No. 12.

The Gospel preached to the poor.
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Matth. XI, 5. "And the poor have the gospel preached unto them."

It is impossible to reflect, as we ought, on the operations of God's government, without learning a lesson of humility and reverence. Here we are taught how much from which we may learn the fallacy and feebleness of human wisdom, the error of human judgment, that our enquiries are converted into adoration, of curiosity becomes devotion. We may form to ourselves an imaginary system of what would be right or fit. I may expect to find it unfolded and pursued in the course of nature and of providence; but no sooner are we made acquainted with the mighty workings of God's hand, than we are feelingly convinced that "He, who sitteth in the heavens" taketh not counsel of man: that His thoughts are far above our thoughts, as the heavens are above the earth. The throne of God's glory is above the dullest man inhabiting the earth as we occupy. In our reflections on the Gospel dispensation, the same truth is constantly presented to our minds. In the
means of promoting the religion of Jesus. There is much, which should not previously have been expected, but is yet perfectly consonant to the soundest tenets of reason, & the maturest decisions of judgment. The wisdom of man might have contrived other materials or other means of using them; yet how is the pride of reasoning founded, when we observe that the method which God has used, approves themselves to our minds as the best supports of the progress of heavenly truth. The text presents an instance, which illustrates these remarks. Among the parables, our Saviour chose to adduce in support of his claims as the true Messiah, the application of God, one was, that "the gospel preached unto them." John had been sent to proclaim the advent of X., and prepare his way, had been imprisoned for offending Herod, a prince too proud to be persuaded of his crimes to be rebuked with impunity. In his confinement John sent a message toesus, couched in the ambiguous terms of doctrine, that he that should come after him should work greater works than these that belong to another! – whether it was, that he wished to convince some of his own disciples, who hesitated, that
to acknowledge the divine authority of, or, whether, as some suppose, after the false hopes of a temporal deliverance in the person of the Messiah, or he in common with his countrymen had cherished were crushed by the cruelties of oppression and the horrors of a prison, he sent to ask in the language of disappointment and expectation, whether he had been deceived in supposing Jesus to be the true Messiah. The answer of our Lord was full of simplicity, dignity, and power. It was an appeal to the proofs had displayed of authority from heaven. "Go," said he, "I show John again those things wh. I do hear I see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Observe the force of this reply. Jesus does not directly answer the question of John, but points to those miracles wh. proclaimed in language not to be mistaken the hand divine that performed them. It may appear strange, that in this array of evidence, the last circumstance wh. is mentioned, "that the poor have the gospel preached unto them," should be ranged with those miracles wh. bore such splendid testimony to the
divine authority of our Lord, that the
of his pretensions should be in any way
ated in his treatment of the poor. But
ry may be of important if satisfactory
and had at first escaped notice.

Let it be observed, then, that the circum-
with our Saviour closes the enumeration of
proofs of his divine mission, was a striking
ment of prophecy. It was thus stated and
plied by himself on another occasion. In the
agogue at Nazareth, amidst the silence of
being audience, he opened the sacred oracle
from that prophet, who enjoyed such full
of the glories of the Messiah, selected this
duction: "The spirit of the Lord is upon
cause he hath anointed me to preach the
el to the poor." The inspiration of prophecy
then, had announced this as one of the char-
acteristics of the Messiah, and by answering
this character Jesus thus fulfilled
prediction of the word of truth.

It should be observed, that the more rigid
the application of it, although the word
may have that figurative meaning, which
quently bears, as in the expression "blessed
the poor in spirit," yet in the present case
metaphorical does not exclude the literal

Perhaps the one is some degree synonymous with the other, for at the time of our Saviour the word, probably be the 'poor in spirit' but those in the humble walks of life, those to whom neither the pride of knowledge, nor the higher satisfactions of self-sufficiency? But there is another reason for this interpretation. The words kind, shame, or doubt, as you well know, have otherwise their metaphorical meaning: yet Lord alludes to the completion of the prophet in the literal sense of those words, for he refers the messengers of John to what they saw heard, to the miracles he was then performing by the restoration of corporal senses members. When, therefore, at the same time Jesus speaks of the poor, why are we not to understand him as meaning literally the poor, i.e. the lower ranks of the people who he was instructing by his heavenly wisdom, as well as healing by his mighty powers? We see, therefore, that he preached the Gospel according to the poor in the literal, as well as spiritual sense of the word, and thus fulfilled the prophecy in its whole extent.

