.

Verse 10. The original for *master* not only means a leader, but also denotes a great and authoritative teacher. Christ is the only one in the kingdom of heaven that is deserving of that distinction (chapter 28: 18).

Verse 11. This is explained in comments on chapter 18: 1-4.

Verse 12. We have learned that true greatness consists of sincere humility and a desire to be of service to others. But if a man strives for worldly greatness he will be brought down by the Lord under a state of enforced humiliation.

Verse 13. Up to now Jesus has been talking to his disciples in this chapter, and a part of that conversation has been about the scribes and Pharisees. From here to the close of the chapter he will be speaking directly to them. A hypocrite is one who pretends to be something he knows he is not. (See at chapter 6: 2.) These Jews knew that their pretensions were false as their evasive conversations showed. *Shut up the kingdom.* They not only refused to receive the teaching of John and Jesus and thus get ready for the kingdom that was at hand, but did all they could to keep others from doing so. Eight times in this chapter Jesus pronounces *woe* upon the scribes and Pharisees. The word is an interjection and means a term of grief or dismay, and when spoken by an inspired man means that great calamity is in store for those referred to.

Verse 14. *Devour* is from KATESTHIO which Thayer defines at this place, "To devour i. e., forcibly appropriate." *Houses* is from OIKIA and the same lexicon defines it in this passage, "Property, wealth, goods." They took advantage of the unfortunate widows who were helpless because of the power of the scribes and Pharisees. After enlarging their own estates at the unjust expense of the widows, they came to the places of devotion and uttered prayers that were unusually long. *Greater damnation.* The Bible speaks of only one Gehenna or lake of fire into which the unsaved will be cast after the judgment, therefore the actual punishment will be the same for all who are put into that place. The second word in italics also means condemnation and applies to the estimate that the Lord will place on the wrong deeds of these men. A judge may sentence two men to prison

for life, yet he may utter a severer condemnation upon one while in his speech of pronouncing sentence than upon the other.

Verse 15. The English word "prose-lyte" means one converted or brought over from one faith to another. The word has virtually the same meaning in the Bible, for the Gentiles were permitted to embrace Judaism, and when they did so they were called proselytes. The Jews recognized a distinction between the extent to which some Gentiles made the change which resulted in such classifications as "prose-lytes of the gate" and "prose-lytes of righteousness." The latter went farther than the former and conformed to all of the requirements of the law of Moses. But this distinction need not concern us as far as the present verse is concerned. The point is that the scribes and Pharisees professed great zeal in making proselytes, but through their deceptive methods of pressing their own traditions upon the converts ahead of the written law, they confused them and made them worse characters than themselves. *Twofold more the child of hell*. This is plainly a figurative statement, for no one can be any more than once a child of another. The word *child* is used in the sense of one who is worthy of or entitled to a thing. This should be understood in the light of comments on "greater damnation" in the preceding verse.

Verse 16. The point in this verse is their inconsistency of making a technical distinction between things where there was no difference in principle. It was a usual practice of these pretenders to make a show of importance by performing oaths, yet they evaded their self-assumed obligation by naming the temple in their oaths and claiming it was not binding. But they insisted that if others made their vows in the name of the gold attached to the temple they would not dare break it since the gold was holy.

Verse 17. Jesus showed their inconsistency in that if the gold was sacred it was the temple that made it so, being attached to and forming a part of the structure.

Verses 18-22. The same argument is made in these verses as that in verse 17. The attachment between the altar and the gift upon it, or between the temple and Him who dwells therein (who is God), or between heaven and the throne therein with its Occupant—that attachment makes the obligation

equal all around. The word *guilty* in verse 18 means the same as *debtor* in the 16th verse; the person is under obligation to perform the oath.

Verse 23. The Jews were required by the law to give a tenth of the products of their land to the Lord's service. The plants named were small ones of the mint family and of small value commercially, yet these Pharisees were very scrupulous to turn over the *tithe* (tenth) as required. At the same time they were so attentive to those comparatively small matters, they were indifferent about such weighty matters as judgment, mercy, and faith. Notice Jesus did not say for them to replace the one by the other, but to observe both the small and great things.

Verse 24. The point in this verse is the same as in the preceding one but expressed with different terms. Both the gnat and camel were among the creatures classed as unclean by the law of Moses. When the Jews made wine they strained it through a fine cloth to get out all the objectionable objects. *Strain at* should be translated *strain out*, and means they were so particular about having the wine pure they would strain out a gnat, but would swallow a camel (figuratively speaking). The meaning is, they would make a big ado about minor matters but overlook the duties of great importance.

Verse 25. This verse is intended to teach the same lesson as the preceding one by using the figure of a cup kept for drinking purposes. The inside is where the material is placed that is to be consumed, not the outside. By cleansing the outside instead of the inner part, they showed that their pretended care in the cleansing performance was for the appearance only.

Verse 26. The activities necessary for cleansing the inside would also affect the outside if the process should be carried out completely and sincerely.

Verses 27, 28. The inconsistency and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees is the principal subject of many of these verses, and Jesus uses various figures and comparisons for his purpose. *Whited sepulchres* is the object used in this paragraph for the comparison, and the occasion of their being whited is explained in Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "A natural cave enlarged and adapted by excavation, or an artificial imitation of one, was the standard type of sepulchre. Sepulchres, when the owner's

means permitted it, were commonly prepared beforehand, and stood often in gardens, by roadsides, or even adjoining houses. Kings and prophets alone were probably buried within towns. 1 Kings 2: 10; 16: 6, 28. Cities soon became populous and demanded cemeteries, Ezekiel 39: 15, which were placed without the walls. Sepulchres were marked sometimes by pillars or by pyramids. Such as were not otherwise noticeable were scrupulously "whited," Matthew 23: 27, once a year, after the rains before the passover, to warn passers-by of defilement.—Article, *burial*. The beautiful appearance of these whitewashed places contrasted with the decayed and unclean bones within, and the fact was used by Jesus to illustrate the outward fair pretensions of the hypocrites that were opposite to the corruptions of their hearts.

Verse 29. The prophets had been dead for centuries and were placed in tombs at the time of their death. The word for *build* is defined at this place by Thayer, "To restore by building, to rebuild, repair." To *garnish* is defined, "To ornament, adorn." There was nothing wrong in the work of these scribes and Pharisees respecting the treatment of the burial places of the prophets.

Verse 30. Neither would there have been anything objectionable about what they said regarding the history connected with those prophets, had the remarks been in harmony with their own conduct in the same matters which were the subject of the history.

Verse 31. The point Jesus made was upon the admission of these pretenders that it was their fathers who had slain the prophets. That fleshly relation would not have placed any blame on them had it not been a prominent practice of them to justify their lives by boasting of their great ancestry.

Verse 32. This verse is partly in a sense of irony. It is as if Jesus had said: "Since you are the fleshly descendants of those murderers, you may be expected to show their traits in their moral and spiritual character. In so doing you will fully measure up to the wickedness of your ancestors."

Verse 33. *Serpents and vipers* are virtually the same creatures as to general classification, being slightly different in variety. The outstanding characteristics of both are deception, poison and filthiness. John the Baptist called those people by the term "vip-

ers" in chapter 3: 7. *How can ye escape, etc.* The fire of *hell* (Gehenna) will have been prepared for the devil and his angels (chapter 25: 41), hence it will logically be the final destiny of the offspring of such wicked characters.

Verse 34. Jesus concluded his direct denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of this speech is made up of predictions against them soon to be fulfilled. He began it by foretelling how they would abuse the righteous men and prophets that would yet be sent to them in that generation.

Verse 35. See the comments on verse 32. By *filling up the measure* of their wicked ancestors, the scribes and Pharisees brought to a climax the long career of murder beginning with the slaying of Abel and including Zacharias in 2 Chronicles 24: 20, 21.

Verse 36. *All these things* means the predictions and charges of the two preceding verses, together with the judgments that were soon to come upon that generation.

Verse 37. The storm that Jesus just predicted was to have its climax upon the capital city of Jerusalem. Seeing that calamity so near, he uttered the lamentable words of this verse. The many attempts to awaken the city to a sense of its evils and the results to follow are compared to the care that a hen manifests in offering her wings for the protection of her brood. And the refusal of the citizens to accept that warning is compared to a flock of chickens that would not come under the wings spread out for them.

Verse 38. *Desolate* is from EREMOS which Thayer defines, "Solitary, lonely, desolate, uninhabited." The word is used figuratively and represents Jerusalem as a house that has resisted all attempts to save it. The city had continued in its attitude of wickedness, unmindful of all the offers of mercy that Jesus extended towards her, and he then sadly left her to her fate that was to come in 70 A. D. by the hand of the Romans.

Verse 39. *Blessed is he that cometh, etc.*, was said before (chapter 21: 9), so that we may think of the present statement as if it said "till ye shall AGAIN say." However, the other time it was said to him in person, while the next time it will be said to him spiritually. And that cannot be when he *cometh in his kingdom* on Pentecost, for it was to be after the "house" was left desolate which did not come till 70 A. D. at the destruction of Jerusa-

lem. Hence all conclusions are eliminated except that it means when the Jews accept Christ (Romans 11: 26; 2 Corinthians 3: 14-16). When that time comes the name Jerusalem will be extended to mean the spiritual starting point of the church and hence its citizens (including the Jews), will recognize Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament and will thus say "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

MATTHEW 24

Verse 1. The speech of Jesus recorded in the preceding chapter took place in the temple that was the pride of the Jews. After going out, the disciples called his attention to the *buildings* (architecture) of the structure, evidently admiring its wonderful appearance which the Jews boasted of requiring "forty and six years" to construct as we may read in John 2: 20.

Verse 2. The remarks of the disciples gave an opportunity that was appropriate for Jesus to make an important prediction. He made the simple statement that not one stone would be left resting upon another. In Luke 19: 43, 44 a more detailed account of the disaster is given, in which it is shown how it was to be accomplished.

Verse 3. The disciples had learned from the teaching of Jesus that the world was someday to come to an end. (See chapter 11: 22, 24; 12: 41, 42; 13: 39.) Because of that teaching they erroneously concluded that the predictions about the destruction of the temple were to be fulfilled at the same time as the end of the world. They also understood that the destruction of the world was to occur when Jesus comes again. With these ideas in mind they asked him to tell them *when shall these things be*. That was the one and only question they intended to ask, and the rest of the verse is only a specification of the things they thought were to happen at the time of the end of the world. However, their intended single question involved two great events, namely, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world which we now know to have been at least nineteen centuries apart.

Because of the radical conditions and various human transactions to occur in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus knew that ambitious men would take advantage of the disturbed state of affairs to make statements about the coming of Christ the second time and thus de-

ceive the people. In order to prepare the disciples against being so deceived, he gave them the teaching that is in this memorable chapter. He gave a description of things to occur at the destruction of Jerusalem, then went ahead to his second coming and depicted some of the things to happen then. He alternated these two subjects throughout the chapter, going back and forth from one to the other in more or less detail, so that his disciples could see the difference between the two events and thus not be deceived. There are a few intervening verses not directly connected with either of the main subjects which will be explained as we come to them. With those exceptions, the chapter should be marked off as follows. Verses 4-26, destruction of Jerusalem; verse 27, 2nd coming of Christ; verse 28, destruction of Jerusalem; verses 30, 31, 2nd coming of Christ; verses 34, 35, destruction of Jerusalem; verses 36-51, 2nd coming of Christ. Trusting the reader will constantly observe which group of verses we are in, I shall now comment upon the verses in their order.

Verse 4. The warning to *take heed* indicates a condition that might be misunderstood or even unnoticed if it were treated with an attitude of indifference. By heeding the signs Jesus gave, the disciples would be able to detect the false prophets.

Verse 5. *Come in my name* means they will take upon themselves the name of Christ as they come among the people. Just because they will be wearing that name they will deceive many who will not look any farther into the subject than the sound of the name.

Verse 6. The destruction of Jerusalem was brought about by the war between the Jews and the Romans. That conflict did not begin in Judea but was going on farther up in Palestine for some time before. The report of the battles in the distance reached the ears of the people in Judea, and that is why Jesus said they would *hear of wars and rumors of wars. Be not troubled . . . end is not yet*. The first rumors of war will not mean that *the end of Jerusalem is right upon them*.

Verse 7. The Roman Empire was composed of many nations, and when the war against the Jews broke out it threw the whole empire into commotions. These various smaller units of governments in the empire were

thrown into confusion and many of them began fighting each other. A state of war often produces shortages in the necessities of life which brings famine and pestilence. A literal earthquake is never caused by warfare, but God has brought them about at numerous times to mark His concern for the conditions. In the present case it was one of the signs the disciples were given by which they could see the approaching storm.

Verse 8. The word *sorrows* is from *odm* which Thayer defines, "the pain of childbirth, travail-pain, birth-pang." The suffering destined to come upon the nation and city of the Jews is compared to the pangs of childbirth. And as the full development of those pains are preceded by brief and comparatively light ones, warning the expectant mother that her time is near, so these rumors of wars reaching the ears of the people of Jerusalem are compared with the preliminary labor pains.

Verse 9. The preceding verse deals with the conditions a short time prior to the actual suffering in Judea, and the present one brings their history down upon the area itself. *Deliver you up* means the persecutions that were to be imposed upon the Jewish citizens by the Romans, especially those who had become Christians.

