No. 103.

On taking thought for the morrow.
Matth. VI. 34. “Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Is it possible, or are we ready to explain the first meaning of this precept? Is it possible, that our divine commands as, as a general principle, to be wholly careless and unconcerned about the future? Are we to sit still with folded arms, and patiently wait for whatever may happen? It seems strange indeed if such a duty were prescribed to us by divine authority. But it is not so. This is one of those passages of Scripture, which are hastily repeated, without considering...
when or to whom they were addressed; or thus they are quoted as intended to convey a meaning they were never designed to express. If we wish to understand any sentence, we must attend to the scope of thought, passing through the mind of the person who uses them. This is the principle by which judge of the meaning of what we hear in conversation, or read in books. The principle is just as applicable to the Scriptures, as to any other writings.

It is in this simple way we are to discover the sense of each passage. They were intended to convey the meaning of our Lord's words to the most simple of a discourse, a large part of which, among the rest, this passage, is addressed solely to the disciples of Christ who were to become his assistants and successors in the office of contending to the world the divine light of his religion. So this high office the scribes of the oracles was an office measure designed

to prepare them. It was a kind of introduction to their labours of duties, as well as an exposition of their morality. And when we consider for a moment on the scene of their day before these first heads of city, when we consider what an entire revolution of society has taken place, it seems, that when they were destined, demanded by the full of every faculty of all their attention, we shall cease to wonder that their Masters bid them take no thought for the answers. They were going forth in a mighty field of service, not to permit them to be entangled in common interests, or distracted by ordinary cares. They were stationed in the watchtowers of the Sanhedrin; and they could not leave their posts of join in the contending or the pleasures of the world. They had before them a scene full of difficulty of hazard. They had obstacles steeped in prejudices to contend with; both in their own minds and in
of others. They carried abroad the messages of a reli-

gin, that hallowed all from distinctions, that took
from the few his breast of freedom privileges, who
claimed the ingathering of all the nations of Christ

to the household of God; of course they could not be
welcomed with kindness by their countrymen, they
would look on the hosts they sublime. And when
they turned to the Gentiles, their prospects
searched better, for we know men may be as brist-

ted as no religion to all, as for 'tis nary, better
what destinations. If the devices of idolaters, who defied
what they witnessed, would have little profit for
a religion whose essence was purity of sincerity. In that
the office of the first messengers of was an office
uncontested right of angels. It required an unanswer-

dedness in the part of those, who were engaged
in its personal vulnereable consecration of all the
time of the ages, of efforts to the one object of one cause. Now
it is easy to perceive, that it was inconsistent with
the duty of such persons, to entangle themselves in
all the cases of providing for future wanderers, who
with the view of engaging upon them the entire devo-
tion to their office. That our Saviour used the language of
we find in the eden, for where our tent is selected, He
points them to the rocks of the air, who are men en-
tering among their creation; through the forest of
nature, that, as it were, is the heart of the field, not that
they tab out neither shin are entangled in laurels,
ging them the verdure of Solomon could command
the then asks his disciples, whether they could but
conjecture, that the All would not yield in
as dear accents to the chosen messengers of the realms
of heavens, as he did the birds of the air, the plants
of earth? Are ye not much better than they? The

The direct consequence whence it deduces is, that men en-
gaged in the high of emunctous a task, as his disciples
were to be, should not involve themselves in the mer-
ious provision for the future, but them themselves in the
providence of God. Therefore, says he, take me thoug-
for the present, as the Newtons shall take thought
for the things of itself; i.e. you will leave no dagon
provided for: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

