

refers to the congregation present. As it is directed that baptism shall be administered "when the most number of people come together"—every member of the congregation, let it be ever so large, should make it a point of duty earnestly to join in this prayer whenever he or she can have the opportunity—exercising faith at the same time in the gracious declaration of our Lord.

Ver. 9. *If his son ask bread will he give him a stone?* "Bread" = "loaf" or "cake"—to which in shape, the round stones at the waters' edge might be somewhat similar.

Ver. 10. *If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?* "A fish" = "an eel" for example—which a serpent or snake resembles.

Ver. 11. *If ye then, being evil.* If men, with all their imperfections, still desire naturally to give only good things to their children,—how much more is it to be expected that God—who has no imperfection, but is entirely good—will desire to give only good things to those who, by entering the Church founded by our Lord, become his children—his especial household? To them his ear is ever open for the sake of his Son, whose Body, or visible impersonation on the earth, they are.

Ver. 12. *Therefore all things.* The inference denoted by the "therefore" appears to be this:—As God, our heavenly Father, is so willing to do us only good,—we ought in like manner, in respect to our brethren—who in Christ are a part of ourselves—to desire to do them good only—to pray for them, and not hastily judge them;—to do to, and for them, in short, what we would fain hope they would do to, and for us, under the same circumstances.

— *whatsoever ye would that men should do to you.* The "whatsoever" is of course limited by the requirements of truth, justice and virtue.—If a criminal in a public court, were to be allowed to argue to the jury that they ought to acquit him, because they, if in a similar position would like to be acquitted—there would be an end to the righteous administration of law.

— *this is the law and the prophets.* This is in harmony with the teaching of the Mosaic Law—with the teaching also of all the

prophets of the Old Testament.—Nothing therefore which is written in "the law and the prophets" can be contravened by the precept which our Lord here delivers.

Ver. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate.*—"Strait" = "narrow." Thus we say the "strait" of Gibraltar, meaning the narrow passage from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean.—The "strait gate" is the entrance into the Kingdom which our Lord was just in the act of establishing on the earth.—Repentance, faith and baptism seemed hard terms of admission to the great bulk of the persons whom he addressed.

Ver. 14. *Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.* In the words which St. Matthew employs there is a distinction observable between "strait" and "narrow."—The gate is strait—i. e. not broad, and therefore not so easily seen:—whilst the way, after the gate has been discovered and passed through, is narrow—in the sense of being obstructed with certain difficulties.— We are often forewarned that it requires a very careful life—an anxious non-resistance to the Holy Spirit within us—to be inheritors who shall actually attain to the possession of the inheritance. As "the poor in spirit," "those that mourn," "the meek," "those that hunger and thirst after righteousness," "the merciful," "the peace-makers," "the persecuted for righteousness sake" are the only persons who would be willing to enter into the Kingdom through repentance, faith and baptism—had that kingdom to be presented for the first time to men of adult years now,—so only such persons—and they are not numerous—are likely to persevere resolutely as Christians to the end of their lives.

— *Few there be that find it.* "Find" = "discover."—"It" = "the gate." Suppose "the gate" to mean the entrance to a rocky pass which is the opening to a country beyond—an entrance so narrow, and consequently so obscure, as to be likely to escape the notice of the casual observer.

Ver. 15. *Beware of false prophets.* 'Pseudo-prophets'—teachers, some teaching falsehoods, and others not possessing the commission which is deposited in the Church founded by our Lord. Any public teacher