Verse 10. There will be several references in this chapter to Josephus' history of the wars of the Jews and Romans. That history is divided into books, chapters and paragraphs or sections. For the sake of brevity and also clearness, the reader should understand that the numbers used in the references will mean those three divisions respectively. The confusion caused by the war resulted in much violence even between the Jews. I shall quote from Josephus, 5-6-1. "Now while the factions fought *one against another*, the people were their prey, on both sides, as we have said already; and that part of the people who would not join with them in their wicked practices, were plundered by both factions. . . . And when the parts that were interposed between their possessions were burnt by them, they left a space wherein they might *fight with each other*; for this internal sedition did not cease even when the Romans were encamped near their very walls . . . for they never suffered anything that was worse from the Romans than they *made each other suffer*."

Verse 11. This is the same prediction that is made in verse 5.

Verse 12. Many people are affected by their surroundings whether good or bad. *Iniquity* means a state of lawlessness, and because that condition was coming upon the country a great number of disciples were going to become cold in their love for God.

Verse 13. *Endure unto the end* first means to remain faithful to the Lord until the end of that war. It would also be true of those who might be slain in the general turmoil provided they were faithful till death.

Verse 14. *World* is from a Greek word that Thayer defines, "The inhabited earth." *The end* means the end of Jerusalem as the climax of the war. That event occurred in 70 A. D., and the Gospel was to have been offered to all the nations of the (civilized) world by that time. Hence the great commission of the apostles (chapter 28: 19 and Mark 16: 15) was fulfilled in the first century, which agrees with Romans 10: 18 and Colossians 1: 23. The Lord was not willing for Jerusalem to be destroyed until the Gospel had been offered to the entire extent of human inhabitants on earth, hence He supervised the whole revolution as far as the dates were concerned.

Verse 15. The prediction referred to is in Daniel 9: 27; 11: 31. *Abomination of desolation* means the Roman army and it is so called because its presence and effects will bring a state of desolation to the city of Jerusalem. *Stand in the holy place* is referred to by the words *standing where it ought not* in Mark 13: 14. It is so described because the area around Jerusalem was regarded as holy ground, and the presence of a hostile heathen army was considered as a desecration of the place.

Verse 16. However offensive the presence of a Roman army would seem, the Lord used it as a signal for his disciples to flee for safety while it was possible. In the church history of Eusebius, chapter 5, in a foot note is the following. "But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed [guaranteed as safe] to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella."

Verse 17. Houses had flat roofs and the buildings were joined one against another even unto the end of the street

at the wall. If a man had gone up there for some reason and saw the army of the Romans near he did not need to come down, but could go from one roof to another until he reached the wall.

Verse 18. The man in a field should not regard his personal belongings at home of more importance than his safety, and hence it would be better to flee immediately for safety.

Verse 19. Women in the condition described could not well travel.

Verse 20. Wintry weather would not be convenient time to travel. *Neither on the sabbath day.* The law of Moses has nothing to say about a "Sabbath-Day's Journey," but that was a tradition of the Jews based on a strained interpretation of Exodus 16: 29 and Joshua 3: 4. On that ground the pious Jews in the time of Christ thought it was wrong to travel more than two thousand cubits on the sabbath day. A person attempting to go further on that day would be hindered by these Jews who would seek to punish him for what they thought was a violation of the law. Jesus was not endorsing the tradition, but he knew it would be an obstacle against speedy traveling and hence expressed the prayerful wish on behalf of his disciples.

Verse 21. That the predictions of this verse were fulfilled can be proved by a number of historians. However, I shall quote from Josephus only on this point because he was a Jew and hence had a genuine interest in that nation. Moreover, not being a Christian, his testimony as a historian that so completely verifies the predictions of Jesus will be of special value. I will first quote direct from his own estimate of the sufferings of the Jews in Jerusalem in his preface to the history of the war. "Because it had so come to pass, that our city Jerusalem had arrived at a higher degree of felicity [happiness] than any other city under the Roman government, and yet at last fell into the sorest calamities again. Accordingly it appears to me, that the misfortune of all men, from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were; while the authors of them were not foreigners neither." If Josephus had intended to point out the exact fulfillment of Christ's predictions, he could not have used stronger language. That was not his purpose, for he was

not a disciple of Jesus and hence had no personal interest in him. But he was an able and truthful historian and gave us the facts of history. In giving the readers some details of the sufferings endured by the people in the city I shall not quote verbatim as it would require too much space. Instead, I shall make the statements and give the references to his history of the Jewish war, that the reader may find them and see the full account by consulting the volume, *The Wars of the Jews*.

The troubles of the people of Jerusalem during the war were many and great for they were divided into three seditious factions (5-1-1), provisions were wantonly destroyed (5-1-4), they ate corn unground and uncooked (5-10-2), children would snatch the last morsel from the parent, and the mother from the infant. Children were lifted from the ground by the food they held in their mouths. People were beaten who ate their food before the robbers arrived. Those who were suspected of having hidden some food were tortured by having sharp stakes driven up into their lower bowels (5-10-3), and the famine consumed whole families. Many died as they were burying others. There was no lamentation as the famine confounded all natural passions. A stupefying silence and awe overcame them (5-12-3). Some had swallowed their money, and then had their bodies ripped open by robbers (5-14-4). Some searched the sewers and manure piles for food (5-13-7) and ate hay, old shoes and leather (6-3-3). A mother roasted and ate her son (6-3-4); bloodshed was so great as to quench fire in the houses (6-8-5).

Verse 22. If the conditions in Jerusalem that have been predicted should continue indefinitely, no one would be able to survive the ordeal. *Elect* is from *ERLEKTOS* which Thayer defines in this and many other passages, "1. chosen by God, to obtain salvation through Christ," and other passages teach us that what one gets through Christ is to be accomplished through obedience to his commandments. When the siege and turmoil in Jerusalem came upon the city and surrounding territory, there were many men and women of both Jews and Gentiles who had become Christians and they are the ones meant by *the elect*. For the sake of these persons the Lord decreed to bring the conflict to a close as soon

as the general purpose of it had been accomplished.

Verse 23. *Then* means while these times of tribulation were going on. The false prophets would use the disturbed condition as a pretext for pointing to some outstanding men and calling some one of them by the name of Christ and that the 2nd coming was upon the world. The warning was that such agitators were not to be believed.

Verse 24. These false prophets were to be able to make such an application of the unusual happenings that even the *elect* (the Christians) would almost be misled by it. The faith of these elect of God in the teaching of Christ was so great that it made them easy victims of the shrewd false prophets. *If it were possible* means that the *elect* would really be deceived had not Christ forewarned them.

Verse 25. This short verse is for the purpose of defeating the plots of the false prophets to mislead the elect, by impressing the seriousness of it on them beforehand.

Verse 26. On the basis of the general warning that was given by Christ, the disciples were not to pay any attention to the false prophets. They would think to mislead the multitudes by claiming that Christ had come for a certainty, but that it would be necessary to make a special search for him. They will even announce that Christ is hiding in some secret place or was strolling out in the desert. Jesus warned them not to believe any such statements because that was not to be the manner of his second coming.

Verse 27. Having warned against letting false prophets take advantage of the disturbed conditions at the time of the Jewish wars to announce the second coming, Jesus then goes over to that event to explain how it will be then. That is why this verse was listed in the comments at verse 3 as the "second coming of Christ." The universal and simultaneous appearance of Jesus at his second coming is compared to that of a flash of lightning. It does not appear in spots only and require that one's attention be called to it before it is observed. When Jesus comes he will be seen by all classes at the same time (Revelation 1: 7). There are false prophets in the world today who have been predicting the second coming of Christ, even setting the very date when it was to occur. But the dates all proved to be wrong, so in order to "save face" they

have changed their story and now declare that he did actually come but was seen only by his "witnesses." The prophecy of Jesus and John contradicts the theory and shows that all of these so-called "witnesses" are frauds.

Verse 28. This verse comes back to the destruction of Jerusalem, in which Jesus uses a habit of birds hovering about a dead creature preparatory to devouring it. Were a bird seen flying around over a certain place we would understand that he scented something which he intended soon to attack for food. This very practice of an eagle is referred to in Job 39: 30. The same is used figuratively in the case of our subject, because the eagle was inscribed on the banners of the Roman army. (Josephus, Wars, 3-6-2.) The fact was mentioned as another sign that would indicate the attack of the Romans upon Jerusalem, seeing their ensigns gathering round the city as a flock of eagles would hover over a carcass.

Verse 29. The most of this chapter is in answer to the inquiry of the apostles which pertains to the two great events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ. This verse is not on either of those subjects, but is a prediction of events that would concern the church and the world, beginning *immediately after* the events of the destruction of Jerusalem. Of course it is figurative for the literal sun and other heavenly bodies were not involved in the things predicted. The sun refers to Christ, the moon to the church, and the stars to teachers and other leading men in the church. Soon after the destruction of Jerusalem the influence of evil in the Roman government and the schemes of ambitious men in the kingdom of heaven combined and brought on the period known in religious literature as The Dark Ages, which lasted until the Reformation. During all that time there were faithful disciples in the world, but since the Bible was taken from the common people, it greatly interfered with the light of divine truth that comes from Christ through the church, and taught by faithful men in the church. All this is what is meant by the statements about the sun, moon and stars ceasing to shine. The same thing is meant by the words, *the powers of heaven shall be shaken*, for all of these sources of light were powers that originated in heaven, but they were *shaken* (agi-

tated) by the revolution of the Dark Ages.

Verse 30. *Then* means after the period predicted in the preceding verse. The Dark Ages lasted until the work of Luther and the other Reformers. That was another revolution in the religious and political world that broke up the union of church and state. After that event the Lord took up the second one of the great subjects that he had been describing since the disciples made their inquiry in verse 3. The length of time that was to elapse before the second coming is not important, but what is of much concern is that the second coming of Christ was not to be until after the Dark Ages. But it is also important that it is to be the next major event in the list of those in the present schedule. The mourning of humanity at that time is the same as John predicted in Revelation 1: 7, and the coming in the clouds is the same as was predicted in Acts 1: 11 and Jude 14.

Verse 31. The prediction that a trumpet will be heard when Jesus comes again is also made in 1 Corinthians 15: 52 and 1 Thessalonians 4: 16. We observe also that the second coming of Christ will occur at the same time the world is to come to an end. In this verse the coming of Christ is accompanied with the work of the angels in gathering the *elect* (saved ones) of Christ, and in Matthew 13: 39 we are told that the angels will do this at the end of the world.

Verse 32. This and the following verse are some of the "exceptions" mentioned at verse 3. They are thrown in to suggest to the disciples the use that should be made of the "signs of the times." He referred to the common fig tree that was so prevalent in Palestine. The preliminary appearance of leaves was observed and from the fact a conclusion was formed that a change of seasons was near.

Verse 33. By using the same kind of logic with the signs that Jesus had predicted, the disciples could know when the first of the two great events was about due. We know this verse has the application to that event, for the disciples were to be living so that they could *see all these things*, and of course we are sure that they were not to live to see, bodily, the signs of the near approach of the second coming of Christ.

Verse 34. In keeping with the preceding verse we may conclude that the

present one is in the bracket of the destruction of Jerusalem. *Generation* is from *GENEA*, which Thayer defines at this place, "The whole multitude of men living at the same time." Jesus spoke these words in about 30 A. D., and the destruction of Jerusalem was in 70 A. D. We know that the entire population would not have died in 40 years, so the prediction was fulfilled according to the words of our Lord.

Verse 35. *Heaven and earth* means the objects composing the material universe such as the earth, sun, moon and stars. They are destined to pass away at the day of judgment, but the truths spoken by Jesus will not fail; they will always be the truth.

Verse 36. From this verse through the end of the chapter the subject is the second coming of Christ and things that will take place in connection with it. At the time Jesus spoke these words no angel even, much less any man, knew when the end of the world was to come. *My Father only* might mean that not even Christ knew it, but I would not be too positive about that. The intimacy between the everlasting Father and Son would suggest the possibility of their having this knowledge in common. However, we are sure that no man knows of it, so that men who presume to predict the date must be regarded as false prophets of whom Jesus warned the disciples to beware.

Verse 37. The comparison intimated is shown in the next verse.

Verse 38. None of the things mentioned in this verse were wrong. The great mistake was in being wholly absorbed in their temporal interests and not paying any attention to the admonitions of Noah "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2: 5).

Verse 39. *Knew not* means they were so concerned with the affairs of this life they did not realize their danger until the flood was upon them, and then it was too late to avoid the disaster. So the coming of Christ will be upon the world in a surprise event even as the flood was in the days of Noah. He and his family were not overtaken by the flood because that patriarch believed the warning of the Lord. Likewise when Jesus comes again there will be some righteous people looking for him and will not be overtaken and found unprepared (1 Thessalonians 5: 4).

Verse 40. *Taken* is from *PABALAM-BANO* which Thayer defines at this and several other places. "To take to, to

take with one's self, to join to one's self." So it does not mean that one man will be taken out of the field and the other left there. That will be impossible since the field will be destroyed with the earth. It means one of the men will be taken to Christ as part of the good harvest, while the other will be rejected and gathered with the tares to be burned.

