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A

SOLEMN WORD

TO THE

SAINTS OF GOD.

SECOND EDITION.

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# A SOLEMN WORD

TO

## THE SAINTS OF G

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MATTHEW, after narrating the baptism and temptation of Jesus, informs us (Ch. IV. 23.) that Jesus began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom: and immediately after (Ch. V.) he delivers in detail the manner and order of the principles of this Kingdom. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us BY HIS SON." Let us fervidly bless God for his gift of this Great Teacher—this Spirit of Truth which he hath spake as never man spake; and let us, with the earnestness and prayerfulness of soul, conform to the teaching which He teaches. "And when his disciples came to him, He taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted and reviled for righteousness' sake and for my sake: and, O ye who are persecuted and reviled, rejoice, I say, and be exceedingly glad. Now ye—ye my disciples and followers—be as the salt of the Earth: carefully then preserve the savour; or you will be good for nothing—and will be cast away. Ye are the light of the world: if ye hide not your light from under the bushel, but that ye hide not your light—that ye let it shine forth and give light to all around—that ye

light abundantly shine before men; so seeing your good works, may, through you, your heavenly Father. Mark accordingly a what I am about to command you, for whose break one of these least commandments teach men so, shall be called the least in the which I am now setting up; but whosoever and teach them, the same shall be called great my kingdom. And I further declare, that your righteousness exceed the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into dom. Now, it was said in the old time, "not kill." Mark, I say, "Thou shalt not without cause." It was said, "Thou shalt not adultery." Mark I say, "Thou shalt not a woman to lust after her." And if it thee to keep thine eye from offending, pluck out with it and away with it: or if thy right other member sin or itch to sin, cut it off and away with it. What! wouldst thou measure against offence? Wouldst thou Hell—eye and hand and whole body? "Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him a bill of divorcement." Mark I say, "Thou shalt put away thy wife at all, except for that which she has herself dissolved her relation of wife—the act of fornication." It was said, "Thou shalt not swear at all." Thou shalt make no oath or vow or obtestation. It was said, "Thou shalt resist evil: thou shalt not even appeal eye, tooth for tooth." Mark I say, "Thou shalt resist evil: thou shalt not even appeal to iniquitous demands: thou shalt do unto others as thou wouldst that men should do unto thee (See Luke VI.): thou shalt forgive men their trespasses, neither shalt thou forgive not men their trespasses, neither shalt thou forgive thyne: and furthermore thy heavenly Father forgive thee thine: and furthermore as it was said of old time, love thy neighbour as thyself."

hate thine enemy ; but thou shalt love thine enemies, and bless them that curse thee, do good to them that hate thee, and pray for them that despitefully use thee, and persecute thee." It was said (See Deut. XXI. 10. Ps. CXII. 9. Dan. IV. 27. 2 Cor. IX. 7.) "Thou shalt give and lend, and do certain good things openly and publicly, and they shall be righteous unto thee." Mark I say, "Take heed that thou do not thy righteousness before men to be seen of them ; but thou shalt not let thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth : let thy righteousness be in secret : and it shall be sufficient for thee that thy heavenly Father seeeth that He will reward." When men pray, it is to be seen of men, or that they may be heard for much speaking ; and when they fast, it is to be seen of men to fast : but *thou*, when thou prayest or fastest, hast a heavenly Father who seeth in secret : do *thou* pray and fast to *Him*. The Gentiles or Nations of the World seek after things of food and raiment ; and they lay up treasures where moths rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But *ye* have a heavenly Father, who knoweth what things *ye* have need of. *Ye*, therefore, take no thought about eating or drinking or raiment—take no thought for the support of your life—take no thought for the morrow. And lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth : but seek *ye* first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; and trust God, O *ye* of little faith, that He will do *for you* what He so doeth for the fowls of the air and the grass of the field. Again I charge you to take no thought for the morrow. Judge not, (See parallel in Luke VI.) and ye shall not be judged : condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned : forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. And it shall be given you : seek, and ye shall find. Your heavenly Father will assuredly give good things to them that ask Him. Now, hear me—all *ye* would be my disciples indeed—hear these my sayings to do them. For, not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven.



