

SERMONS

UPON

CHRIST'S SERMON IN THE MOUNT.

'And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; &c.—MAT. v. 1.

THIS chapter, with the sixth and seventh chapters, are a sermon that Jesus Christ preached upon the mount, the largest and fullest sermon that we have recorded in the Scripture: the sermon of Christ himself.

I being solicitous what to pitch upon that might be most for your edification, this took my thoughts. What can be more suitable for a minister of Christ to preach of, than the sermon of Christ? And therefore I intend, God willing, if life, and strength, and liberty continues, to go through this whole sermon of Christ unto you. For a minister to preach other men's sermons it is negligence, but for him to preach Christ's sermon it is faithfulness. In the 2d Cor. v. 20, the ministers of God are the ambassadors of Christ, and are to speak unto people as if Jesus Christ spake unto them, 'in his stead;' and so they are to look upon them as coming to them in Christ's stead, as if Christ were speaking. And if we must preach as if Christ were preaching, what more suitable than to preach what Christ hath preached? This sermon, in these three whole chapters, is a sermon preached by the mouth of the Son of God himself, of him that is the wisdom of the Father, that hath all the treasures of wisdom in him, of him that hath been in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, and knows all his mind, his whole heart, the counsels of his will concerning man's eternal estate. And it is he that is sent by the Father into the world, designed to this office, to preach his mind and his will unto the children of men.

Oh, what attention is called for, while you are hearing this sermon of Christ repeated to you, and opened and applied unto you!

Oh, we have infinite cause to bless God for the way of knowing his mind by Jesus Christ his Son! The Lord in former times did reveal his mind to men several ways; but now saith the apostle in Heb. i., he 'hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person,' &c. Oh, this is the happiness of those that live in the times of the gospel, that God speaks unto them by his Son, that Christ is come from the Father to make him known unto us: for 'no man knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' Surely there are great things to be known of the mind of God, seeing the second person in Trinity is designed by the Father to come to preach his mind to the children of men. If we hear but of a friend that is come out of a far country to tell us news there; if the news be of moment, and nearly concerning us, and we know that this friend is wise and faithful, and will tell us nothing but that that is truth, we flock about him. Sometimes if one come but from the army after some notable war hath been done, and we know that he doth understand things, and is faithful, how greedy are we to be with him, and to know what news from thence! But here, my brethren, we have Jesus Christ coming from God the Father, that knows fully all the mind

of his Father, and is sent by the Father into the world to make known to us all those counsels of God that were kept hid from the beginning of the world; news about our eternal estates, for that is the gospel—the gospel signifies nothing else but *good news* that Christ is come to bring;—and therefore I beseech you hearken: saith God, ‘This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him!’

I am now beginning, and intend, God willing, to go on preaching what Christ saith; and therefore so long as I keep to what he saith, you are to hear him in it; and that will be a very great aggravation to your sin if you mind not what shall be preached now, because it is the sermon of Jesus Christ that is to be opened, and the fullest sermon that we know of that ever he preached, that is recorded to us. In Heb. xii. see what weight the Holy Ghost lays upon this, that God hath made known himself to us by his Son: ver. 25, ‘See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.’ Here, in this chapter, Christ speaks from heaven; though he were himself upon earth at that time, yet we are to look upon him as speaking from heaven. For so the words that are before shews it is meant of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, that came to preach. It is the sermon of Christ that is our subject, and therefore calls for serious attention, and fear, and reverence. And oh that we would carry this thought with us all the while we hear him preaching out of these chapters!

All that I shall do at this time shall be but to preface this sermon. There are these six things considerable in this sermon:—

I. First, Because we find this sermon recorded not only in Matthew, but also in Luke, to inquire whether they be the same; yea or no: for we shall find it of use; one will much enlighten the other if they be the same.

II. Secondly, We shall inquire at what time Christ preached this sermon, and upon what occasion.

III. Thirdly, In what place he preached it.

IV. Fourthly, To whom he preached it.

V. Fifthly, The manner of his preaching; and

VI. Sixthly, The scope of his sermon, what it did principally aim at. These six things will be useful for the making way to what shall follow.

