

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 11

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass*, etc.] In the course of things, and as before determined and resolved on, that

when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples; when he had given them a commission to preach the Gospel, had finished all his instructions he thought fit to give them, and orders he enjoined them, relating to that work; as where they should go, what they should say, how they should behave, and what treatment they should meet with; and had given them all proper advice and encouragement,

he departed thence, from the place where he then was: he did not desist either from the ministry of the word, or from working of miracles, but went out into other parts of the country,

to teach and to preach in their cities: meaning either in the cities of the Jews, or in the cities of his disciples; and these, either the cities they belonged to, from whence they came, namely, the cities of Galilee; for the disciples were Galilaeans, and in which parts Christ now was; or else the cities where he sent them to preach first, and then came himself, and confirmed their doctrine by his own ministry and miracles.

Ver. 2. *Now when John had heard in the prison*, etc.] The person here spoken of is John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, who was now in the prison of Machaerus; being put there by Herod, for his reproving him for taking Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; and whilst he was there, an account was brought him by his own disciples, (see ~~1718~~ Luke 7:18) of

the works of Christ, the miracles he wrought; as the healing of the centurion's servant, the raising from the dead the widow's son of Nain, and the like; upon hearing of which,

he sent two of his disciples, who might be the most prejudiced against Christ, because of the increase of his followers, and the decrease of their master's; and because he did not live such an austere life as John did; and

who, notwithstanding all that they had heard, and their master had told them of Jesus, were not easily persuaded that he was the true Messiah. Moreover, two of them were sent, both because it was more honourable to Christ, and that they might be proper witnesses of what they saw and heard; and since it was not so much for himself, as for the sake of his disciples, that these messengers were sent.

Ver. 3. *And said unto him*, etc.] By the disciples he sent; this was the message they came with, and this the question they were to ask, and did,

art thou he that should come? A “periphrasis” of the Messiah, well known to the Jews; for he had been spoken of frequently in the prophecies of the Old Testament, as the Shiloh, the Redeemer, the Prophet, and King that should come; particularly, by this circumlocution, reference seems to be had to (~~scrib~~Habakkuk 2:3). “It shall surely come”, *aby ab yk*, which may be rendered, “for he that cometh”, or “is to come, shall come”. So that the question in plain terms is, whether he was the Messiah? John could not be ignorant of this, who had seen the Spirit of God descending on him at his baptism, heard a voice from heaven, declaring him the Son of God; and had so often pointed him out to others, and had borne frequent testimonies that he was the Lamb of God, and bridegroom of his church: wherefore this question was put, not upon his own account, but his disciples, that they might have from the mouth of Christ a full and satisfactory answer, which would remove all their doubts and scruples, and attach them to Christ, now he was about to die, and leave them, than which nothing was more desirable to him. Though some have thought, that John’s faith was somewhat slackened; and through his long imprisonment, he began to doubt whether he was the Messiah or not: and others have been of opinion, as particularly Dr. Lightfoot, that the reason of this message was, neither the ignorance and unbelief of John, or his disciples; but that John, with the rest of the Jews, having a notion of a temporal kingdom, and hearing of the mighty works of Christ, wonders that he himself was not delivered out of prison by him, grows impatient upon it, and asks, if he was the Messiah? And if he was, why did he suffer his forerunner and chief minister to lie in prison?

or do we look for another, to release me, and set up this kingdom?

Ver. 4. *Jesus answered and said unto them,* etc.] Not by an express declaration, that he was the Messiah that was to come, and they were not to look for any other; but he bids them

go, and show John again, those things which ye do hear and see. Christ would have them go back to John in prison, and relate to him the doctrines which they had heard preached by him to the poor; and the miracles which they had seen with their own eyes, then wrought by him; as well as many others, which were attested to them by credible witnesses; for there were at that time about Christ, that had infirmities, plagues, and evil spirits, and that were blind, and he instantly cured them in their presence; (see ^{<4072>}Luke 7:21).

Ver. 5. *The blind receive their sight,* etc.] Our Lord here, has reference to several prophecies concerning the Messiah, in (^{<2386>}Isaiah 35:6) (^{<2601>}Isaiah 61:1) and which having their accomplishment in him, John and his disciples might easily and strongly conclude, that he was he that was to come, and that they should not look for another. The several things here mentioned, were not all done at this time, but were what these disciples had sufficient and authentic evidence of; sight was restored to the blind before them then; and no doubt they were informed of the two blind men, that had their eyes opened, (^{<4080>}Matthew 9:30)

and the lame walk; as did the man sick of the palsy, who was brought to him on a bed, carried by four men, but went away himself, with his bed upon his shoulders, (^{<4082>}Matthew 9:2,6,7)

the lepers are cleansed: as the poor man was, that was full of leprosy, and who was cured by Christ, by touching him, (^{<4083>}Matthew 8:3)

and the deaf hear; as did the man, into whose ears Christ put his fingers and said, Ephphatha, be opened, (^{<4073>}Mark 7:33-7:35)