We see then, that the words of our text were
originally addressed solely to the immediate disciples
and not addressed to them under peculiar circum-
cstances. Taken in that literal sense they
cannot therefore constitute a rule of action for all
age. It does not become a general duty to take
me thought for the morrow. Precepts were given for the
conduct of the apostles, which cannot be supposed to apply
to all mankind at once. Precepts are taken
out of the case, when we treat of universal moral duty,
because the circumstances, as we require them, were pecu-
liar to the time when they were given. And when we
consider the nature of man’s the duties imposed
in the second writings, we cannot imagine that could
intend to inculcate on entire thoughts concern the
future, that he should direct us to live an Alerts by
heedily, regarding only the present moment, without
once looking forward to the scenes which probably await
us. Man is so constituted by his Maker, that he must
connect himself with the future. All the powers
and vitae of his mind inevitably carry him forward to
feel him to go beyond the day of his now rolling over
his head, & reach forward to what of events not here and
yet come... It is only the pleasures of peace which
attain us in the present; all the better parts of our
nature, all that is intellectual, good at humanity, can
one must have observe the change, and was taken place
in his own view of feelings, as he has left the days of
childhood in advance of nature’s view. In infancy our
attention is occupied solely with what is immediately
before us; we look only in the present. But as soon
as our knees this begin to creep or stand, our views ex-
tend themselves to the unknown future. The youth
has a thousand prospects so excess of happiness as if
yet to come: he sees in the distance bright forms of
several objects, if he takes for the day what he shall be
able to some enjoy them... But when these are attained.
The train of thoughts he has impressed on, still he presses on, for there is still something before him to aspire after. His great ambition is to come forth in the world, and it is a remarkable fact, that, even old age is aspiring. Even those, who are standing on the confines of life, are yet looking forward to future objects of pursuit in this world. Anticipation, not despairism, seems to be the law of human happiness; and there is truth that stirs the heart as it elevates the mind, but it teaches us, that we live in a great degree for the future. Now it cannot be, that when we are the instruments of our salvation, it should at the same time be our duty to make one thought for the moment, that when all our plans, hopes, and aspirations, are as well as we have, as well as we can, as links indispensable to the future, we should be forbidden to look beyond beyond the present, to be required to confine all our conceptions of thoughts to the present day. This would be to suppose, that God has made our existence one long series of contradictions, that helps forever set us at war with ourselves. And consider what would be the state of society, if all we should expect to provide for the future, should be based on the pleasures and pains of the moment before them. Would it not destroy at once every motive to exertion and enterprise? Would it not enervate the arm of industry, and, in a word, a annihilate a astigmatism among all classes? The effects, whence we make in any several stations, for our own good or for the good of others, show that we look to the future, if this regard were not out of what would become of these efforts. The hus- banded man, for instance, has a constant regard to the future; he does now, that he may receive his recompense in a future produce. What would you think of him, who should sit still, expecting without any exertion to see the fields smiling in verdure, or covered with grain, or shaded with fruit? If you were in giving, but you may reap in autumn. Given gather in autumn; give that men may have sustenance, or the means of enjoyment in the absolute dreariness of winter. We are instantly
holding parents. The cares of heaven might delight
most refreshing theme; the sun might the dearest
gladness. Of perishing influences: but not the bloy
on labor, it would all be in vain; you could ask
from harvest. And without these regards to the fu-
ture, what would become of these thousand links to
withew from the care. Gratitude of favor for
children? You watch over the minds of children for
offering: you educate them in good principles: a
healing: from the cradle to her grave, you have no
excuses or expense on their behalf. Yes, what do you
do all this? Is it not because you look forward to the
time when your children will have their stations to
take, of their parts to act in life? because you are de-
fully to fit them for that time, that they may
do good, become ornaments, and blessings to society, pro-
minents in their friends? The exertions you make for their
welfare have respect almost solely to futurity: that
have it would be considered as most criminally neglec-
ted, irresponsible: of taking our thoughts for the
motion, should suffer its offering to you as in appearance
vice. It is a matter of study, no less than a point of
prudence, to be diligent in youth. Should that we
may give a memento of old age, weakness; at least,
we look forward to the future... In that the instances,
are not only, but ought to, take thought. The
days to come are so numerous, that the time would fail
to amount to them; if we were to cast off all regard
to the future, as a general principle, head out the pres-
cent, it is impossible to say what dangers there would
of negligence, which would make, in the end, the
energy, the hopes, the virtues, of the best interests
of society.

It seems, then; that the principle of our text, that
had stated in so unequivocally a manner, contains with no
such to us nothing inconsistent with the duty of pro-
viding carefully for the future. If we were placed
in the same situation as were the disciples of x to work
the precepts, those, first, addressed, we might possibly
abide in higher duties, as to be released from the
obligation to forethought of care about common things.
But we cannot suppose that our lives should issue in command of all, and should interfere with the subsistence of others.

Has then, it may be asked, this principle no meaning for us? Is there no lesson for us to learn from it? Not merely there is, but valuable one too. A general humbling effect of great importance may be derived from it — a general humbling effect of it — a general direction for conduct, the influence of which may be highly salutary. It contains as against indulging that criminal spirit of anxiety and distress about the future, which so often prompts us to embitter the enjoyments we have, if we are wise enough for the continuance of heaven’s favors. It does not allow us to look into futurity only to draw subjects of complaint and anxiety, but teaches that while every day brings us its difficulties, it were unwise to dampen our spirits to seek trouble. Of the future, life before us is a better one, let us make all this season, of our time the anticipation of it, to destroy the heart, terror of some of our fears, feeling of grief and uneasiness. This height.