Verse 41. Grain was ground by rolling one millstone round over another by means of a lever fastened to the stone. The separation of these women will be done on the same basis as that of the two men in the preceding verse. Both cases show that the Lord's people and those of the world may engage together in any honorable occupation while performing work necessary to a livelihood. That is why Jesus said "Let both grow together until the harvest" [end of the world] (chapter 13: 30).

Verse 42. To *watch* means to be alert and thoughtful concerning one's duty to the Lord, and then regardless of when he comes the servant will be ready.

Verse 43. *Broken up* is from DIORUSSO and the definition in Thayer's lexicon, is, "To dig through," referring to the attempt to force an entrance into a house. One difference between the coming of a thief and that of the Lord is that the householder did not have any warning that any such attempt would be made upon his house. But we do have warning that Christ is coming again to judge the world and we are not told when, hence the necessity of being always awake and watching. An incidental bit of information may be obtained from this illustration of Jesus. The householder would have been compelled to use force in protecting his home, and the Lord made a reference to the subject in an approving attitude. That shows that it is right for one to protect his home and family, even though he has to use force against force.

Verse 44. *In such an hour as ye think not*. Unlike the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the second coming of Christ will not be heralded by specific signs. Instead, the world in general will be going on in the pursuit of earthly interests, feeling a sense of security and satisfaction, and hence will be taken by surprise as it is awakened to a sense of the awful doom just upon it (1 Thessalonians 5: 1-3).

Verse 45. Jesus finished his speech in parable form, likening himself to a householder who took his leave of the members of his house for a season, instructing them that he would return at some date not announced then. This householder appointed one of his servants to have charge of affairs during his absence, in seeing that the members were served their food at proper times. The practical application is to be made to the service that the disciples of the Lord are expected to render in the house of God.

Verse 46. The servant does not know when his lord will return, but if he is always faithful to his duty it will not matter when it occurs, for his faithfulness is what will bring him the blessing of the master of the house.

Verse 47. In the literal procedure of the parable the promotion of the faithful servant would be the thing usually expected. In its application it means that the faithful servants of Christ will be promoted to the higher enjoyment of heaven.

Verse 48. A servant might be attentive to his duties for a while, but if more time went by than was expected, he may conclude that his lord has postponed his coming for an indefinite period. (See 2 Peter 3: 3, 4.)

Verse 49. Under the impression that "there is plenty of time yet" this servant will relax his vigilance and turn the good treatment of his fellow servants into mistreatment of them; he will even join in the unrighteous practices of some of them. Likewise, some professed disciples of Christ often get tired of faithful service in the kingdom and give way to a life of sin.

Verse 50. Such a worldly life has the tendency of blunting the mind with regard to spiritual matters. It even may blot from his mind the memory of all the warnings of the Lord. In such a case his coming will be unexpected to him hence it will take him by surprise and find him not ready for a favorable meeting.

Verse 51. *Cut him asunder* means to sever him from the Lord's household. An unthinking and self-gratifying servant is not as bad in the abstract as a hypocrite, for such a character that professes to be what he knows he is not is among the worst of sinners. But since both of these individuals are to have their portion together, it teaches us that there is only one lot awaiting the unsaved at the day of judgment. We ordinarily think of a gnashing of

the teeth as a much stronger demonstration than weeping. The use of the two is very significant as applied to those condemned in the lake of fire. Gnashing the teeth will be caused by the bodily pain, while weeping (also defined "lamenation") will be the expression of the mind, caused by the realization of what the person has missed of joy, and what he has brought upon himself by his life of sin while in the world.

MATTHEW 25

Verse 1. *Then* is an adverb of time and applies to the second coming of Christ predicted in the preceding chapter. The word specifies the exact part of the parable that is to be applied, namely, the sudden announcement of the approach of the bridegroom. The whole story had to be told in order to explain the particular point at which the application was to be made.

Verse 2. Wisdom and foolishness are opposite terms which could have numberless applications depending on the connection in which they are used.

Verses 3, 4. The present application is to the ones who took their lamps only (the foolish), and the wise were those who took extra oil in the vessel besides that already absorbed and retained by the wick. The lamps were shallow bowls with a projection resembling the spout of a water pitcher. A wick of twisted flax was placed in this spout extending down into the vessel which was supposed to be supplied with olive oil. The foolish virgins neglected to see that their lamps had oil in them.

Verse 5. *Slumbered and slept*. The first word properly means to be drowsy so as to nod, the last one means to go on into more complete sleep. This happened because the bridegroom was longer than expected in making his appearance. As to the usual hour for the wedding, Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "When the fixed hour arrived, which was generally late in the evening," etc. While it was late it evidently was not often as late as midnight, which explains why *all* of the virgins fell asleep, the wise as well as the foolish.

Verse 6. This *cry* was a strong sound for the original is defined in the lexicon, "a crying, outcry, clamor." That was made necessary by the lateness of the hour and the sleeping state of the virgins.

Verse 7. *Trimmed* is from *KOSMEO*

which Thayer defines, "To put in order, arrange, make ready, prepare."

Verse 8. Putting the lamps in order would include lighting them as well as pinching off the charred end of the wick. Not until after lighting them did the foolish virgins realize they had neglected to "fill their lamps." There would be enough of the oil still retained in the wicks to start the light, but in a short while they would begin to grow dim. *Gone out* is rendered "going out" in the margin which is correct. When the flame began to go down they realized what was the trouble and appealed to the wise virgins for oil from their vessels.

Verse 9. The capacity of the old style lamp was limited and it would have been foolish for the wise to reduce their supply at the last moment.

Verse 10. Ordinary judgment should have told these virgins that it was too late to go on a shopping errand, especially at that time of night. The approach of the bridegroom had been announced with an urgent clamor which indicated that the preparatory period was over and that the event of the hour was about to start.

Verse 11. The word *Lord* is erroneously capitalized which indicates that it means Christ. The person referred to was the one having charge of the wedding activities, and the term as used by the virgins was one of respect only.

Verse 12. *I know you not* denotes he did not recognize them as being entitled to be present at the wedding. The approach of the bridegroom had been announced in no uncertain terms, and these people should have been already there if they were among the invited guests. Coming after the door was closed indicated to this master of ceremonies that they were would-be intruders who were coming out of a wrong motive.

Verse 13. *Watch therefore* are the words that express the lesson intended by the parable. It is the same that was set forth by the parable of the unfaithful servant in the closing verses of the preceding chapter.

Verse 14. Jesus spoke another parable that teaches the duties of the Lord's servants from another angle. Note that the man delivered unto his servants *his* (the man's) goods. In 1 Timothy 6: 7 Paul says "we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." On that basis we should realize that what

is in our hands does not belong to us, but it is delivered to us as a trust which the parable shows.

Verse 15. *Talent* is from TALANTON and Thayer defines it, "The scale of a balance, a balance, a pair of scales; a talent." He also explains it to mean, "a weight, varying in different places and times; a sum of money weighing a talent and varying in different states and according to the changes in the laws regulating the currency." The specific value of the talent is of no importance for the purpose of the parable. It is used merely as a means of expressing the different degrees of responsibility of the servants. Note the different amounts delivered to the servants was based on *his several ability*. The lord knew the abilities of his servants and assigned to them the tasks that corresponded with their ability.

Verses 16, 17. Each of these men did exactly the same thing with the money entrusted to him. By *trading* or making the proper use of the money they doubled it.

Verse 18. The only comment I will make here on the third man, is that he at least did not misuse or lose it; further comments will be made at verse 25.

Verse 19. *Reckoneth with them* means he called upon them for a report.

Verse 20. The only report this man could or needed to make was that he had doubled his lord's money, and had the extra talents to show for it.

Verse 21. *Good and faithful* are the words that signify the lesson in the parable. Jesus combines the application with the telling of the parable by stating the reward awaiting the faithful servant. That reward will be to enter into the joy of his Lord, which means the joy provided by the Lord to be shared together in heaven.

Verse 22. This servant's report was exactly the same kind as that of the first one, namely, that he had doubled his lord's money by trading.

Verse 23. It is significant that each of these two men received the same sentence from their lord, notwithstanding there was a great material difference in the amounts they had to return to him. But each servant was *faithful* to the trust bestowed upon him, which is the basis on which man will be judged at the last day. Some men have more ability than others and hence they will be required

to accomplish more. But if everyone is faithful to the extent of his power and opportunity he will receive the one and only reward in store, which is the entrance into the joy of the Lord.

Verse 24. Every one of the charges this servant made against his lord was false. He made them as a basis for his failure to do anything with the money that was put into his hands. But while they were false accusations, they will be turned against him as we shall see at verse 27.

Verse 25. This verse illustrates what may be called negative goodness in the light of some theories. There are multitudes who think they can expect to be saved by merely abstaining from active wrong doing. That if they avoid doing anything at all they certainly could not be accused of doing any wrong act. The man with one talent seems to have taken that view of the case. But there are many passages that condemn the sin of omission, such as Hebrews 2: 3. This man thought that by burying the money it would be preserved for its owner. Even if that could have been accomplished with literal money, the rule will not hold good in the application. A man's talent will not remain fixed as to quality while in this world. If it is not put to good use, it will be corrupted by contact with the evil elements around it.

Verse 26. This servant was both *wicked* and *stolthful*; wicked in making false accusations against his lord, and stolthful in being indolent to do something with the money. *Thou knewest*, etc., does not mean that his lord admitted the accusations, but used them as a basis for the condemnation in the following verse.

Verse 27. *Oughtest therefore*. If this lord was as exacting as the servant pretended to think he was, that was one great reason he should have been eager to do something that would satisfy him and hence avoid receiving his severe rebuke and sentence. *Exchanger* is from TRAPEZITES which Thayer defines, "A money-changer, broker, banker, one who exchanges money for a fee, and pays interest on deposits." Such a business in Palestine was occasioned by the coming of people from various countries. Their money was not good in the local markets, which made it necessary to exchange it for current money of Palestine. *Usury* is the interest these exchangers would pay local citizens who

were willing to lay their money on the banker's table to be used in the exchange business. In the spiritual application it means that if we make the proper use of the opportunities the Lord has furnished us, we will become better and improve as the years go by. The third man was not condemned for not having as much to give his lord, but for not having any interest at all. In other words, he was condemned on the principle of being unfaithful to the trust that was given over to him.

Verse 28. The lord wished his money to be put to some use so as to bring him proper returns. The man with the ten talents at hand when the accounting was made had proved his good business judgment and hence was entrusted with this other one.

Verse 29. *Hath not, he hath* might seem to be contradictory terms, but in the language of monetary dealings they are not. The second term is the principal and the first is the interest. Since the man had no interest to show, he was not allowed to retain the principal. In the spiritual application if a man does not make good use of his opportunity while in this life, he will not have another privilege. (Revelation 22: 11.)

Verse 30. No earthly lord ever treated his servants as this verse indicates. It is the conclusion that Jesus makes to the lesson of the parable. For *weeping and gnashing of teeth* see the comments on chapter 24: 51.

Verse 31. Many of the passages of a descriptive character in the Bible are worded like the transactions of men. We know from all the direct teaching of the New Testament that Christ will be the sole judge of the human family (Acts 17: 31) at the day of final accounts. No conversation or other participation will be allowed upon the part of human beings. Therefore all the parables and other passages that speak of such actions are used figuratively. They truly represent what would be the result were the mentioned conversations to be permitted. But aside from such parts of the various descriptions, the direct predictions will take place. For instance, the Son of man will actually come with the angels (2 Thessalonians 1: 7), and will sit upon the *throne of his glory* which means the throne of judgment.

Verse 32. *All nations* denotes that no human beings will escape the judgment bar of God, in which He will have seated his Son as the sole judge.

The people will be divided into only two groups, for all human creatures will belong to one or the other, no third group. The reference to sheep and goats is for an illustration only. It is based on the practice of a shepherd who is getting ready to lead his flock into a fold for permanent shelter. While out over the fields some goats may have straggled in among the sheep, and the shepherd would not want them in his fold.

Verse 33. There is no moral value of a man's right hand over his left, but the separation had to be made and the assignment to these respective hands is so worded for its psychological effect.

Verse 34. While Jesus will be the judge, he will pronounce sentence in harmony with the wishes of his Father who has created and prepared all good things. *Foundation* is from KATABOLE, defined in Thayer's lexicon, "a founding," and that means the starting of something. World means the universe in general, but has special reference to the orderly arrangement of things that were intended for the occupancy of man. God intended from the start to have a place of joy and happiness into which the creature man would be admitted after qualifying himself for it. It will be the inheritance of this place (here called a kingdom) that the royal judge will invite the righteous to have.

Verse 35. See the comments at chapter 13: 3 on the scope of the parables. In the present one Jesus had only one point to impress which will be brought out as the comments proceed. But as it is in most of them, the whole story must be told to make the point of application clear. Administering food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty would be classed among "good works" as that term is commonly used. Hospitality is likewise so considered according to Hebrews 13: 2.

Verse 36. Clothing the naked and visiting ("looking after") the sick are both among good works pertaining to our relation with each other. *In prison* does not mean in the sense of a penal institution; at least it was not being used as such in this case, because it was the disciple of Jesus who was there. It means a guard house in which the enemy was confining a captive for the purpose of persecution. If the disciple was in a regular penal structure he was placed there on a false accusation. The case of Paul in

Rome (2 Timothy 1: 16-18) is not exactly in point, for he was in his own hired house. Yet he was a virtual prisoner because he was chained to an officer, and while in that situation the disciple Onesiphorus "came unto him."