What, then, are we taught by the circumstance and thus distinguished from any other, the ministry of the Saviour? We are taught, my dear, most indeed...
of the goodness & wisdom of God. 

of the nature distinguished in the circumstances may suggest answers is, that it manifests both the wisdom of his character, & thus develops the genius & nature of his religion.

1. It places in a strong & attractive light the God. Consider the situation of God: how much they needed "the bread of life," how they were oppressed with ignorance & bewildered in error, when J. C. came to preach the Gospel to them. God had indeed spoken to the Jews. It is not given them a law promulgated from the Mount of Mount Sinai, 

most impressively solemn - a law, which serve as a mound against the floods of corruption which might otherwise have overwhelmed the earth. It was a rule of life, than a system of observances & ceremonies. 

the waters of Zion had not flourished so many ages, free from the taint of corruption. 

When the Scribes 

soult streams. When the Lord's people 

into the instructions of the heads of his people. The Jewish Scribes & Doctors had made their "land" off more effect by traditions. The word of God was enunciated with all the crude imaginations of awhile.
Ingenious, if their holy ritual was debased
and the frivolous artifices of superstition.
Who upon the poor! This corruption must have
corrupted with an influence, peculiarly dis-
gringing of pernicious. If there were among the
men, who could look through I, defile
of those arts in which hypocrisy twice showed
themselves, men who had strength of min-
dough to detect 

destest, the foul abuses under ask the spirit
Jehovah's law was lost, such men were
but to be expected among the lowest ranks
life, among those who, from the necessity
their condition, must look to others for guid-
ance, direction, must receive from autho-
y what they have not time or intellige-
cough to learn for themselves. “The key of
knowledge” was not in their hands. If the
Rabbis' teachers who had it in their pos-
session would not employ it to open to oth-
ers the treasures of heavenly truth. Out of
we know on one occasion addressed a parable
to certain who trusted in themselves, that they
were righteous of despised others. And were those
against whom this reproach was hainted, few
in number or unimportant in influence? No, the
were Pharisees, men who professed to in religion, the interpreters of God's law in degree with their meekness and innocence. It was the bane of their insolent pride. It was not to reproach the people of very ignorance of what they were the cause with the bitterness of scorn (with madness) checked every effort they made to understand the oracles of God. "Have any of rulers or Pharisees," said they, "believed on But this people (or "multitude," as it may be rendered) that knoweth not the law cursed?"

Such was the desolate, pitiful state of Jewish populace with respect to religious truth. And was the condition of the tile poor, think you, more eligible? Do they less need the light of heaven to guide and bless them? No, they were equally despised, and deluded. The Heathen philosopher was not more kind of condescending instructions than the Jewish Rabbi. The of Pagan antiquity might perhaps form rite of morals, plausible and ingenious; they it may be, a glimpse of some of the truth of natural religion. But their reasonings are only the amusements of speculation, the inpressive efforts of the more powers of intell
We felt not that the doctrines, or the truths, they taught, were to bear upon real life, or to spread their influence through every heart, save every character. The spirit, such a disposition, such habits generated, was— as might be expected,— a senseless and contempt of the moral interests of their inferiors. It was of little consequence to them, whether their unenlightened countrymen had a single correct rule of life, a single higher motive to action. Nay, they were probably glad to triumph in the superiority with which they arrogated to themselves, to excel over the ignorance, errors, or the care, not had they been able to remedy. While they ridiculed the popular superstition, they were willing to conform to its most senseless rites; and concealed whatever of truth they imagined themselves to have discovered under the veil of mystery, from the inspection of which the uninitiated were prudently repelled. Were these, then, the men to teach the poor? Was it for these men to supply the moral wants of immortal beings, to unfold truth, and give it that authority which it is powerless to gain? We see, then, that when the Saviour of man came to announce the glad tidings of salvation, the condition of the poor, both Jewish.
and Gentile, was truly wretched. One
discouraged to understand the scale of duty
or desired by those who should have been
instructed, involved in error. I seek to rouse
out the knowledge of the means of recon-
not their distress or the scarcity of relief
not their wants ask for more than man can
suffice, for the aid of divine instruction.