and the dead are raised: as were Jairus's daughter, (^{<4088>}Matthew 9:18,25) and the widow's son of Nain, (^{<4075>}Luke 7:15)

and the poor have the Gospel preached them; by "the poor" are meant, either the preachers of the Gospel; for so the words may be rendered, "the poor preach the Gospel": and such were the apostles of Christ; they were poor with respect to the things of this world; they were chiefly fishermen; and, with respect to human literature, they were unlearned men, had no stock or furniture of acquired learning, and were mean, abject, and

contemptible, in the sight and opinion of men; and yet Christ called, qualified, and sent them forth to preach the Gospel. Or else, the hearers of it are designed; who were also the poor of this world, made a very low figure in life, and had but a small share of knowledge and understanding, and so were despised, and reckoned as cursed by the Scribes and Pharisees: or they were such, who were poor in spirit, or spiritually poor; who saw their spiritual poverty, bewailed and acknowledged it, and sought after the true riches of grace, and glory in Christ. Now these, as they had the Gospel preached to them more fully and clearly, with more power and authority, and so as it never was before or since, so they “received” it, as Tremellius from the Syriac reads the text, readily and willingly, joyfully and gladly, with faith and love; and were, as it may be also rendered, “evangelized” by it, or thrown into a gospel mould and frame: which may be said to be done, when a man has a spirit of liberty, in opposition to a spirit of bondage; when he lives by faith on Christ alone; when his comforts do not spring from his works, but from Christ; when the love and grace of God influence his repentance and obedience; when a man has a spirit of meekness and of love to the saints, is of a forbearing and forgiving spirit: when he is desirous of performing all duties both to God and man, and yet depends upon none of them, but upon Christ alone, for salvation.

Ver. 6. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.*] The Jews were offended at Christ’s parentage and birth, at the poverty of his parents, and at the manner of his birth, by a virgin; and at the place of his birth, which they thought to be Galilee; at his education, because he had not learnt letters, and was brought up to a mechanical employment; at his mean appearance in his public ministry, in his own person, and in his attendants: his company and audience being the poorer sort, the more ignorant, and who had been loose and scandalous persons, publicans and sinners; at the doctrines he preached, particularly, which respected his own deity and eternity, the distinguished grace of God, and living by faith upon his flesh and blood. The disciples of John also were offended in him, because he and his disciples did not fast, and lead such an austere life as they and their master did; because of the meanness and obscurity of Christ’s kingdom; the imprisonment of John, and the many reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions, which did, and were likely to attend a profession of Christ: this our Lord knew, and had a peculiar respect to them in these words; but happy are those persons, who, notwithstanding all these difficulties and discouragements, are so far from stumbling at Christ,

and falling from him, that they heartily receive him and believe in him, make a profession of him, and hold it fast; greatly love, highly value, and esteem him, and are willing to part with all, and bear all for his sake: these are blessed, notwithstanding all their sufferings for him even now; they have spiritual peace, joy, and comfort in their souls, and shall be happy in the full enjoyment of him to all eternity.

Ver. 7. *And as they departed*, etc.] That is, the messengers of John, (~~4172~~ Luke 7:24) when they returned to their master, to give an account to him of what they had heard and seen,

Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John; he took this opportunity before the whole company, who had heard what passed in conversation between him and the disciples of John, to say some things concerning his character and ministry: and which he did, partly to rectify and remove any wrong opinion they might have conceived of him, from this message of his, as if he had retracted his former sentiments concerning Christ, at least was wavering and doubtful about him; and partly, to put them in mind of their former zeal and attachment to John's ministry, when they went out in large bodies to attend upon it; and to revive a good opinion of him; and signifies, that they would do well to ask themselves, what views they had in attending on him, and how they came to grow indifferent to so great a man: and Christ, by giving an account of his character and office, confirms his own Messiahship; and this commendation of John, he chose to enter into, after the departure of his messengers, lest what he said of him should be interpreted as mere flattery:

what went ye out in the wilderness to see? This refers to (~~4185~~ Matthew 3:5) where we read, that great numbers from Jerusalem, Judea, and the country round about Jordan, went out into the wilderness of Judea, where John came preaching, to hear him, and be baptized by him; and our Lord asks, what was it that led such multitudes of them into the wilderness? What did they expect to see there?

A reed shaken with the wind? This may either refer to John's gesture in preaching, who might wave to and fro as a reed does, when shaken by the wind; and Christ's question is, did ye go out only to see and observe the preacher's gesture, to see him move his body to and fro? Was it not to hear his doctrine, and receive benefit for your souls? And did you not? Wherefore, you ought still to retain a valuable respect for him. Or this may regard their opinion of him; and the sense of the interrogation is, when you

first went out to him, did you take him to be an unstable, inconstant man? Like a reed shaken with every wind! If you did, you were mistaken; he was firm and stable in his sentiments and ministry, his preaching was not yea and nay, his doctrine was all of a piece; he stood to it, that he was not the Messiah, but his forerunner; the testimony he bore was always alike, consistent with himself, and he is the same man now he ever was. The Jews use this comparison of a man to a reed, in a sense just the reverse, and make it to signify constancy, and not inconstancy, as well as tenderness, in opposition to roughness, severity, and stubbornness.