Verses 37-39. The righteous will think that Jesus meant all these things were done for him personally. They did not remember having any such experiences and made inquiry as to when it was to which he referred.

Verse 40. This verse tells us the main object of the parable. Jesus is not on earth in person and hence we cannot show him such personal favors as these good sheep are said to have done. But his disciples who are his and our brethren are here, and we always have opportunities for doing them good. (See Galatians 6: 10.)

Verse 41. The extent of this *everlasting fire* will be explained at verse 46. But for the present it should be noted that it was not originally designed for man, but for the devil and his angels. These angels evidently mean the fallen angels who had sinned and were cast down from heaven (2 Peter 2: 4; Jude 6).

Verses 42, 43. The same list of good works is named in the sentence against the folks on the left hand as was said to the others. It might be well to note that these people were not condemned because of any wicked thing they had done. See the comments on verse 25 about the negative principle in the conduct of life.

Verses 44, 45. The ones on the left will have the same misunderstanding about the personal treatment that the others had, and they will be given the same explanation. They might have sometimes professed an interest in the needs of their brethren, but their expressions of sympathy were not accompanied with anything practical and hence no good was accomplished. In James 2: 14-16 is a statement on this angle of the subject.

Verse 46. *These* means the ones on the left hand of the king and the *righteous* are the ones on the right. *Punishment* is from KOLASIS which Thayer defines, "correction, punishment, penalty." Such words do not indicate a condition where the victim is unconscious or has been annihilated as certain persons teach. *Everlasting* and *eternal* are both from AIONIOS which Thayer defines, "Without end,

never to cease, everlasting." This definition applies to the word that is used to describe the future state of both the saved and the unsaved. Whatever can be said as to the duration of the eternal life of the saved, applies with equal force to the duration of the punishment of the unsaved. No man who professes to believe the Bible will say that eternal life will ever end, so neither can he consistently say that the punishment of the unsaved will ever end. Both classes will exist consciously in their respective circumstances without end.

MATTHEW 26

Verse 1. *All these sayings* refers to the speeches Jesus made to his disciples following his last visit to the temple. His work on earth was about to come to an end and he turned his attention to the events that were soon to come.

Verse 2. The passover was a feast of the Jews that was instituted in Egypt on the night of the slaying of the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 12). It became one of the annual feasts of the nation at which time all the males were required to go to the city of Jerusalem where it was celebrated in commemoration of the Egyptian event. *After two days* would come the regular date which was Friday, the 14th day of the 1st month. Jesus and his apostles ate the feast two days before the regular time. As proof of this, the italicized words above indicates it, and John 18: 28 records a statement that shows the Jews had not yet eaten of the passover, although it was the day after Jesus and his apostles had eaten theirs. There was a reason for his observing it at this time for he knew that he was to die the next day and hence would not get to partake of it if he waited for the established time. This should not confuse us any in view of the emergency, and also the authority of Jesus. Chapter 12: 8 states that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath, and he certainly is Lord of other days also.

Verse 3. *Then assembled* means a gathering of the members of the Sanhedrin, the highest court of the Jews in the time of Christ. The word is usually rendered "council" in the New Testament, but it is sometimes referred to as an assembly as it is in this verse. The word is from the Greek, SUNEDRION which Thayer defines,

"Any assembly (especially of magistrates, judges, ambassadors), whether convened to deliberate or to pass judgment; in the Scriptures 1. any session of persons deliberating or adjudicating [judging]. 2. specifically, the Sanhedrin, the great council at Jerusalem." He follows his definition with the following information. "Consisting of seventy-one members, viz., scribes and elders, prominent members of the high-priestly families (hence called . . .), and the high-priest, the president of the body. The fullest periphrasis [wordy description] for Sanhedrin is found in Matthew 26: 3; Mark 14: 43, 53. The more important causes were brought before this tribunal, inasmuch as the Roman rulers of Judea had left to it the power of trying such cases, and also of pronouncing sentence of death, with the limitation that a capital sentence pronounced by the Sanhedrin was not valid unless it were confirmed by the Roman procurator [an agent]. The Jews trace the origin of the Sanhedrin to Numbers 11: 16." All of this information from Thayer is important, and the reader should make a note of it for ready reference, for the subject will be mentioned several times in the New Testament study.

Verse 4. We have learned in the preceding paragraph that the Sanhedrin could not lawfully put anyone to death. That is the reason the Jews had this consultation to devise some plot to kill Jesus by a trick of subtilty.

Verse 5. The Jews were not concerned about disturbing the holy feast, but wished to avoid any conflict with the people. In other words, they were acting on policy more than on principle and wished to retain their popularity.

Verse 6. The writer now goes back a few days to relate some incidents that happened while Jesus was in Bethany. In chapter 21: 17 is the account of his going out to that village nearby where he lodged over night. In John's account (John 12: 1, 2) we are told that when he was there a supper was made in his honor, which our present verse says was in the house of Simon the leper. The law of Moses required a leper to dwell apart from society (Leviticus 13: 46), hence we should conclude that Simon had been miraculously cured by the Lord, and he was designated "the leper" to distinguish him from several other men with the same name.

Verse 7. According to John 12: 3 this woman was Mary a sister of Lazarus. Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says the following of this box. "Alabaster (origin of the word unknown): Mineral carbonate of lime. A white stone much used in antiquity to ornament buildings and for vases and small bottles for holding precious ointment." Mark 14: 3 says the woman broke the box and poured the ointment on his head. No reason is given for breaking the box, but at least it shows she intended to use all the ointment.

Verse 8. According to John 12:4-6 it was Judas who made the complaint. And the same passage explains his motive to have been a selfish one. John calls him a thief and Jesus calls him a devil in John 6: 70, all of which accounts for his conduct.

Verse 9. It was true that such a product was costly (about fifty dollars' worth) to be used in what might have been considered an unprofitable way. But it was not really his thoughts of economy that caused Judas to make his remark. He was a covetous man and it hurt him to see that much value bestowed upon another.

Verse 10. *Good work* is used in the sense of a good act or deed, not so much as a manual effort which we know it was not. What constituted this a good deed will be explained in the comments on verse 12.

Verse 11. Jesus did not criticize the idea of giving something to the poor. He instructed the rich young man (chapter 19: 21) to give his possessions to the poor. Neither did he question the motive of Judas in making his complaint. He left that subject for some other to do as John did in the passage cited at verse 8. But he made a statement that pertained to the subject of using present opportunities that are soon to pass. He was to leave the world in a short time and that would stop all chances of doing him a bodily favor, while they would never cease to have the opportunity of helping the poor.

Verse 12. *For my burial*. It was an old custom to anoint the dead and use spices at the time of burial. (See 2 Chronicles 16: 14; John 19: 40; Luke 23: 56). Mark 14: 8 quotes Jesus as saying, "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." Since it was customary to bestow such treatment on the human body it would be

regarded as a good deed to perform it. Mary evidently believed that she would not have as good an opportunity for this service if she waited until after the death of Jesus. However, whether this tells the motive for her coming beforehand or not, the mere desire to do honor to the body of her Lord was regarded favorably. This subject furnishes us with some suggestions concerning an inquiry often heard as to whether the use of flowers and other items on funeral occasions is right. Of course all good things are liable to abuse, and the extravagant spending of money for flowers is wrong. But we have convincing proof that it is proper to give respectful attention to the body because it is made in the image of the Creator. Any unnecessary mutilation of the body, therefore, would be wrong, which would condemn the desecrating act of cremation.

Verse 13. This means that the deed of the woman would become a part of the Gospel record and hence would be mentioned wherever the sacred book went.

Verse 14. The covetous heart of Judas was evidently stirred by the "waste" of something that would have brought in a goodly sum of money, and since it was bestowed upon Jesus, the thought occurred to him that he could recover some of it by betraying him to the Jews for money.

Verse 15. He asked the priests to make him an offer for which he would carry out the wicked deed. They *covenanted* (contracted) to give him thirty pieces of silver. According to the Oxford Cyclopedic Concordance it would be about twenty dollars today.

Verse 16. Immediately after the bargain was made, Judas watched for an opportunity to fulfill it by pointing Jesus out in the way stated in verse 48.

Verse 17. Matthew resumes his history at the place where he left it at verse 5. *Feast of unleavened bread.* The 14th day of the first month was the time of the passover (Exodus 12: 6), and it was to be eaten with unleavened bread (verse 8). And the seven days following were also days in which they were to eat unleavened bread (Leviticus 23: 5, 6). For more details about these days of unleavened bread, see the comments at Exodus 12: 15 and Leviticus 23: 6, 7 in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary. Jesus and his apostles ate their passover two days before the regular time

(verse 2), and hence all the other items as to dates were set back correspondingly. The entire eight days beginning with the 14th came to be referred to as the feast of unleavened bread, so that the day of the passover (14th) would be called *the first day of unleavened bread* as we see it here; hence these italicized words apply to Christ and his apostles only in this place and the like statements in the other Gospels accounts. This being a special date for them, the disciples wished some instructions where to arrange for the passover, knowing Jesus would not eat it in any public place with the Jews.

Verse 18. Jesus directed them to go to a certain man in the city and deliver the request of their Master to him. Notice Jesus called it *my time*; that is, his time of crucifixion was at hand and he needed to eat the passover that evening. Also, since it was a special date, he wanted to eat it in a private house and hence made the request for the use of this man's house to be occupied by him and his apostles.

Verse 19. *Made ready the passover.* Jesus and his disciples were under the law of Moses and of course they made this preparation according to the directions recorded. Exodus 12: 5-9 has its first application in Egypt which was before the law was given from Sinai, but the same regulations were followed afterward. That means the disciples prepared the animal as directed, and also procured a supply of unleavened bread.

Verse 20. One of the great advantages of having more than one account of the life of Christ is the fact that the same details are not given in all of them. The things that happened on this last night of Christ before his death are not given in strict chronological order. For the convenience of the reader I shall write a list of references, and if he will read them in exactly the order as given he will have a connected record of what took place on that night. Luke 22: 14-18; 21-23; John 13: 23-30; Luke 22: 19, 20. It is important that the passages be read just as the references show, not taking in a single verse not indicated nor leaving out one. I shall now comment on the verses of this chapter in their order. *Even* is from *osros* and has a somewhat indefinite meaning as to any exact hour, but all lexicons agree that it means toward the end of the day.

Verse 21. Jesus had divine knowledge and hence was aware of the intentions of Judas.

Verse 22. *They were exceeding sorrowful.* This was a sincere sorrow on the part of all except the guilty one, for he could not have any sorrow (at this time) for something that he was wanting to do.

Verse 23. The apostles had asked Jesus who was going to betray him but he did not answer them all. According to John 13: 22-26 John was leaning on Jesus' bosom and hence was near him. Peter beckoned to him to ask Jesus who it was, and when Jesus told him, Judas did not hear the answer. The answer was accompanied with the act of dipping a piece of bread in the dish containing the flesh and its broth. Jesus reached into the dish at the same time that Judas did, which was the sign to the other apostles that answered their question of who was to be the betrayer.

Verse 24. *Son of man goeth.* The last word is from HUPAGO which Thayer defines at this place, "To withdraw one's self, to go away, depart." Jesus knew that it was destined for him to leave the world through the treachery of one of his professed friends (Psalms 41: 9). However, this decree against him was not to relieve the perpetrator of the deed from the guilt of wrong doing. We have learned that Judas was called a thief and a devil before he had ever performed this evil deed (John 6: 70; 12: 6), hence it did not change his character in the least for God to use him as the agent in the necessary act. *Woe to that man.* Why pronounce a woe upon Judas if he was selected as this agent, is a natural inquiry. It was because of his motive in doing it, which was to obtain some money to gratify his covetous heart. Another thing, even this deed would not need to have caused him to be lost. The Jews on the day of Pentecost were accused of murdering Jesus, yet they were given the opportunity of obeying the Gospel for the remission of their sins. If Judas who was guilty only of betraying Christ, had repented from a godly sorrow and obeyed the Gospel he could have been saved also. But Jesus knew he would not do this, hence he made the prediction of this verse.

Verse 25. Judas could not have asked the question for information, for he had already contracted with the chief priests to betray his Lord. All

of the others had asked the same question and if he kept silent it would be so conspicuous that his guilt would be manifest to all in the group.

Verse 26. *Blessed is from EULOGEO* and Thayer defines it in this passage, "To praise, celebrate with praises." We should understand, therefore, that it does not mean to bestow some miraculous quality upon the bread. The conclusion is strengthened by the giving of thanks for the cup, and we know that the cup is as important as the bread. If the bread required some miraculous quality to be given to it to produce the desired effect on the communicants, then surely the cup would have also required something more than the simple act of thanksgiving. *Break is from KLAO* which is defined by Thayer, "To break," and he then adds the comment, "used in the New Testament of the breaking of bread." He also cites Matthew 14: 19; 15: 36, and other places where we know it refers to the act of dividing a loaf so that more than one person could properly partake of it. Thus we see the word has no religious significance, but states what is a physical necessity in order that the communicants could eat of it which is the only religious phase about the handling of the bread. *This is my body.* The Romanists insist that this statement must be taken literally and not to be understood in the sense of the bread as only a representation of his body. That reasoning would make nonsense of the other passages where the language is just as direct. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 10: 4 where Paul is speaking of the Israelites in the wilderness and of their drinking of a rock, he says "that rock was Christ." The record of that event is in Exodus 17: 6 where Moses literally smote a literal rock and thus provided drinking water for the congregation. We know that rock was only a piece of material, so that the statement of Paul means it was a type or representation of Christ who furnishes water of spiritual life. On the same principle, the bread represents the body of Christ because his body had to be given to provide spiritual food for mankind.