I. For the first, Whether it be the same sermon that Luke records. I find interpreters are very much troubled about it: and yet if you read the sermon itself, you shall find, though not recorded so largely as Matthew doth it, yet the substance of it is the same, and almost the same words. In Luke vi. 20, ‘He lift up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are the poor,’ and so he goes on, just as here. And

the reason of the doubt is, because we find in Matthew that Christ chose his disciples in the tenth chapter and sent them out, but we find in Luke that Christ did choose his disciples before this sermon was preached. In this sixth chapter, ver. 13, you shall find that the twelve were sent out first, and then the sermon was preached. There is the difference. And then, secondly, Matthew saith that Jesus Christ went up to the mountain, and there taught his disciples, ver. 1. But Luke saith, he ‘came down with them and stood in the plain, and he lift up his eyes on his disciples, and said,’ &c. Matthew saith he *sat*, and Luke saith he *stood* in the plain; so that divers interpreters say it was a different sermon. But yet these may easily be answered.

For the first: Though Luke makes it to be after the sending out of the twelve, and Matthew seems to make it to be afore, yet it may be reconciled thus: that though indeed it be recorded in Matthew after, as in the tenth chapter, yet we know that many times the Scripture doth not set down things that are before in time, always before in place, as I might easily shew you. There be many things that are after in a book that yet were done before those things that are set down first; it is ordinary. Here Matthew had occasion to speak of Christ’s doctrine; afterwards, in the tenth chapter, to speak of sending out his disciples. That is no argument, because it is in the tenth chapter, therefore it was not before this that is in the fifth chapter.

And then for the other: That it is said in Matthew that he was upon the mountain, and in Luke that he came down to the plain. To that the answer is: that here it is not said that he came down to the plain, and preached upon the plain; but it is said that after he had sent forth his disciples he came down to the plain, and then the company came to him. So, then, after he had done the work of giving his disciples the commission to go and preach, then comes abundance of people to him. He had been upon the mount, as we shall see by and by, all night, and then did the work of sending out his disciples, and then comes down and sees a great multitude of people, and did some work about them in healing of them, and then returns up into the mountain again, withdrawing himself from the tumult of the people to preach to his disciples, and those that came together with him. So that, though it be said he was in the plain, and he stood—that is, he stood while the multitude was with him, but after he had done some work about them, then, according to Matthew, he returns into the mountain again, and there falls a-preaching. So that there is no objection of any moment, that I know, why it should not be the same sermon, but these two, and these two may easily be reconciled. Therefore, seeing that the very substance of

the sermon is the same, we will take it that it was all one. Now being all one sermon, you shall find much help by this. The one evangelist will give light into another.

II. And then the second thing that is to be inquired into is, The time when Christ preached it, and that help you must have from Luke,—for so I intend, that what light one evangelist will give, I will make use of that,—though it be not mentioned here in Matthew, and you will find it of very great use to inquire after this. You shall find that the very night before he preached this sermon, that he was at prayer all night. Luke vi. 12, ‘And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.’ It was the night before this sermon was preached.

And this scripture will justify long prayers upon extraordinary occasions, though, I confess, in an ordinary way in family prayer, ordinarily it is more convenient to have them short than long. But this scripture justifies long prayer—speaking many hours in prayer—upon extraordinary occasions. Jesus Christ speaks a whole night in prayer unto God, and you see how the things of the glory of God, and the good of his church, did take up his heart, so that he speaks a whole night in prayer about them. Oh consider this, you that spend so many nights in clambering and wantonness; you that can sit up nights in drinking and playing, remember Jesus Christ sat up a whole night together in praying. He prays all night; hereby giving an example to his ministers upon occasions to be praying for people when they are sleeping—to be seeking to God in prayer, and when they are about other things. Christ he was a whole night here in prayer.