“Let a man (say they ^{f674}) be always *hnqb Ær*, “tender as a reed”, and let him not be hard and stubborn as a cedar: when the four winds of the world go out, the reed goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place.”

So they observe ^{f675}, that it is said, that “the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed shaken in the water”, (^{<1145>}1 Kings 14:15) which they interpret by way of blessing.

“As a reed (say they) stands in a place of water, its body waves about, and its roots are many; and though all the winds in the world come and blow upon it, they cannot move it out of its place, but it goes and comes with them; and when the winds are still, the reed stands in its place.”

Ver. 8. *But what went ye out for to see?* etc.] Since it cannot be thought it was to see the reeds in the wilderness blow to and fro by the wind, or a man like one of them, either in gesture or doctrine; was it to see

a man clothed in soft raiment? In raiment made of soft materials, as fine wool, cotton, silk, etc. such as Mecaenos wore, and who was therefore called Malacinus ^{f676}: one finely dressed, and richly apparelled, draws the eyes of persons to him; but such an one is not to be expected in a wilderness: and if the Jews went to see such a person, they were greatly disappointed; for John’s raiment was of camel’s hair, undressed, and he had a leathern girdle about his loins; and as for his diet, it was locusts and wild honey: no,

behold they that wear soft clothing, or, as Luke says, are “gorgeously apparelled”; to which he adds,

and live delicately, are in kings' houses, or “courts”; not in a desert, where John came preaching, nor in a prison, where he now was: he was no light, inconstant, flattering person, as generally courtiers are; had he, he would not have been in a prison; it was for his uprightness and faithfulness, in reproving Herod the king, that he was in such a place and condition. Thus from his very garb and diet, his character is vindicated from the charge of levity and change.

Ver. 9. *But what went ye out for to see?* etc.] Since it was not any thing so mean as a shaking reed, or so grand as a man in gay clothing, pray what was it you went out to see?

A prophet? This was the truth of the matter, they expected to see a prophet, and they believed he was one; this was the common voice of the people; all held John to be a prophet. This made Herod afraid to put him to death, and the Pharisees to speak against his baptism: now, though this was giving him a great character, to believe and own him to be a prophet, yet it did not come up to his full character.

Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet; when they saw him, they saw not only a prophet, but one that was greater, and more excellent than any of the prophets that went before him: they prophesied of the Messiah at a distance, and in words not so clear, and easy to be understood; they spoke of him as to come, but he pointed him out with his finger, and declared that he was come; he saw him himself, and showed him to others; he saw the Spirit of God descending on him, and he himself baptized him; his office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the administrator of the ordinance of baptism to him, gave him a preference to all the prophets; and was such an one, as never any man was vested with but himself.

Ver. 10. *For this is he of whom it is written*, etc.] (³⁰⁰Malachi 3:1)

Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. That these words belong *abh ml w[l* , to the world to come, or the times of the Messiah, that is, the Gospel dispensation, the Jews ^{f677} themselves own; but as to the particular person meant by the “messenger”, or “angel”, because they are not willing to acknowledge the right person, are at the utmost loss. Jarchi makes him to be the angel of death, who is to destroy the wicked; Aben Ezra conjectures it may be Messiah the son of Joseph, who they fancy will come before Messiah the son of David. Kimchi thinks an angel from heaven is designed; and Abarbinel Malachi himself:

but the more ancient sense of the synagogue was, that the same person is meant, as in (~~4005~~ Mark 9:5) under the name of Elijah the prophet; and some have thought, that Elijah the Tishbite himself, is intended; though others think, that some great prophet of equal degree with him, and who is called by his name, is what the prophecy has regard unto ^{f678}; which last is the true sense of the passage: nor should it be once called in question, when our Lord himself has applied it to John the Baptist; to whom the things said in it perfectly agree. He was an “angel”, not by nature, but by office; a “messenger” sent by God, “before the face” of the Messiah; six months before him: such a space of time he was born before him; and such a space of time he entered on his public ministry before him; and “prepared” his “way before” him, by preaching the doctrine of repentance, administering the ordinance of baptism, pointing at the Messiah, and exhorting persons to believe on him. All which proves him to be, what Christ says he was, “more than a prophet”.

Ver. 11. *Verily I say unto you*, etc.] What Christ had before said, he proved from a testimony of Scripture; what he was about to say depending on his word, he asseverates in the most solemn manner:

among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist. The phrase, “them that are born of women”, is a “periphrasis”, of men born into the world by ordinary generation; (see ~~4840~~ Job 14:1) and the sense is, that of all the prophets that have been in the world, since the beginning of it, Moses himself not excepted, there has not been raised up by God a greater prophet than John, the first administrator of baptism; were but considered, the uncommonness of his birth, his being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, his exemplary life, the excellency of his doctrine; and especially, his work and office, as the harbinger of Christ, and the preparer of his ways.

Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he; which is to be understood, not of Christ, who was younger in age, and a junior preacher, and less in the esteem of the Pharisees, being greater than he, in nature and office, nor of the saints in heaven, where he that was least, the meanest, and most abject, when on earth, is more happy than John, who was then in prison; nor of all the believers under the Gospel dispensation; but of the apostles of Christ, and the least among them, who were then the kingdom of heaven, or the visible Gospel church state. These had a better opportunity of conversing with Christ, and of seeing and

hearing the things they did, than John had; they had the power of performing miracles, which John had not; were immediately sent forth by Christ, to preach the Gospel, and had a clearer insight into the truths of it, than John; especially, after the Holy Ghost was in such an extraordinary manner poured forth upon them, on the day of Pentecost; particularly after the death and resurrection of Christ, they were able to preach him, not only as come in the flesh, but as having suffered and died, and obtained eternal redemption: they could speak of his blood being shed, of his righteousness being wrought out, and of his sacrifice and satisfaction as made, which John could not; and besides, were more successful in the conversion of sinners, both Jews and Gentiles, than ever he was. The comparison does not lie so much between their persons, as their several different degrees of light and doctrine.

Ver. 12. *And from the days of John the Baptist until now*, etc.] From the time that he began to preach, to the then present time,

the kingdom of heaven, the Gospel, and the ministry of it, first by John, then by Christ and his apostles,

suffereth violence; or “comes with force”, and power upon the souls of men: it was attended with the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; as appeared by its being the means of quickening persons that were dead in trespasses and sins; enlightening the blind; causing the deaf to hear; melting and softening hearts of stone; making, of enemies, friends to God and Christ; turning men from the power of Satan unto God; setting at liberty such as were slaves and vassals to their own corruptions; and, in a word, in being the power of God unto salvation, to many souls: and which was further seen, in the manner it did all this; suddenly, secretly, powerfully, and effectually, and yet not against the wills of men; and by such instruments as the apostles were, poor, sinful, mortal men; despised by the world, and attended with opposition and persecution: or “suffers violence”; which may be understood, either of the vast numbers, that pressed and crowded to hear the Gospel preached: great numbers followed John, when he first began to preach, and baptize: still a greater number followed Christ, some to hear his doctrine, others to see his miracles, others to behold his person, others out of selfish ends; and some behaved rudely and indecently: or of the ardour and fervency of spirit, which appeared in some, to the ministry of John and Christ, and in their desires and expectations of the kingdom of the Messiah: or of the Gospel’s suffering violence by the

persecutions of its enemies opposing and contradicting it, reproaching it, intimidating the professors of it, and seeking to take away the life of Christ, the great subject of it:

and the violent take it by force; meaning either publicans, and harlots, and Gentile sinners; who might be thought to be a sort of intruders: or rather the same persons, as being powerfully wrought upon under the ministry of the Gospel; who were under violent apprehensions of wrath and vengeance, of their lost and undone state and condition by nature; were violently in love with Christ, and eagerly desirous of salvation by him, and communion with him; and had their affections set upon the things of another world: these having the Gospel preached to them, which is a declaration of God's love to sinners, a proclamation of peace and pardon, and a publication of righteousness and life by Christ, they greedily caught at it, and embraced it.

Ver. 13. *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*] These words are to be considered in connection with (411b) Matthew 11:11) and are a further proof of John's being greater than any of the prophets; because all the inspired writers and prophets, who were before him, prophesied of the Messiah as to come; and either spoke of him in obscure terms, or represented him under dark shadows and figures: whereas John spake of him as already come, and in plain terms, and directed to his very person; and since his time, there have been no prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom; vision and prophecy are now sealed up; all which are acknowledged by the Jews themselves, who ^{f679} say, *j yçmh twmyl al a wabntn al zl wk µyaybnh l k*, "all the prophets did not prophesy but to, or of the days of the Messiah". This was the subject, and these the limits of their prophecies; for they own ^{f680}, that

"from the day that the temple was destroyed, *yaybnh ^m hawbn hl yj b*, "prophecy was taken away from the prophets"."

Since that time, they confess they have had no prophet ^{f681}, and that they are not able to observe their signs.

Ver. 14. *And if ye will receive it*, etc.] The words carry in them some suspicion of unbelief and hardness of heart, as though they would not receive it: however, whether they would or not, it was a certain truth, that *this* same person, "John the Baptist",