(“Pilate, let it not be forgotten that it
this humble class of men, who gave the
most candid of ready reception, for who was
taught in the streets of Jerusalem, man-
ing to listen to heavenly truths, or, if they
did not turn their attention, how frequently was it
by gratifying an idle curiosity, as to serve the few
purposes of malignity and vengeance: and our
Paul taught the same religion at Rome
as Jerusalem was of its philosophical school
as Jerusalem was of its temple—many a sin-
acres gentiles disdained to notice this ‘foot
with the smell of contempt,” “some mocked” of others added:
“bubbles say.”—But we find it recorded
history of our Savior’s ministry that the com-
people heard him gladly”)

it live to hear him.” They were astonished
at his doctrine, for he taught them as one
by authority, not as the doctors. They felt
energy of importance in the instructions of our
work they had never found in the frivolous
satisfying doctrines of their teachers, and they
the honesty to acknowledge and proclaim their
feelings. When Jesus wrought his miracles, it
was the people, who exclaimed: “Is not this the
son of David?” “He said, ‘it was never so seen
in Israel,’ Who “marvelled and glorified God, who
had given such power unto men’; while their en-
emies remained unconvinced, or distinctly re-
tested their conviction by resorting to blasphemy.
And among the gentiles, St. James speaks of the
oppression of charity in the words of St. Paul re-
mands his converts. “that not many wise men
after the flesh, not many mighty, not many
noble are called.”

Now it was to those, who were thus involved
in the darkness of ignorance, of the masses of or-
tons, who were thus misled, deluded, or contem-
by the wise and powerful, but who possessed
much of that fairness of mind, not qualify
them for the reception of truth: it was to this
men that the Savior came to give the light.
of life. I bring the messages of love from the Father in Heaven. What would disprove the benign character of this religion? It cannot fail to excite the sentiments of our favor. Should we not feel that this circumstance should be predicted by the Son of God himself? When the people, struck with despair, saw the great numbers of the despised under the mercies of the Son of Man as they were, did the Father hear them? Did he, with the wise delegation of the Son's mission, invite them to rebellion? Did the instruments of political ambition, some of whom should have been political ambition? Did the religious leaders of his kingdom and his subjects, when they discovered that the kingdom of God was at hand, invite them to rebellion? Did it fail to excite the sentiments of our favor? Would it have been possible for any human ingenuity to have discovered a mode of teaching so effectual as this? Would it have been possible for any human ingenuity to have discovered a mode of teaching so effectual as this? Would it have been possible for any human ingenuity to have discovered a mode of teaching so effectual as this? Would it have been possible for any human ingenuity to have discovered a mode of teaching so effectual as this?
in the feelings of maturer reflections and experience the people would probably have been the dictates of wisdom. But what would have been the effect? It could scarcely be expected that those from whom the religion should be first proposed - the high, the governing part of society - would receive it with the readiness of an enlightened and candid disposition. To minds like those of Mr. J. A. Smith, with whom doubting might be considered pardonable, even miracles might be regarded only as the tricks of expert impostors, and a religion which stripped their philosophy of its vails and deep disquisitions of their interest, would not reluctantly receive, though stamped with the sanction of heaven. There was much in their intellectual and moral habits which would have been at war with the spirit of the age. But if the promulgation of the religion in the manner had been successful as could be desired, the learned and the great, to whom it was first addressed, had used all the influence with which to spread it, with authority. It would have been received at once by the strength of divine assistance. In the influence of those learning, wealth, and rank,
argument for the divine authority of it is derived from the feebleness of the instru
cused in its promulgation, from the po
less situation of those by whom its can
first embraced. No wonder, it might have
said, no wonder that it was so widely g
firmly established, sheltered as it was b
the patronage of the rich of the great, y
by those who were lords over the sentimen
city. The cause is adequate to the effect.
is in vain for you to tell of supernatural
position said, where the power of man alone t
have been sufficient to have produced an
appears. - But now it is not so; - now we c
with confidence; surely there was something th
than human in the establishment of ch
of a religion, wh was preached at first on
the poor, s to the poor, - or, - though unp
sted by human authority, unaided by the of
fluence among men, - though instead b
being recommended by a flattering accompa
ing character, it advanced openly; professed
 demolish the favorite fortresses wh suspec
t false views had reared in the minds of men
still proceeded in its heavenly march with a
unflattering step till the banner of the co
became the banner of empire, of things bowe
the sceptre of the prince of peace. Who then
may not recognise here the impress of that divine
inspiration which prompted equally the instructions
of the Gospel and the means of its diffusion? Well
said St. Paul, “God hath chosen the foolish
things of the world to confound the wise: God
has chosen the weak things of the world to con-
found the things which are mighty; and base things
of the world of things which are not to bring to
light; that our faith might not rest
in the wisdom of men, but in the power
of God.”
Thus we have seen how strikingly the good-
ess of the wisdom of God are manifested in
the circumstance, emphatically pointed out
by our Saviour in his reply to the message of
John. “That the poor have the gospel preach-
ed unto them.”
There is one interesting reflection naturally sug-
gested by the subject, to which I would for a
moment call your attention, that is the pow-
rous of fly in smoothing down those asperities, in
smoothing those exclusive separations, in the artificial distinctions of society cannot fail frequently to produce. The condition of
men united together in one community may necessarily be a condition of inequality. It is but the dream of enthusiasm to suppose it possible to bring to the level of one rank the different intellectual capacities of mankind, the infinitely various characters, produced by different degrees of energy and action, by the accidental combinations of circumstances. Yet who does not know that these distinctions sometimes a dark shade over the happiness of a part of society? That modest merit is not enfranchised; that many a generous heart lining slow, coldness of neglect or the insolence of force, for these evils, for all these sufferings, my opinion presents a sovereign remedy. Before the functions of life, however wide marked, divided, it is nothing. In that heavenly light with which it surrounds us, the lustre of a coronet is lost. If the magnificence of rank is too few to unimportant to arrest attention. It takes from pride its base from honor its prerogatives; for it suffices us not to forget that all men are the children of one Father — the children of God, candidates alike to immortality. How alike to the blessings of reason! If inefficacy of authority should for a moment tempt us to look with feelings of vengeance scorn on any of our fellow men, let us remember that in the day when