Enter *ye* in at the *strait gate*; for *strait* is the *gate* and *narrow* the way, which leadeth unto life: strive, yea *agonize* to enter in at the *strait gate*, Beware too of *false teachers*—of men preaching unto you soft and smooth things. Mind I have told you. Whosoever therefore heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house:—but it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house:—and it fell; and great was the fall of it.”

When Jesus had ended these sayings, “the people were astonished at his doctrine and at his authority.” Astonishing indeed are these sayings, and astonishing is the authority of the Speaker. Let not *us* rest in astonishment: let us proceed to consider and to do. And now may God grant unto us the understanding heart! First then, the Speaker addressing us is the Word of God—the Declarer, the Revealer of the mind and will of God. Secondly, this august Speaker introduces and closes his commands with strong emphasis and solemn injunction and admonition. Thirdly, He professedly delivers precepts and principles to a particular body—to a people distinguished from “men,” from “the Scribes and Pharisees,” from “publicans and sinners,” from “the Heathen or Gentiles or Nations of the World,” and characterized as “Salt of the Earth,” “The Light of the World,” “The City set on a hill,” “Subjects of the kingdom of Heaven,” “Children having God for their Father,” and “Children who are to be perfect even as their perfect Father.” Fourthly, the precepts and principles which He delivers, and the temper and disposition and spirit which He commends and requires, are indeed “*astonishing*,” are *amazing, absolute, uncompromising, extreme, unprecedented, unearthly*. Let us go again over these particulars. Let us with

aroused and earnest soul consider them. Let us fervently seek the presence of the Spirit ; and let us with all purity and singleness of heart, receive his teaching. The Speaker then is JESUS—Jesus that died for us, and that is thus our ever adorable and blessed Master and King. This our JESUS first pronounces benedictions—and upon what?—upon poorness of spirit, upon sorrowfulness and meekness of spirit, upon heavenly-mindedness, tenderheartedness, saintliness, submissiveness, passiveness ;—upon such qualities and habitudes of spirit as had ever been opposed to those that were great and noble and glorious in the World's estimation ; and as had ever been described by such terms as meanness, baseness, tameness, lifelessness, faint-heartedness, cowardliness, &c. He thus, in opening his mouth, declares the character of the Gospel-Dispensation. *Let us prayerfully study these benedictions.* (Ch. V. 3—12.) Jesus next, by employing striking designations, declares the character of the people who, under the Gospel-Dispensation, were to be evidences and witnesses to the World of the grace and forbearance of the Father ; and, through deadness to the honors and pleasures and occupations and engagements of Earth, were to be “separate unto Himself.” *Let us prayerfully study these designations.* (Ch. V. 13, 14 &c. and *Vide pra.*) Jesus next, by an authoritative, emphatic, and impressive introduction and close of his injunctions and mandates, forcibly calls our attention to matter both extraordinary and momentous. *Let us prayerfully study this introduction and close.* (Ch. V. 19. 20. & Ch. VII. 24—27.) Jesus then delivers his commands and prohibitions ; explains and applies them by exemplifications so strong and striking as to preclude the possibility of mistake (Ch. V. 29. 30. 39—42. Ch. VI. 26. 27. 28.) ; declares the principles and reasons of them (Ch. V. 45. 46. 47. 48. Ch. VI. 21—24. 26—34. Ch. VII. 3. 4. 9—11.) ; reiterates them or variously expresses them (See parallels in the other Gospels) ; and adduces the case and character of his and our heavenly Father UNDER THE PRESENT DISPENSATION OF GRACE, and proposes it fo

