

said, Sir, I knew that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hadst not sown, and gathering whence thou hadst not
 25 scattered: And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in
 26 the earth: lo, thou hast what is thine. His master answering
 said to him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest
 that I reap where I sowed not, and gather whence I had not
 27 scattered! Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money
 to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received
 28 my own with interest. Take therefore the talent from him,
 29 and give *it* to him who hath ten talents. * For to every one
 that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but
 from him that hath not shall be taken away even what he
 30 hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer
 darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of
 teeth.

31 When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the

* Matt. xiii. 12.

us power to perform. So does every obstinate sinner, in one kind or other, lay the blame of his own sins on God.

Verse 25. *And I was afraid*—Lest, if I had improved my talent, I should have had the more to answer for. So, from this fear, one will not learn to read, another will not hear sermons!

Verse 26. *Thou knewest*—That I require impossibilities! This is not an allowing, but a strong denial, of the charge.

Verse 27. *Thou oughtest therefore*—On that very account, on thy own supposition, to have improved my talent as far as was possible.

Verse 29. *To every one that hath shall be given*—So close does God keep to this stated rule, from the beginning to the end of the world.

Verse 30. *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness*—For what? What had he done? It is true he had not done good. But neither is he charged with doing any harm. Why, for this reason, for barely doing no harm, he is consigned to outer darkness. He is pronounced a wicked, because he was a slothful, an unprofitable, servant. So mere harmlessness, on which many build their hope of salvation, was the cause of his damnation! *There shall be the weeping*—Of the careless, thoughtless sinner. *And the gnashing of teeth*—Of the proud and stubborn.

The same great truth, that there is no such thing as negative goodness, is in this chapter shown three times: 1. In the parable of the virgins: 2. In the still plainer parable of the servants who had received the talents: and, 3. In a direct, unparabolical declaration of the manner wherein our Lord will proceed at the last day. The several parts of each of these exactly answer each other, only each rises above the preceding.

Verse 31. *When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him*—With what majesty and grandeur does our Lord here

angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his
32 glory : And all the nations shall be gathered before him :
 and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd
33 separateth the sheep from the goats : And he will set the
34 sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Then
 will the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye
 blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you
35 from the foundation of the world : For I was hungry, and ye
 gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was
36 a stranger, and ye took me in : Naked, and ye clothed me :
 I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came
37 to me. Then will the righteous answer him, saying, Lord,
 when saw we thee hungry, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and
38 gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took
39 *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we
40 thee sick, or in prison, and came to *thee*? And the King
 will answer and say to them, Verily I say to you, Inasmuch
 as ye did *it* to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did
41 *it* to me. Then will he say to them on his left hand, Depart

speak of himself! giving us one of the noblest instances of the true sublime. Indeed not many descriptions in the sacred writings themselves seem to equal this. Methinks we can hardly read it, without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes.

Verse 34. *Inherit the kingdom*—Purchased by my blood, for all who have believed in me, with the faith which wrought by love. *Prepared for you*—On purpose for you. May it not be probably inferred from hence, that man was not created merely to fill up the places of the fallen angels?

Verse 35. *I was hungry, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink*—All these works of outward mercy suppose faith and love, and must needs be accompanied with works of spiritual mercy. But works of this kind the Judge could not mention in the same manner. He could not say, I was in error, and ye recalled me to the truth ; I was in sin, and ye brought me to repentance. *In prison*—Prisoners need to be visited above all others, as they are commonly solitary, and forsaken by the rest of the world.

Verse 37. *Then shall the righteous answer*—It cannot be, that either the righteous or the wicked should answer in these very words. What we learn herefrom is, that neither of them have the same estimation of their own works as the Judge hath.

Verse 40. *Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me*—What encouragement is here to assist the household of faith! But let us likewise remember to “do good to all men.”

Verse 41. *Depart into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the*

from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels : For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then will they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ? Then will he answer them, saying, Verily I say to you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not unto one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life everlasting

CHAP. XXVI. 1 * And when Jesus had finished all these discourses, he said to his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be

* Mark xiv. 1 ; Luke xxii. 1.

devil and his angels—Not originally for you ; you are intruders into everlasting fire.

Verse 44. *Then will they answer*—So the endeavour to justify themselves will remain with the wicked even to that day !

Verse 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting*—Either therefore the punishment is strictly eternal, or the reward is not ; the very same expression being applied to the former as to the latter. The Judge will speak first to the righteous in the audience of the wicked. The wicked shall then go away into everlasting fire in the view of the righteous. Thus the damned shall see nothing of the everlasting life : but the just will see the punishment of the ungodly. It is not only particularly observable here, 1. That the punishment lasts as long as the reward : but, 2. That this punishment is so far from ceasing at the end of the world, that it does not begin till then.

Verse 1. *When Jesus had finished all these discourses*—When he had spoken all he had to speak. Till then he would not enter upon his passion : then he would delay it no longer.

Verse 2. *After two days is the passover*—The manner wherein this was celebrated gives much light to several circumstances that follow. The master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine, which, having solemnly blessed, he divided among the guests. Luke xxii. 17. Then the supper began with the unleavened bread and bitter herbs ; which when they had all tasted, one of the young persons present, according to Exod. xii. 26, asked the reason of the solemnity. This introduced the showing forth, or declaration of it : in allusion to which we read of “ showing forth