Ed shall make up to me the loss of despair may leave us to its winter of bitterness that we had aspired to the seasons of the sun cannot without the song of the other world for the peace on earth of good angels who proclaimed peace on earth will to men!  

August, 1815.
God shall make up his jewels; he whom we now
least love may leave us to wish in vain with tears of bitterness that we had
advised to honour. Time cannot wither. Yet all the harsh notes of conten-
tious insolence be lost in the song of the angels who proclaimed peace on earth
and good will to men!

August, 1818, 7

that the same bright hope beams on us all.
At Medford, Nov. 15th. 1818, — in the forenoon.
At Watertown, Jan. 17th. 1819 — afternoon.
At Roxbury, March 9th. 1819 — forenoon.
At Salem, March 14th. 1819 — forenoon.
At Lexington, April 18th. 1819 — forenoon.
At Dedham, May 22, 1819 — forenoon.
— Mrs. Gannett’s, May 9th. 1819 — forenoon.
Waltham July 6th. 1819 — afternoon.
— Mr. Horne’s (Wtron) Oct. 17th. 1819 — forenoon.
At home, Jan. 10th. 1836 — forenoon.
Almighty, ever blessed God, Thou art our Father in heaven, with admiration of reverence would we venerate in the wisdom of Thy government in the dispensations of nature and of grace. Particularly, would we be grateful for the manifestation of Thy mercy and Thy power in the Gospel of X, both in its internal character, and in the means of its promulgation. Blessed be Thy name that when moral darkness covered the earth, a future life was but the shadow of virtue or the conception of reason, that Thou, O G, hast been a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge for the storm, a shadow in the heat. We praise Thee that Thou hast established our faith on the sure evidences of Thy power and wisdom, and that the gospel of grace has prevailed and triumphed over the opposition of the pride of man. We thank Thee, Lord G, for the opportunity we have enjoyed of worshipping Thee and attending to the instructions of Thy religion. May it not be in vain that we have assembled here at this time, that we may go forth in this house with deep
love of thy character, presence of thy laws, - For the sins of our holy things, if there have been a minds wandering, distracted, idle, we entreat thee to forgive us and enable us to worship thee with sincerity of purity in time to come. - We offer our fingers to the name. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, ous of glory, forever, amen. -

At Medford, Nov. 15th.