is Elias, which was for to come; who was appointed by God to come, and was prophesied of (^{<304B>}Malachi 4:5) that he should come; and even according to the doctrine of the Scribes and Rabbins, he was expected to come before the Messiah; only they in general thought that Elijah the Tishbite, in person, was meant; though some, as before observed ^{f682}, were of opinion, that some great prophet equal to Elijah, and endued with the same spirit, is intended; and which is true of John the Baptist, who came “in the Spirit” and “power” of Elias, (^{<4017>}Luke 1:17). And, as it was usual with the Jews ^{f683}, to call Phinehas by the name of Elias, and Elias Phinehas, because of his zeal for the Lord of hosts; for the same reason may John be called by the same name, there being a great resemblance between Elias and him; in their temper and disposition; in their manner of clothing, and austere way of living; in their very great piety and holiness; in their courage and integrity, in reproving vice; and in their zeal and usefulness in the cause of God, and true religion: in respect to which, Christ must be here understood, when he affirms John to be Elias; not Elias in person, but he that was intended by Elias, that was said should come: hence here is no contradiction to the words of the Baptist, in (^{<4021>}John 1:21) when he says, that he was not Elias; for the Jews, who put the question to him, whether he was Elias, or not? meant whether he was Elias in person, Elias the Tishbite, or not; and so John understood them, and very honestly and sincerely replies, he was not: but he does not deny that he was intended by this Elias, that was prophesied should come; yea, he says such things as might induce them to believe he was that person; hence, Christ, and he, say nothing contrary to, and irreconcilable, as the Jew ^{f684} suggests, with each other.

Ver. 15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*] A way of speaking used by Christ, when anything serious, and of great importance, was delivered; and which required attention, and was not easily understood: and such were the several things he had mentioned in this context; as that John was more than a prophet, more excellent than all the prophets; that the law and prophets were now at an end, and that John was Elias; which things, if rightly understood, would serve greatly to settle their judgment, with respect to himself as the Messiah: but his words imply, that everyone had not spiritual ears and understandings, to hear and take in things of such an high nature, and excellent use; none but those to whom they were given; and such ought to attend to them, and, seriously weigh and consider the

importance of them. The phrase is to be met with in Jewish writings, where it is thus expressed ^{f685};

““He that hears let him hear, and he that understandeth let him understand”,”

(see ^{413B} Matthew 13:43).

Ver. 16. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation?* The men of that age, the stubborn and perverse Jews; who were pleased with nothing, with no man’s ministry, neither with John’s, nor with Christ’s, but found fault with whatever they heard, or saw done:

it is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows: that is, the case of such persons may be fitly represented by children in a public market, calling to their companions, to pipe or mourn with them, and who are so morose and sullen as to do neither: for the men of that generation, are not the good natured children, that called to their fellows, and were willing to join in innocent diversions and exercises; but rather John the Baptist, Christ and his disciples, who may be compared to “children”, for their harmlessness and simplicity; and are represented as “sitting in markets”, places of concourse, where much people met together; which may intend the synagogues and temple, and other public places, which they made use of to publish their doctrines in, to preach to, and exhort the people; and as “calling to their fellows”, to their contemporaries, to those of their own nation, by the external ministry of the word.

Ver. 17. *And saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced,* etc.] The allusion is to Jewish children, who having seen their parents and friends at their festivals and weddings, some play upon the pipe, and others dance to them, mimicked the same in their diversions; and also having observed, at funerals, the mourning women, making their doleful ditties, and others answering to them, acted the part of these persons, expecting their fellows would make their responses, but did not: hence the complaint,

we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. The different characters of John and Christ, are here set forth, by “piping” and “mourning”. The character and ministry of Christ and his disciples, by “piping”; by which is meant, the clear, comfortable, and joyful ministry of the Gospel; which is delightful music to a sensible sinner; and may be compared to it, for distinction of sounds, harmony, and agreement, being charming and delightful; its notes are all grace, mercy, love, liberty, peace,

pardon, righteousness, and free salvation; and it is very powerful and engaging, it quickens and animates, attracts, allures and charms. The character and ministry of John, is signified by “mourning”: his life was a very austere one; he and his disciples fasted oft; he appeared in a very coarse habit; his speech was rough, his voice thundering: his doctrine was the doctrine of repentance, and he used very severe threatenings, in case of impenitence: on the other hand, by the “fellows” to whom they piped, or ministered, in their different ministrations, are meant, the Scribes and Pharisees; who were neither affected to, nor with, either of them: as for John, he was too austere for them; they did not like his garb, nor his diet; nor did his doctrine, or baptism please them; nor were they wrought upon, or brought to repentance by his ministry; they did not lament, weep, or shed one tear, but sat unmoved, like stocks and stones, under those awful striking discourses, on mournful subjects, delivered by him: nor were they pleased with the free conduct, and pleasant conversation of Christ; nor did they dance, or rejoice, at the good news and glad tidings of grace, and salvation, which were brought by him: of such froward, peevish spirits they were, that neither John, nor Christ, could please them: they were a true picture and emblem of many persons, who like neither law nor Gospel, but are morose, sullen, and quarrelsome, let them hear what they will; as Solomon says,

“If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest”, (²¹⁰⁰Proverbs 29:9). Upon which the Talmudists ^{f686} comment, and illustrate it in this manner, and produce a proverbial saying, much like this in the text.

“Says God, I was angry with Ahaz, and I delivered him into the hands of the kings of Damascus; he sacrificed and burnt incense to their gods, (⁴⁰²²2 Chronicles 28:22,23). I played with Amaziah, and I gave the king of Edom into his hands; he brought their gods and worshipped them, (⁴²⁵⁴2 Chronicles 25:14). Says R. Papa, this is what men say, or it is a common proverb, [dy al d rml hyl ykyj [dy al d rml hyl yykb, “they weep to a man who takes no notice of it, they laugh to a man who does not observe it”; woe to that man, who knows not the difference between good and evil.”