*our imitation.* And now, with the aid of certain other Scriptures which reveal the mind of our divine Teacher and most beloved Master, *let us prayerfully study these commands and prohibitions* (Ch. V. 21. & Ch. VI. & VII.) "*Thou shalt not be angry without cause;—for this is Killing: and thou shalt not look upon a woman to lust after her;—for this is Adultery.*" For ye, O my people, greatly privileged and honoured, are to know yourselves as delivered from the Law, yea, as dead to it; and as brought into the liberty of Sonship, the life of the Spirit, and all the glory and blessedness of Love. Loosed ye are and freed, absolutely and for ever, from the law of sin and death; and quickened ye are and raised with me to righteousness unto holiness. Subjects then of Grace, Temples of the Spirit of Life, Children and heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with me, live ye in the Spirit, and walk in newness of life! Speak I unto *you* of Killing and of Adultery? Nay, O beloved, be *ye* in the Spirit, and thus quell the first risings and motions of sin; through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body; and as your old man is crucified with me that the very body of sin might be destroyed, so do ye resist, deny, subdue, crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts. "*Thou shalt not put away thy wife except for fornication.*" For ye, my people, are not to be indulged in the natural "hardness of your heart." Ye are called to know that man and wife are One, even as Christ and his Church are One. Ye are by this close and sweet union blessedly reminded of your absolute and everlasting Oneness with me. "*Thou shalt not swear at all.*" Ye, my people, are to know yourselves to be nothing. Can ye make a hair of your head black or white? Swear not therefore, and vow not, and promise not; and be mindful of your impotence and vanity. Your strength, your goodness, your stability, your life is *in me*. And what! would ye return under the Law, and lay yourselves bare to the judgment of the Righteous Judge?—would ye imprecate upon yourselves the vengeance of the Great Avenger of evil

“*Thou shalt not do thy righteousness before men; nor shalt thou pray, nor shalt thou fast, to be seen of men.*” Ye, my people, are to make no reference to Man: *your* blessedness is to act and live unto God. Ye have a Father in heaven, and *your* reward is with Him. “*Thou shalt not lay up treasures upon earth—thou shalt not be careful about the life of the body.*” Ye, my people, are the Children of God:—ye are his objects of love and delight—ye are his jewels. Mind then your high estate: walk and live by faith: honor your great Father; and realize the blessedness which He offers. “*Judge not, and thou shalt not be judged: forgive, and thou shalt be forgiven.*” Ye, my people, stand acquitted, by an act of pure grace, from a debt of ten thousand talents: can ye then rigorously exact payment, from a fellow debtor, of a hundred pence? Ye, my people, though your sins were as scarlet and as blood, have been through free love, washed and made whiter than snow: will ye then, can ye, judge a petty trespasser against yourselves? And who art thou that judgest? Dost thou not the same things—and thus condemnest thou not thyself? Canst thou, having a beam in thine own eye, see to cast out the mote from thy brother’s eye: Nay, my people, judge ye not one another: ye shall all stand before my judgment-seat. (See Rom. XIV. &c.) “*Ask and it shall be given thee.*” Yes, my people, all things which ye ask in prayer, believing, shall be given unto you.—Yes,—to have of your own and in yourselves *nothing*, and to have for a Father the King of Heaven, and for a possession the riches and treasures of the Universe, is the very glory unto which I call you.

Here let us pause. What is the impression made upon our minds—what is the conviction of our judgment—what the assurance of our souls? Is it not that a *new* Lawgiver is delivering *new* laws and precepts upon *new* principles and reasons, in order to form a *new* and singular people unto a *new* and marvellous end?—even that the LORD from Heaven is delivering laws and principles for the separation of a people

from the World, and for the transformation of this people into the Divine Likeness ; in order that they may exhibit on Earth the holiness and goodness and grace of God, and obtain in Heaven the vision and fruition of God ?