But you will say, What was the occasion? why was he a whole night in prayer before he preached this sermon? Why, the occasion seems to be the work that he had to do the next morning, which was to send forth his disciples, for so the text saith in ver. 13: ‘When it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.’ He had a great work to do—to choose twelve apostles to go up and down in the world to preach the gospel of God, the greatest work that ever men were to do since the beginning of the world. To go and preach the gospel, Christ looked upon this as a great and a weighty work. And, therefore, by way of preparation before he chooses them, he spends a whole night in prayer to God to prepare for that great work.

You may see by this, that the work of the ministry it is a great work. You may think it indeed a light matter, but Christ accounted it a great matter: he makes solemn preparation for the choosing his apostles, and prays to God all night before. Oh let

those, then, who are in the ministry, consider of this as a mighty and great work, as a solemn business. That that Christ shall spend so much time in prayer about, must needs be a solemn thing. They should so look upon the work that they are called unto. And for people that are at any time to choose or to call a minister, oh, they should look upon it as a solemn work, and not think it a light matter. Some when they hear of such a man, say, Come let us have him presently; when Christ was to choose his apostles and send them forth, he makes a preparation by sitting up all night in prayer. And it is a very seemly thing for people that are at any time to choose a minister, that they should spend much time in prayer and seeking to God. Indeed, for the choice of civil officers, or of any that shall be but by way of assistance to the civil magistrate, there is not need of so much solemnity; but if it be for the choice of those that shall exercise the power of Christ in the administering of ordinances, they are to be chosen and brought into their place with a very great solemnity: here it was so at first; and so I find it continued, that if but a deacon was brought in, Acts vi., it was with prayer and imposition of hands; and so elders much more, if they be for to exercise the power of Christ, then, as in Acts xiv., they are with prayer and fasting and imposition of hands brought into their places. It is a solemn and great business, and all ministers of God should consider of this prayer of Christ in way of preparation for the ministry: consider of it, and exercise their faith in believing the blessing of it upon them. Now whereas Christ himself saith in John xvii. 20, that he prayed not only for them that were present, but for all others after that should believe: so certainly Christ, when he spent this whole night in prayer, did not pray only for the twelve apostles, but for all those that should be in the ministry, to preach the gospel of Christ, to the end of the world. But now having spent all the night in prayer, then in the morning the first thing he doth is to choose his twelve apostles, and when he hath done, he seeing the multitude come to him, doth a little retire himself from them and falls a-preaching, and preaches this excellent and notable sermon that we are now beginning to speak of. After Christ had been all night up, yet next day he falls a-preaching. You see Christ is not so tender of his body; those that had been tender over him, would have been ready to say that he should go and sleep. What! shall he tire and wear out his body, having sat up all night, and spent himself in prayer?—as there is no exercise that is more spending to the body than prayer—yet after all this, the next morning, Christ he takes this opportunity, and falls a-preaching.

Teaching thus much, that the ministers of the gospel should not be too nice and dainty of their bodies;

not to be always whining and complaining of the weakness of body, and spending of themselves, and such things; but if there be opportunity given for service, they should be ready to take it, although it should be a weariness and spending. What if it should shorten their days a little while? is it not all one, to do a great deal of good in a little time, or to do a little good in a great deal of time? To do a great deal in a little time is the more comfortable. A man's life is to be reckoned according to his service, not according to how many years he lives. Christ he preaches this long sermon, the longest that ever he did preach, for aught we know, and it was the morning after he had been up all the night a-praying.

Further observe from this time of the sermon of Christ: what a notable sermon doth Jesus Christ preach, after he had been thus praying. It is a most heavenly sermon. And that prayer that he had a little before he died, from John xiv. on for two or three chapters, they have the most of Christ in them that the Scripture doth record of anything that Christ hath done. Then let ministers pray more, and they will preach better. The way to be a good preacher it is to be a fervent prayer. Do as Christ did: ministers should come reeking from prayer into the pulpit; and those will be the best sermons that are warmed in their own hearts by prayer. They come to give the milk of the word; and you know nurses, when they give milk to the child, will not give it raw, nor cold, but they will warm the milk before they give it to the child. Oh, the milk of the word, that is warmed by the prayer of a minister in his own heart before he comes, that is that that is like to be most nourishable unto people.