Take me thought for the moment; consider I contain a general principle of duty, applicable to us as it is intended to exclude all painful, distressing anxiety about the future, all such anxiety as arises from the providence of God. Many a time of our life is wasted in the conjectures of what may happen, or what, or what we are as the expected, we shall be unhealthy because we exhaust our strength, in reaching forward to what may be, while we neglect present opportunities and present advantages. We scarcely pass a day without picturing out to ourselves scenes of happiness. Some desirable object, the the future, if of our choice, objects be given by others, if we use various methods of accomplishing them, these may not and to be wasted in the pursuit, but after after our imaginations to dwell on them, to open our minds, or to dwell on them, until they become necessary to our solace. Then we are tortured with distressing apprehensions, cannot
ing the attainment of them, we cannot be saved from the charge of most criminal impudence of un-

lawful ambition if we act as if we were the only objects of the care of God, as if our plans must be

attended to if our happiness consisted in the neglect of

the whole creation besides. Such a disposition argues an utter distrust of the providence of God. All

that we have not yet learned to humble our wills

to the Supreme will, that there is a proper selfish effort within us, that has never been tamed,

of that we dare not exclaim over temporal goods

and evils. Suppose the future should bring with it a

town of plagues, a future, and your future should

be reckoned, your calculations inexact, your hopes

disappointed, suppose the malice of the passions

should not be abated, even that malice of the sea
does not descend, if the sun does not shine, what

the time you could desire, suppose the plans you

had formed for the happiness of others, friends shall

be entirely frustrated, (your own grief would know

laid in the grief of those who are dear to you,

suppose you were even certain, that the future will

bring all these, worse, and sorrows—still in hope

and faith, why should you be dismayed, all these

things may be taken from you if still some mortal

able possession may be left; your own soul if the

of God are things of such nothing can rob you: the

future may take away outward blessings of privileges, be

the Redeemer will still remain, you that you may

and possess. But even this is making the most

favorable supposition that can be made. None has

reason to suspect that the future will be fully

worse only; it will doubtless have its bright days

its cheering scenes, not entirely dark or somber,

but with the last, mingled with comfort, with joy, on

of all of pleasant things. You will feel a moment

your own experience: call to mind what has been

your situation, what have been your feelings

before. Have you not found your enjoyments equal,

if not superior to your sufferings? Has not many a
his proceedings are not irregular of life; treading the
those of this creatures. He is not a friend to day planning
the moment, when there is nothing in us to create a bond
If then, we are disposed to fill the future in looking
take anxious thought about the present, perform
a distinct full spirit... let us remember, that though
"is the same yesterday, today, forever" is still essential;
and this, that He will direct the future. He has
the best... you will make all things work together for
a good to these, whatever happens.

Such then, office is the duty of each. the dangers
before us. The duty is, to provide with industry,
the care & discretion for the future; the danger is, that
while we do this, we shall laboriously, with too much
anxiety, fall into the habit of distrusting that peace
of God, of wasting our time of strength in idle play
"pride... Let us strive... the duty toward the
dangers... while we are passing through this world.
All the means of procuring
are the instruments in using all the means of procuring
present or future good, but let us not forget that
the dark showering was gone, and part-
tow, just as you thought it ready to break upon
you head? Frequently, it may be, we have been
the victims of distress of apprehension. We once thought
it impossible to bear up under this is that disease
of the body or distress of the mind. But we have
suffered it to return to them all. The progress of
unknown to living, to may be compared to far
age through a thick mist; at a very little distance
all is imperceptible; not a single object can be
perceived; but as we advance, there is always a little
mark of comparatively clear atmosphere about us. So
in life, though we know not what destiny may bring
forth, but for a few hours there may be light upon
us; among the unassuming relief occurs just at the
moment, when it is most valuable & important: The
Lord can is not heavy, that he cannot bear; while in
his own strength, He cannot save. The man who
the has gained the world in ages past, gains
the world now. " Immutable in his nature of prosperity,
Heavens blessed God, we pray that in the dis-
charge of all our duties we may be guided by
the spirit of infinite mercy. Grant us grace, that
we may in all things seek to please thee by our
laws and ordinances, and by our walks, while we
are endeavored with diligence to serve all the
duties of our position, as they are given us, in
the charge of obtaining good, may we only
unreservedly in thy providence, hope and have
the fear of service. Save us from all ungodly
charge about the future, from all distinct of thee,
from despising thy language of chosen hearts, and
our minds and be firm and tranquil, prepared for
the events of life, if we are remember as an source of
higher consolation ye. May ye seek first ye. Bless
form of virtue improvement than religious exercises.
At home, April 22, 1821, afternoon.

At Mr. Peabody's (Walth.), July 24, 1821, afternoon.

At Rocking (Mr. Gray's), July 29, 1821, forenoon.

At Dedham (Mr. Samson), Aug. 12, 1821, forenoon.

At Quincy, Aug. 26, 1821, forenoon.

At Brookline, Sept. 9, 1821, afternoon.

At West Roxbury (Mr. Walshe), Sept. 22, 1821, afternoon.

At Lexington, Oct. 26, 1821, afternoon.

At Mr. Peabody's (Boston), Nov. 25, 1821, afternoon.

At Mr. Cushing's (Boston), Feb. 27, 1822, afternoon.