Verse 27. It might be asked why the cup was not "blessed" if it is as important as the bread; it was. The definition of "blessed" is, "to praise, celebrate with praises," as may be seen in comments on the preceding verse. In thanking God for the cup one would thereby be praising it. Matthew uses

the two terms, blessed and thanks, as being the same in principle. *Drink ye* all of it means for all of them to drink of it. The priests of Rome insist on doing the drinking for the others, which is a contradiction of the instructions that Jesus gave to his disciples.

Verse 28. *Blood of the New Testament*. Under the Old Testament the blood that was shed was that of beasts, but the blood of the New was that of the Lamb of God. *Shed for many*. None but the Jews received the benefit of the blood shed in the animal sacrifices, while the blood of Christ offers benefits to the whole world (Romans 3: 25; 1 John 2: 2), which includes Jews and Gentiles without distinction.

Verse 29. The passages cited at verse 20 show that when Jesus spoke the words of this verse they were still in the passover feast, and hence he said them before verses 26-28 of the present chapter. Therefore, when the fruit of the vine was served in the institution of the Lord's supper he did not partake. That would be appropriate, for that supper was to celebrate the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11: 26), and a man would not be expected to memorialize his own death. *Until I drink it new in my Father's kingdom*. Yes, Jesus does partake of the cup, but it is in a spiritual sense only. When disciples are eating and drinking of the Lord's supper he is present in spirit even as he promised that he would be (chapter 18: 20).

Verse 30. According to Thayer and Robinson this hymn was one of the Psalms of David. The mount of Olives was the site of Gethsemane which will be explained at verse 36.

Verse 31. While on their way to the mount of Olives Jesus said many things to his apostles. Chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17 of John were spoken as they were going, but Matthew records only what is in verses 31-35. *Shall be offended* or be caused to stumble. It means that something was going to happen that would cause them to falter in their devotion to Christ. This lack of devotion was to be manifested by the fact of their deserting him and fleeing. Jesus said it was written and we may read the prediction in Zechariah 13: 7.

Verse 32. *After I am risen* explains what Jesus meant in the preceding verse by being smitten. The stroke was to be so severe that it would cause his death, but he predicted that he was to rise from the dead.

Verse 33. Peter was a man of an impulsive temperament and inclined to make rash statements and to perform rash acts, such as that recorded in John 18: 10. The emphatic statement recorded here, therefore, is not surprising or should not be.

Verse 34. Jesus made a specific prediction of what Peter would do; not only specific as to the act but also as to the time of the night in which it would occur.

Verse 35. Even the pointed predictions of Jesus did not calm the rash spirit of Peter, but he repeated his declaration with an added item, that he would die before he would betray Jesus. His enthusiastic vows seemed to affect the other disciples for they all repeated his declaration.

Verse 36. The journey from the upper room and the passover to the garden of Gethsemane was ended. When they reached the border of the garden Jesus instructed the group to be seated while he went on farther to pray. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary on the item of Gethsemane. "A small 'garden,' Matthew 26: 36; Mark 14: 32, situated across the brook Kedron, John 18: 1, probably at the foot of Mount Olivet, Luke 22: 39, to the northwest and about one-half or three-quarters of a mile English from the walls of Jerusalem, and 100 yards east of the bridge over the Kedron. There was a 'garden' or rather an orchard, attached to it, to which the olive, fig and pomegranate doubtless invited resort by their hospitable shade."

Verse 37. Leaving the most of the group at the place where they first paused, Jesus took with him Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James and John), and went on into the garden with them. The humanity in his nature now began to manifest itself which caused him to be sorrowful and heavy hearted.

Verse 38. Jesus expressed his feelings to the three disciples and told them to tarry there while he stepped aside to pray. *Sorrowful, even unto death*. This is a highly colored figure of speech, meaning that he felt sad enough to die.

Verse 39. Having asked the three disciples to tarry and watch, Jesus wished to be alone with his Father and hence went a little farther away from them before beginning his prayer. He prayed that *this cup* might pass

from him if it was the will of his Father. A common error in the comments heard today is to apply this cup to the suffering and death on the cross. Jesus rebuked Peter for thinking he could rescue him from that cup (John 18: 11), saying that the cup of death was necessary to fulfill the scripture. He certainly would not ask the Father, then, to save him from it. No, the *cup* to which he referred was *this cup*, meaning the present agony through which he was going. That cup of agony is forcefully described in Luke 22: 40-44. Jesus only asked that he be spared the terrible nervous agitation which he was at that time enduring. But it was not God's will to spare his Son even that much, so he was compelled to go through with it, until his agony brought out the great drops of sweat that was likened to thickened blood.

Verse 40. After his first prayer Jesus came back to the three disciples and found them asleep. We might wonder why he did not rebuke them more severely, but Luke 22: 45 says they were "sleeping for sorrow." Even that should have been overcome by the spirit of watchfulness, but at least we are pleased that it was not from indifference.

Verse 41. *Watch and pray* denotes the two sides of the scheme of salvation, the human and the divine. Watching is a duty of man in order that he may not be overtaken or surprised by temptation. (See Galatians 6: 1.) While doing what is humanly possible, it is proper to look for help from God if man goes to Him in prayer. *Spirit* and *flesh* are the two parts of a human being; the first is the inner man and the other is the outer. The first is inclined to the better way of life and the other is more inclined to evil. A good picture of these two is presented in Romans 7: 15-25.

Verse 42. Notice Jesus says *this cup* which denotes something present with him then. See the comments on the subject at verse 39.

Verse 43. The eyes of the disciples were heavy with the fatigue of sorrow.

Verse 44. Jesus prayed three times and each time his prayer was on the same subject. His persistence was on the principle that faith should be enduring and not inclined to give up easily. See the teaching on this subject in Luke 18: 1-8. It should be noted that each of the prayers was made on condition that they were as God willed.

Verse 45. Jesus perceived the depressed condition of his disciples and decided to let them sleep undisturbed for a little while since the critical hour was about on hands. *Is betrayed* is in the present tense as to grammatical form but really means "is to be betrayed." Yet it is put in this form to indicate the event was very near.

Verse 46. We do not know how much time passed between this and the preceding verse. It could not have been long, yet there was enough time for the disciples to get a short but undisturbed nap. Jesus saw Judas and the crowd with him approaching, and roused the disciples from their sleep.

Verse 47. Jesus was concluding his speech to the disciples when Judas arrived in his immediate presence. To avoid confusion as to why he was not with the group of disciples that Jesus left at the border of the garden, the reader should see the passages cited at verse 20. He should particularly note from John 13: 30 that Judas left them while the passover was still taking place, hence he was never near them again until the present verse. *Staves* is from a Greek word that means "clubs," and the possession of such weapons indicated an attitude of cruelty and disrespect. Even an ordinary policeman usually refrains from using his club (billy) unless there is resistance, but Jesus had never even indicated that he would "resist arrest" as a guilty lawbreaker might do. No wonder he asked them (Luke 22: 52) if they thought they had to deal with him as they would a thief.

Verse 48. *Hold him fast*. Judas had no doubt of the ability of Jesus to escape from the hand of the mob and really expected him to do so. Then if the priests complained of their loss and demanded the recovery of the money on a pretense of fraud, he could remind them of his warning and thus reject their complaint. Had things turned out as he expected, Judas would have procured the money which his covetous heart craved, and at the same time Jesus would not have been any worse off.

Verse 49. *Hail* means a salutation that comes from a Greek word denoting a friendly greeting that includes good wishes. It is as if Judas had said, "Master, I give you my good wishes for your happiness," and then pretended to verify his wishes by a kiss.

Verse 50. *Friend* is from *ETAIBOS* which Thayer defines, "a comrade, mate, partner." *Wherefore* is from some Greek terms that virtually mean "for what purpose." The verse denotes as if Jesus said, "Judas, we have been comrades for over three years, then why is it that you come to me in this manner?" Just then the mob took charge of Jesus.

Verse 51. John 18: 10 tells us it was Peter who made this attack on the servant.

Verse 52. Some people use this verse to condemn capital punishment, but instead of condemning it the opposite is true. To *take the sword* under the circumstances where Peter did is the act of a private, unofficial man. Had he gone to the limit in his act it would have caused the death of the servant and that would have made him a murderer since he did not represent the law. And if that had occurred, Jesus said that he should himself have perished with the sword, that being one of the means of lawfully executing a murderer under the criminal law of the land.

Verse 53. Had it been right to defend Jesus with force, he could have prayed his Father who would have sent him twelve legions (about 72,000) of angels.

Verse 54. But if that had been done it would have prevented the scripture prophecies of his death from being fulfilled. Jesus knew all through his life that he was to die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, to replace the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic system and make one offering for all time (Hebrews 10: 1-5).

Verse 55. Jesus rebuked the mob for coming out against him armed as if he were a thief. He reminded them of former opportunities of taking him and they did not do so nor even try to. All this showed their evil motive in the present movement.

Verse 56. Matthew is making the statements in this and the following verses. He is telling us that the deeds of this crowd were done in fulfillment of the predictions in the scriptures. The rebuke that Jesus gave Peter, also his submission to the attacks of the mob, seemed to dishearten all the disciples so that they *forsook him and fled*. By that act they fulfilled the predictions in Isaiah 53: 3 and Zechariah 13: 7.

Verse 57. *Led him away to Caiaphas*.

John 18: 13 says they led him to Annas first who was the father-in-law of the high priest. Just what official position (if any) this Annas had at this time is a disputed point. But he was a former high priest and perhaps as a preliminary hearing Jesus was taken before him through respect for his former position, and in view of his relation to Caiaphas.

Verse 58. Peter's curiosity prompted him to follow Jesus as they led him away to the officers. But he also began to show the cowardice which he afterward displayed in the court by following Jesus *afar off*. He wanted to be near enough to see what was going on but not so near as to be suspected of being connected with him in any way that might be embarrassing or endanger his own life and liberty.

Verse 59. The persons referred to here were leading men of the Jews who composed the *council* (Sanhedrin). The description of this court and the extent of its powers may be seen at verse 3. Before they could obtain any action from the Roman court, the Sanhedrin must first try and condemn the prisoner. *Sought false witness* is very significant. They knew that nothing could be said truthfully against Jesus, hence they would have to rely on witnesses who were willing to give false testimony.

Verse 60. *But found none*. That is, no man was willing to testify to any act on the part of Jesus that would have made him guilty of a capital offence under the law of Moses. However, at last two witnesses came forward who said they had something to offer the court about the prisoner.

Verse 61. The testimony of these had nothing to do with any capital offence. Had Jesus said what they claimed, it still would not have made him guilty of anything serious, but only a claim as to what he said he could do if he chose. But even this was false, for he never said anything like what they affirmed. Another thing, according to Mark 14: 59, even these two witnesses disagreed with each other, and that would have thrown their testimony out of court had it been even on the subject of capital offences. According to Deuteronomy 17: 6; 19: 15 there must be at least two witnesses who testify to the same thing before a man could be condemned to death.

Verse 62. The high priest was surprised that Jesus did not make any

reply to the testimony of these witnesses. He tried to get him to say something or other but failed.

Verse 63. *But Jesus held his peace.* There is a familiar rule that "silence gives consent" which would mean that if a man refused to deny a charge made against him it was taken as an admission of guilt. Under most circumstances that would be true, but Jesus knew he was bound to be condemned to die regardless of whether he replied or not. Besides, the pretended testimony was so ridiculous and contradictory that he considered it as beneath his dignity, hence he treated their statements with silent contempt. For an officer to *adjure* another person means to place him under oath. The high priest did this to Jesus and placed him under oath *by the living God*. Having bound Jesus with such an oath he asked him *whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God*. This introduced another subject, different from the one for which he was supposed to be brought into the council. The question pertained to his divinity and hence was a vital one, being the central fact of the entire system that Jesus was introducing into the world. Of course he would not be silent on that and his answer will be given in the next verse.

Verse 64. *Thou hast said* is an affirmative answer to the question of the high priest. *Nevertheless* is used in the sense of "moreover, furthermore," etc. It thus is not a restriction on or modification of what was just said, but introduced additional thoughts. Jesus did not stop with merely answering the question about his divinity, but announced some things that were to happen because of his divine Sonship with God. *Ye shall see* agrees with Revelation 1: 7 which says that *every eye* shall see him when he comes to the earth again. The prediction was a blow to the pride of the high priest, not because he was told that he would see Jesus when he comes, but because it predicted that he (Jesus) was to occupy a throne of glory. The high priest was at that very hour presiding in a meeting that was prejudiced against the prisoner, and he as president had manifested his sympathy with the accusers.

Verse 65. Decisions of the Sanhedrin were to be made by the vote of the members who should be uninfluenced by any interested person. The high priest violated the rules of justice

by announcing a conclusion ("he hath spoken blasphemy") before they had voted.