And hence likewise we may note, that the way to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be filled with heavenly truths, with a most spiritual frame, it is to be much in prayer, the spending time in prayer; and doing of it to purpose indeed, will help not only ministers but Christians to rise up full of the Holy Ghost, full of heavenly and divine truths. Consider that this sermon was preached the next morning after Christ had spent a whole night in prayer, and it will add much to the excellency of the sermon, and will be a special motive to your attention, and for the receiving of what shall be said out of this sermon. Certainly there must be some notable matter in this sermon, that was preached presently after such a prayer; and that is the second consideration by way of preface, The time when this sermon was preached.

III. The third thing by way of preface to this sermon is, The place where it was preached; for there is nothing in Scripture without use. My text saith that he went up to the mountain. He had been in the mountain in prayer, and came down and did

some work among the people, and then goes up thither again to preach.

Why upon the mountain?

Something it was to fulfil those prophecies that we have in divers scriptures about preaching of the gospel upon the mountain, in Isa. xl. 9, and Joel iii. 18, but these are only guessings. Others I find do allegorise very much, how a minister should be as upon the mountain, and how heavenly he should be when he is a-preaching; but I like it not to strain Scripture any further than I think to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost; therefore I think there is nothing else to be considered than this, the conveniency of the mountain, because it was a retired place, and there being a clutter of people, he could not be so composed among them to speak so freely to edification, therefore he retires unto a mountain again, where he had spent so much time in prayer.

Christ doth not stay till he comes to the synagogue to preach, or the temple; no, but takes any place that was a fitting place to preach unto the people. It is not necessary that there should be a consecrated place for the preaching of the word.

What mountain was this? you will say.

Some have thought it to be the mountain of Olivet, but that cannot possibly be, for Christ was in the upper Galilee at this time, and mount Olivet was near to Jerusalem, as near to Jerusalem as Islington is near the city; but Christ was about forty miles from Jerusalem at this time, therefore Jerome and others think it to be mount Tabor.

And certainly, this will further justify that preaching may be in any place where ministers have opportunity, and may be with peace and edification. There is a double vanity of conceit in people. Some men think that some places are so profane by profane uses, that there must not be no preaching there; and others think that some places are too superstitiously used, and because of the superstition that hath been there, there must be no preaching there; they will not go to hear a sermon because of the superstition of the place. Truly this may help us against both these.

For profane: Certainly there is nothing done in any place that doth so defile the place but that if occasion serve there might be preaching in that place, and would be acceptable to God; though it were in a place that had been a playhouse, it would not defile the work at all, if there can be no more convenient place had. Shall so many thousand souls perish for want of knowing God and Christ, because they have not a consecrated place? It is a very sad thing to consider of. This mountain—if it be mount Tabor, as I find both Jerome and others think it was—as ill a place as a playhouse could be, where Christ

preached this sermon; and a place that was like to be abused to much superstition and idolatry. I find in the prophecy of Hosea mention of this place, chap. v. 1, 'Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is towards you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.' The meaning of it is this, that when the ten tribes had fallen off from the true worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem, and set up their calves in Dan and Bethel, there were some that were more godly and strict than others, and they could not be content to worship there, but they must needs go to worship at Jerusalem. But now the laws of the king and the priests were against it, and no man could be suffered to worship at Jerusalem but it was upon his peril; but yet there would many go, therefore the priests and others set watchers to watch those that did go up into Jerusalem to worship. As heretofore there have been men set to watch when men went from their parish churches, though they had no preaching at home; so there were watches set upon mount Tabor to watch those that went to Jerusalem, for they were to go by that place, and therefore it is said that there was a net spread upon Tabor. Surely this place was profaned as much as any place could be; and yet for all that, Christ he goes and preaches this sermon upon mount Tabor. It was as wicked a work to set watchmen to spy out those that went to the true worship of God to Jerusalem, as it was to make a play; and yet, I say, Christ comes and preaches here upon the mountain.