Ver. 18. *For John came neither eating nor drinking*, etc.] This and the following verse are an explanation of the foregoing “parable”; and this shows, that John and his disciples are the persons that mourned, of which

his austere life was a proof: for when he “came”, being sent of God, and appeared as a public preacher, he was “neither eating nor drinking”; not that he did not eat or drink at all, otherwise he could not have lived, and discharged his office: but he ate sparingly, very little; and what he did eat and drink, was not the common food and drink of men; he neither ate bread nor drank wine, but lived upon locusts and wild honey; he excused all invitations to people’s houses, and shunned all feasts and entertainments; he abstained from all free and sociable conversation with men, in eating and drinking: and though the Scribes and Pharisees pretended to much abstinence and frequent fastings, yet they did not care to follow his very severe way of living, and lament, in answer to his mournful ditty; but in a calumniating way,

they say he hath a devil; is a demoniac, a madman, one that is unsociable and melancholy; under a delusion of Satan, and influenced by him to abstain from proper food and company of men, under a pretence of religion.

Ver. 19. *The son of man came eating and drinking*, etc.] Meaning himself, who ate and drank as men usually do, lived in the common way of life, was free and sociable, went to feasts, entertainments, and weddings, when he was invited; and was affable, courteous, and friendly in his deportment, to all men;

and they say, behold a man gluttonous, a voracious man, an epicurean, one that indulges his appetite to a very great degree, and in a scandalous manner;

a winebibber, a common tippler, one that drinks to excess; whom the Rabbins call ^{f687}, ׀ֶרְגֵּרְגֵּ, who is one, they say, that drinks up his cup at one draught; one that is given to wine, and is greedy of it:

a friend of publicans and sinners; such as are openly and notoriously wicked; and loves their company, for the sake of tippling with them; and encourages them in their revelling and drunkenness; a very black charge this!

But wisdom is justified of her children; either the wisdom of God, in making use of ministers of a different disposition and deportment, whereby some are gained, and others left inexcusable: or the Gospel, in which there is such a display of divine wisdom, which is vindicated from the charge of

licentiousness, by the agreeable lives and conversations of the children of God: or rather Christ himself, who is the wisdom of God; and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; who, however he may be traduced by ignorant and malicious men, yet will be acquitted from all such charges, as here insinuated, by all the true sons of wisdom; or by such, who are made wise unto salvation. We may learn from hence, that no sort of preachers and preaching will please some men; that the best of Gospel ministers may be reproached as libertines, or madmen; and that they will be sooner, or later, justified and cleared from all such aspersions.

Ver. 20. *Then began he to upbraid the cities,* etc.] When he had sent forth his disciples to preach, and had been in these several cities hereafter mentioned himself, and had taught and preached in them, and confirmed his doctrine by many wonderful works; when he had observed how ill they had used both John and himself, representing the one as having a devil, and the other as a licentious person; when they could not be pleased with the ministry of the one, nor of the other, he very seasonably and righteously began to reproach them with their ungenerous treatment of him, their ingratitude to him, their unbelief in him, the hardness and impenitence of their hearts; which could not be moved to repent of their evil ways, and believe in him, and acknowledge him as the Messiah, by all the instructions he gave them, and miracles he wrought among them: for the cities he has a view to, were such,

wherein most of his mighty works were done; the most for number, and the greatest in their kind; as particularly at Capernaum; where he cured the centurion's servant, recovered Peter's wife's mother from a fever, healed the man sick of a palsy, raised Jairus's daughter from the dead, made whole the woman that had a bloody issue, opened the eyes of two blind men, and cast out a devil from a dumb man, possessed with one: all these, and more, he did in this one city, and therefore he might justly upbraid them,

because they repented not: not because they did not commend him, and speak well of his works, for he sought not his own glory, but their good: all he did was, in order to bring men to repentance of their sins, and faith in himself, that they might be saved.

Ver. 21. *Woe unto thee, Chorazin!* etc.] Though many of Christ's mighty works were done in this place, yet mention is made of it no where else, but here; whether it was a single city, or a country, is not easy to determine:

the word $\chi\omicron\sigma\rho\omega\iota$, “Chorasin”, signifying “woody places”, Dr. Lightfoot ^{f688} conjectures it might include Cana, in which Christ wrought his first miracle, and a small adjacent country, situated in a wood, and be so called from thence; and Origen ^{f689} reads it, $\chi\omicron\rho\alpha\ \zeta\iota\nu$, “the region of Zin”:

woe unto thee, Bethsaida! This was the city of Andrew and Peter, *see Gill “<414>John 1:44”*; so that as bad as it was, some persons were called out of it by the grace of God, and to the high office of apostleship; and which makes that grace in such the more distinguishing:

for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. These words are to be understood in a popular sense, as Grotius observes, and express what was probable, according to an human judgment of things; and the meaning is, that if the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon had had the advantages of Christ’s ministry, and of seeing his miracles, as the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida had, it looks very likely, or one would be ready to conclude, especially from many coming out of these parts, to attend on Christ’s ministry, (^{<408>}Mark 3:8) and from the conversion of some of them in after times, (^{<408>}Acts 21:3,4) they would have repented of their sins; at least, in an external way, signified by sackcloth and ashes, which were outward signs of repentance; (see ^{<285>}Isaiah 58:5 ^{<405>}Jeremiah 6:26). And which, if it had been only performed in such a manner by the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, would have saved them from temporal judgments, which their sins now called for. The words are an hyperbolic exaggeration of the wickedness of those cities, like to (^{<305>}Ezekiel 3:5-7) showing, that they were worse than the Tyrians and Sidonians; an Heathenish and idolatrous people, who lived very profligate and dissolute lives, in all intemperance, luxury, and impiety; and therefore would be punished in a severer way: neither this passage, nor what follows, can be any proof of God’s giving sufficient grace to all men alike, which in some is effectual to conversion, and in others not, but of the contrary; since the men of Tyre and Sidon had not the same means, or the same grace, as the inhabitants of the other cities, if the mighty works done among them are to be called so; or that man has a power to repent of himself, in a spiritual and evangelical way; or that outward means, as doctrines and miracles, are sufficient to produce such a repentance, without efficacious and unfrustrable grace; since only an outward repentance is here supposed, such as that of Ahab, and of the Ninevites.

Ver. 22. *But I say unto you*, etc.] What may be depended upon as true, and which shall certainly come to pass, however the inhabitants of these cities might flatter themselves; or in whatsoever light they might look upon their neighbours, the Tyrians and Sidonians; and fancy themselves to be the favourites of heaven, and these as the most execrable of creatures;

it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day off judgment, than for you. Their punishment in another world will be more mild and moderate; they will not have such severe stings of conscience, nor have reason to make such bitter reflections on themselves, as those will who have had the advantages of a Gospel revelation: all sins are not alike, nor will the punishment of them be the same; there will be degrees of torments in hell, and which the justice of God requires. These words suppose, that the men of Tyre and Sidon will be punished for their many abominable sins, committed against the law and light of nature; but that the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, having rejected the Messiah, and the doctrines of the Gospel, against all the evidence of miracles, and convictions of their own minds, and probably sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; as their sins are aggravated, their condemnation will be the greater, and their punishment the more intolerable.

Ver. 23. *And thou Capernaum*, etc.] This city is singled out from all the rest, and spoken to particularly, because of its peculiar advantages:

which art exalted unto heaven; which has respect to the very great privileges this place enjoyed, it being the city where Christ chose to dwell, and for a time fixed his abode in; where he first began to preach, and where such a train of miracles were done; a particular enumeration, of which has been before given: as also it may refer to the situation of the place, which was very high and lofty, so that it seemed to reach unto heaven; for the account that R. Benjamin Tudelensis^{f690} gives of it is, that

“Capernaum, which is, by interpretation, “the village of comfort”, at first sight looks to be *yl mrk l [mwqm*, “a place higher than Mount Carmel”.”

And Nonnus on (^{<119>}John 6:59) calls it, *βαψυκρηπιδι χαφαρναουμ* which the interpreter renders, the land of “Capernaum founded on high”. But notwithstanding all this,

shalt be brought down to hell; meaning, it should be attended with very humbling providences, be reduced to a very low condition, (see ²³⁴⁴⁵ Isaiah 14:15) be destroyed and laid waste, as a city, as it was in the times of Vespasian; and the inhabitants of it not only punished with temporal, but everlasting destruction;

for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. The sense of these words is the same with that of (⁴¹¹² Matthew 11:22) only this may be observed, that whereas Capernaum was superior in privileges and advantages than the other cities, and yet acted the vile and ungrateful part it did; so that its impotence and unbelief were the more aggravated; hence a still viler set of men are pitched upon, even the men of Sodom, to make the comparison of them with: for as wicked as the men of that place were, who were so infamous for their unnatural lusts; yet if they had enjoyed such a ministry as Christ's, and had had such miracles wrought among them, for the attestation of the doctrines taught them, in all human probability they would have repented of their flagitious crimes; at least in an external way, in such a manner as to have escaped that dreadful judgment, which laid their city, and several adjacent ones, in ashes; and so would have continued a city until this day. The phrase remained is Jewish, and is used of Sodom by the Rabbins, who say ^{f691}, that

“Abraham was “ninety nine” years of age when he was circumcised, and then was the overthrow of Sodom; which was “fifty one” years, after the generation of the division (of the people and languages), and near “fifty two” years; but “Zoar remained” one year, **µwds bwçy rj a**, “after Sodom remained”.”

According to the Jews, it stood but fifty two years at most ^{f692}: and they have a notion, that Sodom and Gomorrhah will be built again in the future state ^{f693}, or world to come, the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 24. *But I say unto you*, etc.] Capernaum, and the inhabitants thereof, as before, to Chorazin and Bethsaida.