Verse 66. With such a breach of justice to influence them, it is no wonder that the assembly answered the question of the high priest as they did. It was all the more to be expected when their own personal sentiments were previously set against the prisoner because of his frequent rebukes of their wicked lives. *He is guilty of death* means that he is guilty of a crime that calls for the death penalty. Under the law of Moses a man who was guilty of blasphemy against God was to be put to death (Leviticus 24: 16). Jesus was not guilty, but the high priest had pronounced him so, hence the way was opened for the assembly, which was overwhelmingly moved by the spirit of a mob, to agree with the decision of the president and condemn the prisoner.

Verse 67. The Sanhedrin could pronounce a sentence of death but it could not execute it, hence they gratified their wicked hearts by this contemptible treatment of Jesus. According to Numbers 12: 14 and Deuteronomy 25: 9 it was regarded as a disgrace to have another spit in one's face. Thayer says to buffet means "to strike with the fist, give one a blow with the fist," which would be intended to cause pain. To smite with the open hand was not so much to cause pain as it was to treat with contempt.

Verse 68. *Prophecy* is from *PROPHETEUO* which Thayer defines at this place, "To utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation." In a crowded condition no one person would be distinctly visible so that the belittling act of slapping with the hand could be done without its being seen as to who really did it. (See Mark 5: 27-31.) This act was an unmanly challenging of Christ's knowledge.

Verse 69. *Sat without in the palace.* We should remember that the present session of the Sanhedrin was held in the headquarters of the high priest (verse 57). *Palace* is a somewhat indefinite word in the Bible, but a common view of it is a building surrounded with an uncovered court. Sometimes the word is used to designate the building only, and at others it means the courtyard around it; the session of the Sanhedrin was held in the building. *Peter sat without in the palace* means he was out in the courtyard of

the palace. The text does not tell us why the damsel asked Peter the question, but the same thing was asked him by another damsel, and still one of the crowd asked this question. All of them received the same negative answer, hence it is reasonable to conclude it was a part of the Lord's plan to bring about the threefold denial that was predicted in verse 34. This question about Peter's being *with* Jesus and the cowardly denial is significant, and shows that the fact of association with another makes him a partaker of whatever he is doing. (See Romans 1: 32.) Of course Jesus was not doing anything wrong, and if Peter had been true to his profession so strongly expressed in verses 33-35, he would gladly have admitted his friendly association with the Lord and rejoiced in sharing in his persecutions. (See Acts 5: 41.)

Verse 70. Peter not only denied being an associate of Jesus, but uttered a falsehood by saying he did not know him. The fear of sharing in the persecutions of Jesus caused him to say this and thus added another sin to the ones previously committed.

Verse 71. This *porch* was a place a little further away from the main building. The statement of the first damsel alarmed him and he was induced to move farther away. But even at this place his presence was noticed and a maid connected him with Jesus.

Verse 72. Peter emphasized his denial this time with an oath.

Verse 73. We are not told which person did the speaking this time, only that it was someone of the group standing near. The statement was made in an argumentative mood which shows they had heard his former denials (verse 70). *Bewrayeth* is the same as saying his speech "gave him away" or proved him to be what they were saying. Different communities and groups had their own dialects or brogues in their conversation. These people knew the dialect of Jesus and recognized that of Peter as being the same.

Verse 74. This time Peter thought he should make his denial still more emphatic than he had the first two instances. *Curse* is from KATANATHEMATIZO which Thayer defines, "to call down direct evils on, to curse vehemently," *Swear* is from OMNURUI and the same lexicon defines it, "to swear; to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath." The sentence means that Peter

expressed the wish that some great misfortune would come to him if what he said was not true. And to give force to his declaration he made an oath in connection with it. As soon as he had concluded his statement the cock crew. Mark 14: 30 says the cock would crow twice, but that Peter would make his third denial before the second crowing. Verse 72 of that chapter says the cock crew the second time after this third denial.

Verse 75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus.* Luke 22: 61 says that *the Lord turned and looked upon Peter.* The place where Jesus was being tried was so arranged that he could be seen from the space outside where Peter was. Jesus hence could be seen by the apostle, and when the cock crew the third time he turned and gave him an accusing look that reminded him of what was said in verse 34. This brought him to his better thinking and filled him with genuine sorrow (Godly sorrow, 2 Corinthians 7: 10); his immediate reaction was to go out from the crowd to himself and weep bitterly.

MATTHEW 27

Verse 1. The Sanhedrin pronounced the death sentence against Jesus and that was as far as it could go under the power that the Roman government granted to it. The members of the court then consulted or planned the next move they would have to make to get this sentence affirmed by the officer who had the necessary power.

Verse 2. *They bound him* which was unnecessary as far as security of the prisoner was concerned, for Jesus had not given any indication of even wishing to escape. But it was customary to put some kind of shackle on a man who was a prisoner, and the feeling of this mob was such that it would certainly not make any exception of Jesus. *Pilate the governor* was an officer appointed by the Romans to represent the empire in parts of Palestine. His presence in Jerusalem at this time, and also some other useful information will be explained by a quotation from Smith's Bible Dictionary. "He was appointed A. D. 25-6, in the twelfth year of Tiberius. His arbitrary administration nearly drove the Jews to insurrection on two or three occasions. One of the first acts was to remove the headquarters of the army from Caesarea to Jerusalem. . . . It was the custom for the procurator

[governor or agent] to reside at Jerusalem during the great feasts, to preserve order, and accordingly, at the time of our Lord's last Passover, Pilate was occupying his official residence in Herod's palace. Caesarea was the official headquarters for the Roman government in Palestine, which accounts for the mention of Pilate's temporary presence in Jerusalem at this time.

Verse 3. *Condemn* is a legal and judicial term as used in this place. Thayer defines the original, "To give judgment against one, to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn." The word is stronger than a mere accusation and means that the case had been decided officially against Jesus and that no way could be used for him to escape death. Judas had not expected this to happen; see the comments on this subject at chapter 26: 48. The pronouns are to be understood as follows: "When he [Judas] saw that he [Jesus] was condemned." *Repented himself* does not mean that Judas had repented in the sense of "repentance unto salvation" (2 Corinthians 7: 10), for in that case his conduct afterward would have been righteous. Instead, it means he reversed the money part of the transaction by returning the pieces of silver.

Verse 4. Judas knew from the start that Jesus was innocent, but expected him to resort to his miraculous power to escape from the hands of the mob. He had a guilty conscience but it was overruled by the effect of his disappointment so that he did not have the moral courage to do the right thing. *What is that to us* means they were not concerned about the affairs of his conscience.

Verse 5. Casting the pieces of silver down in the temple indicated that Judas was offering the money to the sacred service as "conscience money."

Verse 6. The priests understood the purpose of Judas to be that the money was to be put into the treasury. They pretended to have great respect for the sacredness of the temple, notwithstanding they had treated the one who was "greater than the temple" (chapter 12: 6) with the deepest disrespect.

Verse 7. *Potter's field*. After all the clay suitable for the making of pottery has been taken from a field, the land is of little use and hence very cheap commercially. A plot of such land was bought with this money and devoted to the burying of strangers or persons unknown to the community. From this circumstance comes the name "potter's

field" today, a portion of cemetery grounds where poor people may bury their dead free of charge for the ground.

Verse 8. The *field of blood* was so called because it was purchased with the money that had been paid to Judas for his betrayal of Jesus. The priests had called it *the price of blood* (verse 6), and thought it was not fitting to put such "tainted money" into the treasury of the temple.

Verse 9. *Was spoken by Jeremy [Jeremiah] the prophet*. This prophecy is actually in the book of Zechariah, chapter 11: 13. Various explanations have been offered for this apparent contradiction, but I consider the most reasonable one to be that which is based on the outstanding prominence of Jeremiah. He was so highly respected that he was looked upon as a sort of "dean of prophets," and hence the prophecy was accredited to him in a complimentary or honorary sense.

Verse 10. *Lord appointed me*. The first person of the pronoun is used because the passage represents Christ as the speaker, and the *Lord* would be the Father who had appointed him to suffer this shame.

Verse 11. *Thou sayest* is equivalent to giving an affirmative answer. This conversation is referred to by Paul in 1 Timothy 6: 13 in which it is called "a good confession." This indicates that the confession required of men may be made in any form of speech that amounts to such a profession of faith.

Verse 12. *He answereth nothing*. This fulfilled Isaiah 53: 7, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

Verses 13, 14. Pilate was surprised at the silence of Jesus in the face of accusations made by the chief priests. This was the same thing that happened in the presence of the high priest (chapter 26: 62).

Verse 15. *Governor was wont to release* means it was customary for him to do so. The feast of the passover was celebrated on the part of the civil powers by releasing a prisoner. There is little or no information available today as to when or how the custom started. Selection of the one to be favored was left to the voice of the people or unofficial crowd, not to the chief priests or other officers.

Verse 16. *They* means the people who had this prisoner in confinement

for the security of the public. He is said to have been a *notable* prisoner. Thayer says this word means "notorious, infamous" [of bad report]. This bad name is explained in Mark 15: 7 which says he had committed murder and insurrection in connection with others.

Verse 17. All of the pronouns in this verse refer to the *people*, described in verse 15. Since they were the ones who must name the prisoner to be released, it was necessary for Pilate to ask them this question. *Barabbas* or *Jesus*. Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent of the accusations being made against him, but he was powerless to make any decision in the matter. However, as a suggestion which he thought would influence the crowd in their decision, he named Barabbas and Jesus. This prisoner was such a wicked character that surely they would not want him turned loose upon society. He thought they would reason that "of two evils it is better to choose the lesser." If they would do this it would result in the discharge of Jesus without any responsibility on his (Pilate's) part. It is possible they would have done as Pilate expected had it not been for the fact that will be explained at verse 20.

Verse 18. *They* in this verse means the chief priests (Mark 15: 10) who had been responsible for the arrest of Jesus. Since that was the case Pilate thought the *people* would not be so prejudiced against him and would certainly vote in favor of his release rather than such a dangerous character as Barabbas.

Verse 19. There is nothing to indicate this to have been a miraculous dream. It is natural for the exciting events occurring in one's presence to make an impression on the mind, and that in turn would cause dreams to come in sleep. The innocence of Jesus was so evident that even this pagan wife of the governor was concerned about what might come to her husband if he should have any part in persecuting such a *just man*.

Verse 20. While Pilate was waiting for the decision of the crowd, the *chief priests and elders* were busy among them, using their persuasive powers to influence the decision. They were not permitted to have any public voice in the selection, hence they accomplished their wicked purpose by working on the people who did have such a voice.

Verse 21. Pilate repeated his question to the people. Acting upon the influence of the chief priests and elders, the crowd named Barabbas as the one to be released.

Verse 22. If such a notorious criminal as Barabbas was to be given his freedom, surely as just a man as Jesus would not be dealt with very severely, hence the somewhat challenging question was asked as to what should be done with the man who was called Christ. Their answer that he was to be crucified, was to carry out the sentence imposed by the Sanhedrin but which it did not have the authority to execute.

Verse 23. There is nothing in the text that indicates any knowledge on the part of Pilate as to the charge upon which Jesus had been brought into his court. It is true the crowd accused him of perverting the nation (Luke 23: 2), but that was not any authoritative testimony for it was made by this mob at the moment. According to Matthew 26: 64-66 the point at which the Sanhedrin voted Jesus guilty was when he claimed to be the Son of God. Pilate, however, did not know anything about that (as far as we know), hence it was logical for him to ask the crowd the question stated. They refused to answer Pilate's question although they knew the pretense the Sanhedrin used in rendering its verdict. But they also knew that such a decision would not have much weight in a secular court, hence they ignored the question of the governor and repeated their wicked demand instead.

Verse 24. Although Pilate was a Roman official, he was somewhat acquainted with the Jewish history because of the frequent appearances of the leading men of that nation in Roman affairs. In Deuteronomy 21 is a provision in the law to dispose formally of a case of death for which it was not known who was responsible. The elders of the city nearest the body that was found were technically held to be guilty, or at least to have guilty knowledge thereof. The Lord knew that in some cases this would be unjust toward innocent persons, so a ceremony was ordained that included the washing of the hands which settled the case and cleared them of all responsibility. Pilate thought he could use that ceremony and thus avoid all responsibility for the death of Jesus. He failed to consider, however, that

the Mosaic ceremony was in force only in cases where the elders actually were innocent or did not know anything about the case, while Pilate did have knowledge of the merits of the case and even had pronounced Jesus not guilty (Luke 23:4). He therefore could not escape responsibility by this misuse of the law intended only for the protection of the innocent.

Verse 25. The people understood from this performance of Pilate that he was hesitating because of a conscientious regard for the possible results of turning Jesus over to crucifixion. In order to remove that obstacle and secure the desired decree, they uttered the awful statement, *His blood be on us, and on our children*. This rash sentence proved to be a prediction that was fulfilled forty years later. In the year 70 A. D. the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the Jewish people suffered untold miseries in the siege. That event was a part of the Roman military strategy, but God caused it to come upon the Jews because they had slain His own Son.

Verse 26. It was a custom with the Romans to scourge a prisoner who was to be executed. There were various methods of administering this punishment. Luke 23:22 reveals that Pilate proposed to chastise Jesus and let him go. That would have been a compromise with the hopes of pacifying the Jews and yet not being so harsh upon Jesus. But the mob would not accept it, so Pilate followed the cruel practice and scourged Jesus, after which he turned him over to the mob to have him crucified.