And so for any superstition in places, the synagogues of the ten tribes, and the places that they set up for their service, and for teaching, they were abused exceedingly, for they set them up in opposition to the true worship of God in Jerusalem: and yet Christ would preach in every place according as he came into it, and we do not find that Christ refused preaching in any such place where he came, though it had been abused this way or that way; Christ stood not upon that, but took the present opportunity to do his work, for to preach the word. That is the first; and,

Secondly, That all ministers of God should take what opportunities they can for doing good; and that is the third consideration by way of preface.

IV. The fourth is, Who are these auditors that the text speaks of? 'And seeing the multitude, he went up into the mountain.' Now I confess some they make this sermon of Christ to be to the multitude that was there, that did come and clutter about him, and therefore think that Christ was moved with compassion to preach unto them, because he saw such abundance of people. It is very true, it is a very moving object to any gracious heart, to any godly

ministers, when they see abundance of people coming to hear, and especially manifesting a willingness to attend, it is a very moving object to draw forth any minister's heart in the world: and so we find at some other time that Christ's heart was much drawn forth upon the sight of a multitude of people, in Mat. ix. 36, 'But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd: then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.' When Jesus Christ looked upon abundance of people that were there, the text saith that he was moved with compassion, thinking with himself, Lord, what shall become of these many thousand souls, that know so little of God and the things of heaven? And therefore, Oh pray, saith he to his disciples, pray ye that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. These people are willing to hear, the regions are white unto harvest; oh pray that there might be labourers sent into the harvest. The very sight of a multitude is a moving sight, to preach and to pray that God would send faithful ministers to preach unto them. Indeed, the sight of a multitude is an object of envy to many; as heretofore we know it was enough for a faithful minister to be silenced, such was their envy, and so contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ. But I cannot tell how to build any point of doctrine upon this, because I think that at this time Christ did go up into the mountain, and withdrew himself from the most of the people, for so I find the text saith, 'And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:' and it may be some of the rest, but not the generality of them. And so in Luke vi, there having the same sermon recorded, the text saith, 'That he lift up his eyes upon his disciples, and said, Blessed are the poor,' &c. So that it is probable that rather than he would spend his time at this present among the multitude, he retires himself to speak to his disciples. Why? for his chief work was about his disciples, about the sending out the twelve, and making them to be apostles; and therefore, though the preaching to all the multitude be a very good thing, and that the heart of Christ was much in upon all occasions, yet now Christ would mind his work that he was about, to speak to his apostles that he was to send abroad.

From whence we may note, That men must tend their present work, and not be upon thinking that they may do more good some other way, and so leave the present work that God calls them to. Let us look to the work that we are about for the present, and not be taken off to think, Ay, but another work may be more useful; but, Is this my work for the

present? Then let me go upon it, and commit my work to the blessing of God.

And then, secondly; Hence we may see that Christ hath a special regard unto his ministers; he withdraws from the multitude to speak to them; he did not forbid any of the people to come, but the thing that Christ intended, was to speak to them. Christ hath a special regard to his ministers; he knows that great things doth depend upon them, as afterwards in this chapter he calls them the salt of the earth, as if all the world would rot and putrefy if it were not for them. And so he calls them the light of the world, as if all the world would be in darkness were it not for the light of the word; they should be full of light, and so should enlighten others. Ministers they should be filled with the will of God, as it is said of Epaphras in Col. iv., he prayed for the people that they might be 'filled in all the will of God,' ver. 12. Oh! it is an excellent thing for a minister to be filled with the will of God, as a sail is filled with the wind.

Those who are most instructed by Christ, they are fittest to instruct people. Christ he falls preaching to them, that they may preach to the people. Those cannot preach to the hearts of people that have not had Jesus Christ preaching to their hearts before.