Bearing in mind this *newness*, we are prepared to examine the precept which has been passed over in silence, "RESIST NOT EVIL." And O Christian reader ! O sinner forgiven ! O disciple and imitator of the meek and forgiving and loving Jesus ! O declarer and manifester unto a Grace-rejecting World of the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God ! O be prayerful—prayerfully examine this "astonishing" precept. Our adorable Lord introduces his precept with referring to the law of Retaliation or Equitable treatment of offences (Ch. V. 38) ; and with—abrogating it !—abrogating the law of Equity ! Strange is it, O passing strange, that this explicit declaration of the nature of the kingdom which He was setting up, and of the spirit and temper which He was enjoining, has so extensively escaped observation ! He proceeds to state his precept broadly, absolutely, without condition or qualification, "RESIST NOT EVIL." He then in exemplification of it adduces cases so strong and bold as most indisputably to declare its meaning and power (v. 39—42). He then even *amplifies* his precept (v. 44), "not only are ye forbidden to resist evil, and enjoined to yield to and comply with all violence and all injuriousness ; but ye are, *per contra*, to love and bless and pray for and do good unto those who hate and curse and evil-entreat you." He then (45—48. & Luke VI.) familiarly and most graciously opens out his wondrous purpose in this his injunction, "that ye, O my followers, may do more and be greater than the Publicans and Sinners, who render love for love and return salute for salute ; and that ye may be the children of the Highest, who is merciful and kind and gracious to the unthankful and the evil, and who maketh his sun to rise and his rain to descend alike upon the evil and the good, upon the just and the unjust. Be ye then, my beloved ones, in your dear children, imitators of God :—

be ye perfect even as your Father is perfect." In sweet accordance with the Lord and Master, the Apostles do prohibitions of recompensing evil for evil; railing for railing; of avenging themselves; they abound with exhortations to forgiving and active recompensing of good for evil, and enforce all by pointing to that when He was reviled, reviled not; when He suffered, threatened not; when He was crucified on the cross, prayed for his murderers; and exhorts us to follow his example and to walk as He walked. The Apostles too follow the Lord in forgiving. (Matt. V. 40. &c. 1 Cor. xiii. 7.) *Retaliation or Like evil for like* which is not *excessiveness, rancorousness,* &c. so all prosecution and punishment is ever quiet and regular and legal, is the prohibition. In exact correspondence with the prohibition of vengeance or punishment is the prohibition of being equitable, and however *certain* too, Grace shall come to its end, and will be no more. One to whom all Judgment is committed are our blessed Lord's prohibitions *power, authority, rule, office,* and of "Ye know that the princes of the earth exercise dominion over them; and they that exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so with you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be first among you, let him be your servant. For the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to give his life. Be not ye called Masters, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye shall be brethren. Neither be ye called Master: but he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant. Whosoever will be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." (Matt. XX. 25—28, &c.)

This precept then of our Lord "Be ye perfect" is, however "astonishing" and not only *extra* and *ultra*, and notwithstanding it has

softened and sobered and accommodated, in full and glowing harmony with all the "astonishing" precepts of this "astonishing" Sermon. It is implied likewise, though the implication has been so sinfully overlooked, in that nervous and beautiful and universally extolled compendium of prayer "the Lord's prayer." For, when we supplicate forgiveness as (or for) *we* forgive, what mean we—what can we mean—but that we be forgiven, *wholly, absolutely, everlastingly*, as (or for) *we* thus forgive; or that we be forgiven *with qualification or reserve*—that we be punished *without harshness, undue severity, passion, fury, &c.*—for *we* thus forgive or thus punish? Now what wretched rebel against the King of kings has ever meant to supplicate *equitable and righteous* treatment!!

Leave then, beloved brethren, vengeance with God, and with those whom God, for the preservation of his Church and for the restraint of the wickedness of the World, ordains as Kings and Rulers and Magistrates. To all powers and authorities be subject, submissive, respectful—to them all, as appointed of God, give acknowledgment and honor: but do *ye*, O followers of the Crucified and the Rejected One, hasten to get into your true position: hasten to receive in all its fullness this heavenly precept and all these heavenly precepts and principles; hasten to apprehend their meetness unto you as sinners forgiven—as captives freed—as a people elected, separated, made peculiar—as children of Wrath and of the Devil passed into Love and Sonship with the Lord Almighty. Hasten, O hasten, to realize your stupendous blessedness, and to declare and magnify your Saviour God.

#### APPLICATION.

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