Verse 27. Of course the people of the Jews could not personally perform this execution since they were not officers of the Roman government. That action was to be done by the soldiers, who took the victim into the *common hall* which the margin correctly renders "governor's house"; here they brought the entire band of soldiers. There was no need for such a military display for Jesus was not showing any disposition to resist. It was done through pomp and to humiliate the doomed man by their show of power.

Verse 28. *They stripped him*. This was after Jesus had been scourged, for that operation required that his clothing be removed first according to Smith's Bible Dictionary. This denotes that after the scourging was performed his clothing was replaced upon

his wounded body. Scarlet was one of the royal colors of Rome, and the placing of this robe on the body of Jesus after it had been stripped the second time, was in mockery because he had said he was a king.

Verse 29. The actions of this verse also were done in mockery of the claim of Jesus that he was a king of the Jews. For a crown they used *thorns*, which comes from the same Greek word as that used in chapter 13:7. Thayer defines the word, "A thorn, bramble-bush, brier." It means something that was not visible at the time the sowing was done, for it was afterward that the thorns "sprang up." The plant used as a mocking as well as a painful article was the kind that could be *platted* or woven into a crown and then pressed down upon the head of Jesus. Kings usually hold a baton or rod in their hand which was called a scepter when so used, indicating the authority of the throne. For that purpose a *reed* was placed in his hand in mockery of his claim as king. Smith's Bible Dictionary gives the following information on the reed that grew in Palestine. "A stronger reed, *Arundo donax*, the true reed of Egypt and Palestine, which grows 8 or 10 feet high, and is thicker than a man's thumb. It has a jointed stalk like a bamboo, and is very abundant on the Nile." There is something very pathetic about this item of the mocking ceremony. The placing of a crown on the head would require only that Jesus would not resist, but to put a reed *in his right hand* would be possible only by his cooperation, for an object like that would have to be grasped in order for the act to be a success. All of this was in keeping with the prediction of nonresistance that was made in Isaiah 53:7 and Acts 8:32, 33. It is fitting that a king would be saluted respectfully in the manner described in this verse, but these wicked men did it in mockery.

Verse 30. Isaiah 53:3 predicts that Jesus was to be "despised" which means to be treated with contempt or belittled. That was fulfilled when they *spit upon him*, which was done also when he was in the high priest's house (chapter 26:67). They next took the reed out of his hand and struck him on the head. That indicated that he was to be dispossessed of the authority he claimed to have, and then be punished by the very authority he claimed to represent as king.

Verse 31. After completing their shameful mockery, they replaced the robe with his own clothing and started the "last mile" of his life toward the place of crucifixion.

Verse 32. Simon did not "bear the cross alone," but helped Jesus with the burden. See the comments on this subject with the reference cited at chapter 16: 24.

Verse 33. No genuine believer in Christ would wish to lessen the respect that is so universally held for "the scenes of Calvary," yet it should be understood that most of the sentimental expressions on the subject are prompted by the general facts connected with the crucifixion. Even the poetic term "Mount Calvary" is not justified except figuratively as may be seen by the information now to be offered to the reader. *Golgotha*, rendered "Calvary" in Luke 23: 33, is from the Greek word *KRANION* which Thayer and Robinson define by the simple term "a skull." Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following in an article entitled *Golgotha*. "The Hebrew name of the spot at which our Lord was crucified. Matthew 27: 33; Mark 15: 22; John 19: 17. By these three evangelists it is interpreted to mean the 'place of a skull.' Two explanations of the name are given: (1) that it was a spot where executions ordinarily took place, and therefore abounded in skulls; or (2) it may come from the look or form of the spot itself, bald, round and skull-like, and therefore a mound or hillock in accordance with the common phrase—for which there is no direct authority—'Mount Calvary.' Whichever of these is correct, *Golgotha* seems to have been a known spot."

In his comments on the word "Calvary," Robert Young, author of the Analytical Concordance to the Bible, says the following: "This name occurs only in Luke 23: 33, and is not a proper name, but arises from the translators having literally adopted the word *Calvaria* (i. e., "a bare skull"), the Latin word by which the Greek word is rendered in the Vulgate [a Latin version of the Scriptures]. This *Kranion* is simply the Greek translation of the Chaldee *Golgotha*. The place of crucifixion is by each of the four evangelists called *Kranion*, and is in every case translated *Calvaria* in the Vulgate, and in every place but that in Luke the English version translates the word by 'scull.' There is no

sanction for the expression 'Mount Calvary,' for it is only 18 feet high."

Verse 34. According to both Smith's Bible Dictionary, and Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary, this gall was made from the poppy plant which grew in abundance in Palestine. That, combined with the vinegar which would be somewhat alcoholic, composed a stupefying product that would act as an easement from pain. Jesus would not drink it because he was not willing to do anything to make his sufferings any less severe. Incidentally, we have an important bit of information as to what the verb "drink" means. The passage says that Jesus "tasted" of the mixture but would not "drink," which shows there is a difference between the two. Christians are commanded to "drink" of the fruit of the vine, not just taste of it. There is no need to consume a regular serving of it as one would to quench thirst, but we are expected to partake of it enough that it can be said we drink and not merely taste as is commonly done. Most churches do not provide enough of the fruit of the vine in the Lord's supper to meet the requirement of the ordinance.

Verse 35. The crucifixion of Jesus forms so important a part of the plan of human salvation, that I believe the reader should have some information on the manner of performing the act itself. I shall quote a description of it as may be found in Smith's Bible Dictionary. "The one to be crucified was stripped naked of all his clothes, and then followed the most awful moment of all. He was laid down upon the implement of torture. His arms were stretched along the cross-beams, and at the center of the open palms the point of a huge nail was placed, which, by the blow of a mallet, was driven home into the wood. Then through either foot separately, or possibly through both together, as they were placed one over the other, another huge nail tore its way through the quivering flesh. Whether the sufferer was also bound to the cross we do not know; but, to prevent the hands and feet being torn away by the weight of the body, which could 'rest upon nothing but four great wounds,' there was, about the centre of the cross, a wooden projection strong enough to support, at least in part, a human body, which soon became a weight of agony. Then the 'accursed tree' with its living human burden was slowly

heaved up and the end fixed firmly in a hole in the ground. The feet were but a little raised above the earth. The victim was in full reach of every hand that might choose to strike. A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly,—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic [shock from a wound] fever, tetanus, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of unattended wounds, all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness. The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbled with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened; the arteries, especially of the head and stomach, became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood; and, while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of burning and raging thirst. Such was the death to which Christ was doomed. The crucified was watched, according to custom, by a party of four soldiers, John 19: 23, with their centurion, Matthew 27: 54, whose express office was to prevent the stealing of the body. This was necessary from the lingering character of the death, which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation. But for this guard, the persons might have been taken down and recovered as was actually done in the case of a friend of Josephus. Fracture of the legs was especially adopted by the Jews to hasten death, John 19: 31. In most cases the body was suffered to rot on the cross by the action of sun and rain, or to be devoured by birds and beasts. Sepulture [burial] was generally therefore forbidden; but in consequence of Deuteronomy 21: 22, 23, an express national exception was made in favor of the Jews. Matthew 27: 58. This accursed and awful mode of punishment was happily abolished by Constantine."

Parted his garments. We learn from the aforesaid quotation that the victim to be crucified was stripped of his clothing before the crucifixion. It was a custom that the soldiers performing the execution should have this raiment as extra pay in addition to their wages

as soldiers. According to John 19: 23 there were four of them, corresponding to the four parts to be nailed, the two hands and two feet, and hence there would be four parts to be shared by them. *Casting lots.* Most of the garments were so made that they could be divided into parts without any damage to them. But John 19: 23, 24 says the coat was made by weaving into one piece without any seams, and therefore it could not be divided without ruining it. Accordingly, the soldiers agreed to decide the question by casting lots for the garment. This action fulfilled the prediction in Psalms 22: 18. *That it might be fulfilled.* The bearing on this kind of phrase is explained in the comments on chapter 4: 14.

Verse 36. Consult the preceding verse for the reason why they watched him.

Verse 37. *Accusation written.* It was a custom of the Romans to place a tablet on the cross over the head of the victim on which was written the accusation for which he was crucified. In the present case the "crime" was that he was *Jesus the king of the Jews*. According to John's account (John 19: 21) the chief priests objected to the wording of this inscription, which will be commented upon at that place.

Verse 38. The scripture does not tell us the motive of the Romans for crucifying these thieves at this particular time and in the position with Jesus as stated. But we can understand the part the Lord had in it, for it fulfilled a prediction in Isaiah 53: 12 that "he was numbered with the transgressors."

Verse 39. Thayer says this wagging of the head was "expressive of derision." A similar movement is recorded in Job 16: 4 and Psalms 109: 25. *Reveled* is a stronger term and comes from the same Greek word as "blaspheme." Thus by the movement of their body and their word of mouth, these cruel people showed their contempt for the Lamb of God who was at that very hour making the supreme sacrifice that creatures like them might have an opportunity of being saved.

Verse 40. To blaspheme means to speak evil, whether in direct falsehood or otherwise. The preceding verse says they reviled him which means to blaspheme, and the present verse tells us some of the false things they said. Jesus never said he would destroy the temple (John 2: 19), hence this was

one of the blasphemous falsehoods they uttered against him. If *thou be the Son of God* denotes they understood what was the real issue between Jesus and his enemies. It was not about his personal life nor his knowledge, but it was his identity. That is why the devil dwelt on that question in the temptations (chapter 4: 3, 6), and why Jesus asked the question stated in chapter 16: 13, 15 and 22: 42. All the other questions and facts in the life of Christ are important only in so far as they pertain to the fundamental claim that he is God's Son.

Verse 41. The reproachful sayings in the preceding verse were from the crowd in general. This verse specifies the chief priests and scribes as the ones who were mocking Jesus. They had been against him all through his public work, so it is not surprising that they would join in the mob clamor at this time.

Verse 42. *Saved others* refers to the miraculous cures that Jesus did for people. *Himself he cannot save* means he cannot deliver himself from the cross. This was another falsehood, and it ignored the incident in the garden when Peter thought to defend him against bodily attack (chapter 26: 51-54). They professed that they would believe in him if he would come down from the cross. This was a hypocritical claim for Jesus had done many works in their presence that were as great as this would have been, yet they refused to acknowledge him as the Lord.

Verse 43. *Let him deliver him* means for God to deliver his Son from the cross. This was as insincere as the statement of the preceding verse. They must have known that God would have the same reason for not interfering with the crucifixion as Jesus had for not resisting it.

Verse 44. This reproach from the thieves was as much out of place as any such a thing could be. There was no honorable reason why they were in the difficulty of the hour, for they could have avoided it by the right conduct. But Jesus was so situated from the fact that his conduct was righteous. We are glad that one of them did see the situation in the proper light and so expressed himself. (Luke 23: 39-43.)

Verse 45. The sixth and ninth hours corresponds with our noon and three in the afternoon. This darkness is pre-

dicted in Joel 2: 30, 31 and is referred to by Peter in Acts 2: 19, 20. It seems that nature was draped in mourning during the last hours of this human-divine sacrifice. And to add to the gloom, the Father withdrew his comforting grace so that Jesus made a strong outcry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In order that the Son of God might make a complete sacrifice, that he might "pour out his soul unto death" (Isaiah 53: 12), he was left unattended in his painful solitude, no soothing hand to calm the nervous agitation with a caressing touch, but, deserted by all his friends and mocked by his enemies, compelled to die for the unjust.

Verse 46. *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani* is from Hebrew words as Jesus uttered them. Then Matthew translates them into Greek, which the translators of King James render in English for us, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* This bewailing sentence is recorded as a prophecy in Psalms 22: 1.

Verse 47. The Hebrew word that Jesus used is similar in sound to the Greek for Elias, and that misled the bystanders to think he was calling for Elias who had been predicted to come into the world as his forerunner (Malachi 4: 5).

Verse 48. In John 19: 28, 29 where this part of the event is recorded, Jesus is reported to have said he was thirsty. Thus in our present verse we are told that a person standing near offered him a drink of vinegar (sour wine), serving it with a sponge on a reed. That was the most convenient way either of serving or receiving it under the circumstances. This was done merely to quench his dying thirst and not as an opiate since it did not have the gall mixed with it which he had refused (verse 34).

Verse 49. Others, with less sympathy with Jesus in his distress, were willing to let him linger on in pain to see if his friend Elias (as they supposed) would come to his rescue and take him down from the cross.

Verse 50. When a human being is at the point of death from exhaustion, he is generally unconscious, or if not, he is very weak and would not be expected to make a strong cry. An exception to this would be when the patient is in delirium and hence acting with abnormal energy and without intelligent expression. No part of this

description can apply to Jesus at this point. He not only was conscious, but his mind had not entered that stage where it would be acting mechanically, for according to Luke 23: 46 this "loud voice" was immediately followed by the all impressive words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Our present verse says he yielded up the *ghost*, which comes from the same Greek word as spirit. So this outcry was evidently the final expression of one who, though ready to die, being "crucified through weakness" (2 Corinthians 13: 4), was able by the force of the will to make a triumphant shout as he was ready to leave the scenes of death and go to his Father.