And besides, Christ saw that the work was very difficult. The work of the ministry is a hard work; therefore Christ spends a great deal of time, as in praying for them before, so after he had chosen them, in instructing of them. They were to be set as a light upon an hill; and the eyes and observations of men would be upon them to watch them in all their ways. They must bear the brunt of all, and if there be any hazardous work they must approach. This work of God is very difficult. It is a speech of Luther, 'What is it to preach, but for a man to drive the envy of people that are evil upon himself?' And therefore it was that Christ made such a preparation of his apostles before they were to go abroad. And that is the fourth consideration about the preface to Christ's sermon, his auditors whom he had.

V. And then the fifth consideration by way of preface is, The manner of Christ's preaching. And there are three things observable. I would gladly take up all things in Scripture, for the Scripture is not like a carpenter's yard, that a great deal of chips lies about and are of no use; but it is like a goldsmith's shop, that every dust is precious. So, when we have to deal in Scripture, we should not neglect the least particle, for we shall find it of much use.

There are three things that are recorded about the manner of Christ's preaching.

First, That Christ did sit and preach.

Secondly, That he opened his mouth and spake.

And then the third is, That Christ fastened his eyes upon his disciples;—that you have in Luke vi.

But we have two of these in Matthew: That he sat and opened his mouth and spake. For the sitting: Christ when he preached he sat down; he did not stand as preachers do now. And we find it was the ordinary way of preaching among the Jews, for the preacher to sit down. In Mat. xxiii. 2, the scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' chair: hear them, and do what they say, saith Christ, though do not what they do. And so you shall find it in Mat. xxiv. 3, and xxvi. 55; you shall see in both these places that Christ when he came to preach sat down; he stood up when he read the law, but when he preached he sat down. And so in Luke iv. 20. In all these scriptures you may see it was the manner in preaching to sit down. Now some would make a significance in it; but I take it, it was only a civil gesture, that Christ observing what the way was at that time, he would conform himself to the order and way of sitting, not that it had any spiritual signification. As now, the French ministers they preach with their hats on, it is the custom there; and no question, if any one were to go among them it were fit they should observe the customs that they have: and so here, to sit down, and in other churches to stand.

You will say, Doth not this justify the conforming to ceremonies in churches? Christ you see conformed to this ceremony of sitting, and why had we such a stir about kneeling at sacrament? And,

Now to answer that clearly, thus: You must know the difference of ceremonies. Whatsoever ceremony is but merely natural or civil, and is but helpful to the worship of God in a natural and civil way, certainly we should conform to the customs of churches wheresoever we come. But now when a ceremony comes to have a spiritual use, and to have by the institution of man some spiritual thing put upon it, as our ceremonies had, then, though they be but ceremonies, we must not, except we would sin against Jesus Christ and our consciences, we must not conform to them; for then they come to have some worship in them, when they come to have spiritual significations, and there is that put upon them by way of institution. But if there be no more in a ceremony than what the nature of the thing carries with it to be helpful in God's worship, there is no question but the prudence of men is enough for the ordering of that in it; as it is a natural help for people when they come to hear the word, to have convenient seats. It is a natural help so when it is but used in a natural way; but now kneeling at sacrament, and such ceremonies, they had a spiritual efficacy put into them, and an institution from them.

And so for garments: for a minister to have a con-

venient garment it is a natural thing; but now, if they will make an institution, that a garment must be therefore decent because it is appointed and not else, for what decency is there in the nature of the thing, but all is in the institution that is put upon it by man. Therefore observe here, whatsoever ceremony is but natural and helpful in a natural way, there should be no contention; we have no such custom, nor the churches of God, to contend about these; but if they come to have a religious use put upon them, for so it is said in the Common Prayer Book, to stir up the dull minds of men, now they come to be sinful, and therefore Christ he observed the ceremony of the Jews as a natural help.

And secondly, Christ opened his mouth and spake. Opened his mouth, you will say; why is this mentioned? How could he speak else to them?

I answer, first, There is a speaking though there is not an opening of one's mouth. In Heb. xi. 4. there the Holy Ghost speaks of a speaking without opening of the mouth. 'By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.' So there is a real speaking as well a verbal one, and so some think that this was a similitude, whereas Christ did preach in his life; as a minister of God should preach in his holy life continually before them, so Christ preached.

But secondly, By opening the mouth, according to the Jewish expression, is to signify, not only that he did speak, but that he had some weighty matter to speak, as in Job xxxii. 20. There Elihu, when he saith that he is full of matter, and hath excellent things to say, he saith, 'He will open his mouth to speak.' And so our English phrase will bear it; when we see an object wishly, we will say, I saw it with mine eyes—that is, I did mind it, and regard it; and so if a man will express a serious intentness to hear, he will say, I heard it with mine ears—that is, he did diligently hear it, and mark it. And so he opened his mouth and spake: he did not only speak, but he had some great and weighty matter to deliver.

Thirdly, This was to shew that the mouth of Christ was as a door of a rich treasury. Jesus Christ had in his heart a rich treasury, and his mouth was the door of that rich treasury; and now Christ opens the door and fetches out these precious things that you shall hear in this sermon. And thus, then, opening the mouth, and setting these things before us, you see is of great use unto us. There are some that have so much evil in their hearts, that it doth burst out of the door of their mouths, and they speak without any consideration. As a man that hath an unclean heart, it breaks forth in his mouth.

As a vessel that is full of filthy liquor, it will break forth when it hath no vent. And so that is the reason men speak so wickedly, in bawdry, or swearing; their hearts are full of wickedness, and it breaks the door open. And so the heart of Jesus Christ was full of heavenly and spiritual things, and Christ he opens the door of his mouth and speaks. It should be so with us. It should be so with the ministers of God especially; they should have their hearts full of heavenly treasure, and when they come to preach, it is but to open the door of this treasury; their mouths should be but as the door to vent those treasures of heavenly truths that they have been trading for in heaven. And so all people, they should have their hearts as a treasure of excellent things, and so have command of their mouths, that when they see an occasion of doing good where they come, they should open the door of this treasury to vent what good things they have got in this treasury. Oh that all our mouths were so! This is the meaning of this expression, Christ opened his mouth. It was a mercy, my brethren, that Christ had his mouth open to speak to this people. Had the scribes and pharisees had their wills upon Christ, his mouth had been shut long before this time, for they envied him, but through God's mercy the mouth of Christ was open to speak to the people the great things of God. And it is a mercy that ministers' mouths are open, that they may open their mouths to speak to people, and shew them what the mind of God is. We had not such a mercy long since. Though there were many ministers that had their hearts full of rich truths, yet the door was locked and bolted against them; they could not open the door, so as the people could not have them. And I believe there was never any reformed church that contracted so much guilt, in all the world, in stopping the mouths of faithful ministers, as England hath done in former time. But blessed be God, that God hath stopped the mouths of the stoppers of mouths. I remember in Chrysostom's time, I find that the godly people then did profess that they had rather have the sun withdraw her beams than the mouth of Chrysostom should be stopped; there was so much excellency in Chrysostom's preaching: say they, Shall the door of the treasury of John Chrysostom's heart be shut, shall that be bolted, and shall we have no benefit by it? It were better we had no benefit by the sun itself. Oh account it a great mercy that the mouths of faithful ministers may be opened to speak unto you. And that is the second consideration in the manner of his preaching, He opened his mouth.

And then the third is, He set his eyes upon those he spake unto. So the Holy Ghost doth note in Luke vi. 20, 'He lifted up his eyes upon his disciples.' Certainly, my beloved, the eyes of Christ did sparkle