Verse 51. This veil separated between the holy and most holy rooms in the temple. Through it the high priest went on the day of atonement to offer a service of blood for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16: 29, 30). Jesus died at the hour that the animal was slain for the sacrifices, and hence it was fitting that this veil be rent at the same time, signifying that the great High Priest was ready to offer himself as a ransom for all. The quaking of the earth and rending of the rocks was God's method of opening the graves, the significance of which will be explained in the next two verses.

Verse 52. *Graves were opened*. The tombs are meant which were in the form of caves that either were natural or were hewn out of a rock (verse 60), and another stone placed at the entrance to close the burial place. The earthquake loosened these stones and made them roll away thus *opening the graves* or tombs. A saint is anyone who is devoted to the service of God. These could not have been Christians because the church had not been set up. They were persons from one or all of the following groups of servants of God; those who had lived and died under the Patriarchal or Jewish dispensations, or disciples who had been called by the preaching of John or Christ, and who had died within the three years of their personal ministry. The rising of these saints forms a link in a very important chain of thought, which will be dealt with at Romans 8: 29, 30. For the present, however, I will state that these saints never died again.

Verse 53. One thing that is often overlooked in referring to this event, and that is that it was *after his resur-*

rection that the saints arose. That was in order to make Christ the first one to come from the dead to die no more (Acts 13: 34; 26: 23). Also, it was necessary for it to occur this close to the resurrection of Jesus in order that he could be the first "among many brethren" (Romans 8: 29). The *holy city* means Jerusalem because it was the capital of the Jewish nation in its religious system.

Verse 54. The centurion and the other watchers were filled with awe by the demonstration. It was not at the resurrection of anyone for that had not taken place yet. But they saw and felt the shaking of the earth at the same time that Jesus died, and knew that some supernatural power was the cause of it. They were pagans and did not know God as Christians know him, but they did know that Christ claimed to be His son, and the demonstration convinced them that he was what he claimed to be.

Verse 55. These women were faithful to the last, but with feminine timidity they stood some distance away watching. They had come from the same district where Jesus was brought up, Galilee, and had served him on various occasions.

Verse 56. Mary Magdalene was the woman whom Jesus cured of demons (Mark 16: 9); Mary the mother of James and Joseph was the mother of Jesus (Mark 6: 3); the mother of Zebedee's children was the mother of James and John (Mark 10: 35).

Verse 57. Luke 23: 50, 51 says that Joseph was a counsellor which means that he was a member of the Sanhedrin. That passage states also that he "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them," meaning the Sanhedrin. Decisions of that body were made by the voice of the members (Matthew 26: 65, 66), and when the case of Jesus was presented, Joseph did not vote with those who condemned him. It should be noted that Joseph was a *rich man*, also that he was "a good man and a just," and that he was a disciple of Jesus. All of this disproves the teaching of some that a man cannot be a true disciple of Jesus and still be a rich man. It is the trusting in riches that will condemn a man (Mark 10: 24; 1 Timothy 6: 17, 18). But if he will "do good" with his riches he will thereby lay up for himself a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold upon eternal life. Had Joseph not been a

rich man he might not have been able to purchase the burial place that was used to give the body of Jesus the respect that even any human body deserves, much more that of the Son of God. Another thing, by the fact of this man's being rich it fulfilled the prediction that Christ "made his grave with the rich" (Isaiah 53: 9). That same prophecy includes a grave with the wicked which means the people of the world from whom Joseph purchased the place.

Verse 58. Joseph knew he would have to make special provisions and obtain a legal permit in order to take charge of the Lord's body. As an explanation of that subject I shall quote again a part of the statement from Smith's Bible Dictionary. "In most cases the body was suffered to rot on the cross by the action of sun and rain, or be devoured by birds and beasts. Sepulture [burial] was generally therefore forbidden." The statement that *Pilate commanded the body to be delivered* shows that a considerable amount of "red tape" was necessary in procuring the body of one who had been crucified.

Verse 59. Joseph wrapped the body in a winding sheet of clean linen. In the comments at verse 35 it is shown that a person to be crucified was stripped of all his clothing, hence the immediate need for using this linen cloth, for under the circumstances there was no opportunity for getting a burial shroud.

Verse 60. John 19: 38-40 says that Joseph had a helper in this loving service, the man who came to Jesus by night (John 3: 1, 2). This gives us the information that Nicodemus became friendly with Jesus at least, and was willing not only to assist in the work of burying the Lord, but contributed a substantial amount of valuable products to be used in the burying according to the Jewish manner of such a ceremony. The tomb was hewn out of the rock and might well be compared to the burial chambers that are made in the walls of modern mausolems in the public cemeteries. The body was borne by these two men and laid in this cavity as it would be deposited on a couch. To close it a great stone was rolled up against the opening.

Verse 61. The *other Mary* was the mother of Jesus (verse 56). These women found a seat opposite where Jesus was buried and "beheld where

he was laid" (Mark 15: 47), which explains their concern about the stone when they were coming the day after the sabbath with spices, intending to anoint his body (Mark 16: 1-3).

Verse 62. The day before any holy or sabbath day was called a preparation (Mark 15: 42), and this would apply to every holy day, not only the regular weekly sabbath. The day of the passover was a holy day (Leviticus 23: 4, 5), hence the day before it would be a preparation. The passover came on Friday the 14th, thus it would naturally be a day that followed the day of preparation, and also the day following the crucifixion. On that day the leading Jews came to Pilate with their request.

Verse 63. The Jews reminded the governor of the claim of Jesus that he would rise from the dead after three days. Yes, Jesus did declare such a thing, and the Jews had no misunderstanding of the words. But when they had a wicked motive prompting them, they perverted them to serve their hypocrisy (chapter 26: 61).

Verse 64. I do not believe these Jews actually feared the disciples would steal the dead body of their Lord; what could they do with it? Besides, they were discouraged and in no mood for trying any rash means of what at best could only have been propaganda that would soon have been exposed. But these Jews were foolish enough to think that a seal over the tomb would prevent Jesus from breaking it, just as there are people today foolish enough to think that by having their bodies cremated they can escape the lake of fire. *Error and deceiver* are from Greek words with virtually the same meaning. The *last error* means the last deception, and the thought was that if they let the disciples succeed in their plan, then they (the Jews) would be worse beaten at the game than they were the first time.

Verse 65. Pilate reminded them of the watch in existence already, which consisted of various regulations as to the number of men to be on the watch at a time and the number of hours each group was required to be on duty. In addition to this, Pilate authorized them to make the tomb as secure as possible.

Verse 66. Acting upon the authority of Pilate, they put a Roman seal on the tomb and appointed the watchmen to be on duty at the grave.

MATTHEW 28

Verse 1. The particular time at which the 24-hour period was supposed to start has been a disputed point, and that is because no absolute and universal rule was observed by all people. According to this verse the period began in the morning. Thayer defines *began to dawn* to mean, "To grow light, to dawn." And Mark 16: 2 refers to the same event as being "at the rising of the sun," all of which indicates that at least in some cases the 24-hour day was from sunrise to sunrise. However, we should not overlook that it was after the sabbath was past for the text says *end of the sabbath* which Thayer defines, "the sabbath having just past." The two Marys were the same as those mentioned in 27: 61; Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Verse 2. There was a great earthquake. The marginal renders it "had been," which is correct, for Mark 16: 4 says that when the women arrived at the tomb they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. The angel was not afraid to break the seal that the Jews had caused to be placed upon the tomb, for he did not flee but rather remained and sat upon the stone.

Verse 3. Lightning is very bright and penetrating and a fitting comparison for the counterance of an angel. Snow-whiteness is an emblem of purity and well represents the kind of being who would come down from heaven.

Verse 4. The keepers were the members of the watch who were stationed there to see that no person would disturb the tomb. When this angel ignored the entire setup and removed the stone it was a great surprise to the watchers who were soldiers. No wonder it filled them with fear and trembling and rendered them helpless.

Verse 5. As far as the text shows, the angel paid no attention to the members of the watch, but he addressed encouraging words to the women. Being on a mission from heaven he was endowed with the information that would be useful in his work. By this he was aware of the purpose of the women who appeared at this time.

Verse 6. Not only had Jesus risen, but he had left the scenes of the tomb. As a visual evidence of the Lord's resurrection, the women were invited to come and see the place where he had lain.

Verse 7. After a look at the empty tomb they were bidden to go quickly and tell the good news to the disciples. They were later to see Jesus in Galilee, the district where he had lived until he was ready for his public ministry.

Verse 8. The fear of these women was the same as profound respect, and the great joy was caused by the wonderful fact that their Lord was alive again. Their joy would not let them be selfish, but they went running to bring the word to the disciples.

Verse 9. Jesus had left the tomb before the women arrived, and as they were leaving he met them and gave them a joyous greeting. The reader should see the note on the subject of "worship" at chapter 2: 2 and note the various shades of meaning of the word. In our present verse the only outward demonstration indicated was their grasping the feet of the Lord. This act of respectful condescension could very properly be called one of worship and is included in the definition of the word.

Verse 10. This is the same message the angel gave the women at the tomb. Christ's *brethren* means his disciples (John 20: 17, 18), and they were promised to be met by him in his home country of Galilee.

Verse 11. *Some of the watch* means the men who had been on duty at the tomb. They doubtless did their duty in seeing that no man disturbed the tomb, but they were powerless to prevent what the angel did. As faithful watchmen they made a true report of what had transpired. However, this was before they had been approached on the bribery proposition and agreed to make the foolish statement mentioned above.

Verse 12. Gave the money unto the *soldiers* means the men who had been appointed to guard the grave from disturbance by the disciples.

Verse 13. The absence of the body of Jesus from the tomb could not be denied, hence the story of stealing it was made up to account for the empty tomb. There are at least two weak points in this story. If they were asleep they could not know what was going on; also, such a lack of faithfulness as watchers was punishable by death and they would not likely have risked it. But money will do wonders and it seems to have had its effect on these soldiers.

Verse 14. Thayer says to persuade means "to win one's good will." Pilate was a wavering sort of governor as had been shown in this case, and they felt sure they could influence him to let the soldiers off without punishment. Another thing, they said *if this come to the governor's ears; there is no proof that he ever heard the report.*

Verse 15. This foolish report was circulated among the Jews which is very significant. They were the ones who wanted to believe it and pretended to do so. There is no account of any knowledge of it among the people in general.

Verse 16. The women were told by the angel (verse 7) to give the disciples the word, and in verse 10 Jesus gave them the same message. Hence this verse reports the journey to Galilee, the very mountain spot for the meeting having been designated. Eleven disciples were in the group because Judas had taken his own life before the crucifixion of his Lord (chapter 27: 5).

Verse 17. All we can say of this *worship* is that what they did comes within the definition of the word as given at chapter 2: 2. Thayer defines the original of *doubt*, "to doubt, to waver." It indicates a frame of mind that might be expressed by a familiar saying, "it is too good to be true."

Verse 18. In the Authorized Version the word "power" comes from two Greek words, with only a few exceptions, which are *DUNAMIS* and *EXOUSIA*. There is a partial blending of these words in their meaning so that they are used somewhat interchangeably, but each has its main or proper meaning. According to Thayer the first word means, "strength, ability, power; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature." He defines the second word, "power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission." For convenience the first may be defined as "personal strength or ability," the second as, "the right or privilege bestowed on one." The word in this verse is *EXOUSIA*, which means that God bestowed upon Christ full right to rule over his kingdom.

Verse 19. *Teach* is from *MATHETEUCO* and is defined by Thayer, "to make a disciple; to teach, instruct." Its main application is to bring persons into a relationship with Christ that they never had before. *All nations* is equiva-

lent to "every creature" in Mark 16: 15. The Mosaic system was given to the Jews only, while the Gospel was given to both Jew and Gentile. To do this teaching among all nations would require ability to speak in every language, and none but the apostles had that ability. It is a perversion of scripture, therefore, to apply this commission to preachers of today. *In* is from *eis* which means "into" as used here. The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are a unit in the Godhead and hence "name" is singular. Whoever is baptized into one is baptized into all three, therefore one baptism is all that is necessary and right. The scripture in no place presents this as a formula to be spoken by the administrator of baptism, and when he says these words he is merely announcing to the hearers what he is doing.

Verse 20. *Teaching* is from *DIDASKO* and means to instruct in general. The ones to be instructed were those that Christ had commanded. In order that no mistake would be made, the Comforter (Holy Spirit) was to be sent to "bring all things to their remembrance" (John 14: 26). *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The authority of the apostles was to be in force to the end of the world. Christ is not with them in person any more than he is with all Christians in person. But the words of the apostles are written in the New Testament and they are as binding on us now as if they were here in person and as if Jesus also had remained on earth in person. So there can be no successors to the apostles in this world because they are still in their own proper place of authority under Christ and will be until the end.

MARK 1

Verse 1. Mark was not one of the apostles, but was inspired to write an account of the life of Christ. He is mentioned a few times in the New Testament which will be noticed as we come to them. *Beginning of the gospel* is his introduction to the story of Christ, indicating the point in the history at which he was to begin his book.

Verse 2. This verse states the beginning point that was referred to in the preceding verse, that it was the time when Jesus was ready to start in his public work. But since that was to be preceded immediately by the work of the forerunner, John the Baptist, the author opens his story with