with very much wisdom, and there was much of the glory of God sparkling in the very eyes of Jesus Christ. In Rev. i. 14, we find that 'the eyes of Christ were as a flaming fire.' Wisdom makes a man's face to shine. And many times there appears a great majesty in the very countenance of a minister; and a great deal of use is made by the minister's looking upon the people, and the people's looking upon the minister. Therefore because Christ would have his word effect the more, the text saith, he lifted up his eyes upon his disciples, and looked upon them. And it hath a great deal of power in way of reprehension and threatening: and many times a guilty conscience is not able to bear the fastening of the eyes of a minister upon them. Therefore in Acts xiii. 9, we read of Paul, whenas Elymas the sorcerer would have taken off Sergius Paulus, that was the deputy of the place, and would have hindered the work of the ministry upon his heart, Paul was a-preaching, and the deputy began to be stirred up, and to hearken to what Paul should say, and there comes one Elymas and would have taken off the deputy; now when Paul, having hopes to have gained such a man that might be a public instrument in the place where God had set him, the text saith that Paul set his eyes upon Elymas, and spake to him in a terrible manner, as if he should say, O wretch; for so he saith, O child of the devil, and full of all subtlety! What! wilt thou seek to hinder the word upon such an eminent man, O thou child of the devil? There is a great deal of power sometimes in the eyes of a minister of the word. And we find that when Peter had denied Christ, the text saith that Christ looked upon him, and then Peter went forth and wept bitterly. There was much darted through the eyes of Jesus Christ; and there is much many times darted through the eyes of a minister of God.

Now then, my brethren, this is the close of this sermon for the present. I beseech you, while we are preaching over this large sermon of Jesus Christ, do you apprehend that the eyes of Jesus Christ are upon you all. Why should we not apprehend it so now as well as then, when Christ saith, He that heareth you hears me? It is the sermon that Christ preached himself; and as he lift up his eyes upon his auditors at that time, so do you know that Jesus Christ lifts up his eyes upon you all, and his eyes will be upon every heart all the while his sermon shall be preached. Oh, Christ comes into the congregation to look upon this man and the other man, to see how they will entertain his word; and if you will but remember this one note all along as we go, it will be of very great use to you—remember the eyes of Jesus Christ will be upon you, and looks upon your behaviour all the while. And that is the fifth thing by way of preface.

SERMON II. Ver. 2.

VI. The sixth thing is to shew what the scope of this sermon was; and that consists especially in these three things:—

First, To discover wherein true blessedness doth consist; who they are that are truly blessed.

Secondly, To open the spiritualness of the law, or that spiritual light that by the light of the gospel we come to understand. Christ undertakes to shew the duties of the law, how they were by the gospel raised to a higher height. The gospel doth not abolish them, but shews us a more spiritual life to live than those generally under the law did understand. Our Saviour aims at taking of men off from satisfying of themselves in external duties of righteousness, of prayers, or any other way, or keeping from external sins.

And then thirdly, A forewarning of false teachers. These are the three principal heads of the sermon. There are many other things interwoven in. But for the first thing, It is to shew wherein true blessedness consists. He begins with blessedness in his mouth,—Blessed are the poor, Blessed, Blessed, again and again. From this we have these notes briefly—

First, That it is Jesus Christ that teaches wherein true blessedness doth consist. If we would know how to be happy and blessed, it must be by Christ; the natural wisdom of man can never reach it. There were among philosophers a hundred and four-score opinions of man's happiness, and some reckon more. They did but beat the bush; it is the Christian that catches the bird. It is only by Christ that we may know how to be happy; Christ is come from the bosom of the Father to reveal unto mankind those eternal counsels of the Father about man's last end. Man since the fall would never have come to have known wherein his last end consists, and what good it is that he is capable of and God intends towards him, had not Christ come from the bosom of the Father to declare it. Oh the poor and low things wherein the children of men place their happiness in, that know not Jesus Christ, but are strangers to Jesus Christ! When Christ comes to be revealed, the thoughts and hearts of men are raised and enlarged; they look after happiness in another manner than formerly they did. Oh let us bless God for Jesus Christ, by whom we come to know how we may be happy—that is, wherein our last end consists, that high good that man's nature is made capable of by God.

Secondly, It is the end and scope of the ministry to shew to people how they may come to be blessed. For this sermon was preached especially to the apostles when they had their commission, as I opened the