It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee: though the punishment of the men of Sodom will be very great, their iniquities being horribly dreadful and enormous, yet more easy to be borne than the vengeance, which, in the last and general judgment, will fall upon such, who have had the means of grace, and have despised

them; especially such as had the personal presence, ministry, and miracles of Christ among them, as the Capernaïtes had. Such a way of expressing and setting forth the severer punishment of others, by that of Sodom, is not unusual in the Old Testament; (see ^{<2006>}Lamentations 4:6) nor in Jewish writers, who say ^{f694}, that

“the Israelites were fit for, or deserved, μwds çnw[m rwmj rtwy çnw[l , “a far more heavy punishment than the punishment of Sodom”: because they abounded with prophets, rising early, and sending them, but they did not hearken; whereas Sodom had no hands stayed on her, or prophets to warn them.”

Ver. 25. *At that time Jesus answered, and said,* etc.] The time referred to is, when the disciples returned to him, and gave him an account of the success of their ministry, (^{<2007>}Luke 10:17,21) who say nothing of the conversion of sinners, but of the spirits being subject to them; and may also refer to the several things spoken of in the context: it was at that time when Christ spoke to the multitude about John, and the excellency of his ministry, which yet was ineffectual to great numbers, who for a while attended on it; and when he took notice to the people, how he himself, as well as John, was rejected and vilified by the Pharisees, and received by publicans and sinners; and when he upbraided Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, for their impenitence and unbelief: taking occasion from hence, he “answered and said”; an Hebrew way of speaking, used when nothing goes before, to which what is said can be an answer; (see ^{<888>}Job 3:2).

I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth. This is an address to God, by way of thanksgiving; glorifying and praising him, confessing and acknowledging his wisdom, power, grace, and goodness, discovered in the things he after mentions: so far was he from being discouraged and dejected at the poor success of the Seventy: at his ill treatment by the Pharisees; and at the general impenitence and unbelief of the cities, where he preached and wrought his miracles; that he is abundantly thankful, and admires the distinguishing grace of God in the calling of a few in those places. This address is made to God as a “Father”, as his Father, his own Father; for he was the only begotten of him, and dearly beloved by him: this epithet he makes use of, to show the near relation he stood in to him, and the freedom he could use with him: he also addresses him as “the Lord of heaven and earth”; he being the maker, upholder, and governor of both,

and which he fills with his presence; the one is his throne, and the other is his footstool. This he mentions to show the sovereignty of his Father, in the conversion of men; and that it was not for want of power in him, that there were no more wrought upon under the ministry of John, himself, and his disciples. The things he expresses his thankfulness for, follow;

because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent. The “things” he means are the doctrines of the Gospel; such as respect himself, his person, as God, and the Son of God; his office, as Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour; and the blessings of grace, righteousness, and salvation by him. The persons from whom these things were hid, are “the wise and prudent”; in things worldly, natural, and civil; men of great parts and learning, of a large compass of knowledge, having a considerable share of sagacity, penetration, and wisdom; or, at least, who were wise and prudent in their own conceits, as were the Scribes and Pharisees, and the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the two famous doctors of that day: and indeed the people of the Jews in common were so; who thus applaud themselves at the eating of the passover every year, and say, *hrwth ta μy[dwy wnl k μynwbn wnl k μymkj wnl k*, “we are all wise, we are all prudent, we all understand the law”^{f695}; the same is elsewhere^{f696} said of all Israel; in their opinion they were so, yet the things of the Gospel are hidden from them. God may be said to “hide” these things, when either he does not afford the outward revelation of the Gospel; or, if he does, it is given forth in parables, or he does not give along with it the light of his Spirit and grace, but leaves men to their own darkness and blindness; so that they cannot see, perceive, and understand the beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness of the doctrines of it. Now, when Christ confesses this, or gives thanks to God for it, it is a declaration that God has done so, and denotes his acquiescence in it; and is not properly a thanksgiving for that; but rather, that forasmuch as he has thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to take such a method, he has been pleased to make a revelation of these things to others;

and hast revealed them unto babes; foolish ones, comparatively speaking, who have not those natural parts, learning, and knowledge others have, that wisdom and prudence in worldly and civil things; and are so in their own account, and in the esteem of the world; and who are as babes, helpless, defenceless, and impotent of themselves, to do or say anything that is spiritually good, and are sensible of the same: now to such souls

God reveals the covenant of his grace, Christ, and all the blessings of grace in him, the mysteries of the Gospel, and the unseen glories of another world. The veil of darkness and ignorance is removed from them; spiritual sight is given them; these things are set before them; they see a glory and suitableness in them; their desires are raised after them; their affections are set on them; their hearts are impressed with them; and they are helped to view their interest in them. The Jews themselves have a notion, that in the days of the Messiah, children and babes shall have knowledge of divine things.

“Says Simeon ben Jochai ^{f697}, it is not the pleasure of God that wisdom should be so revealed to the world; but when it is near the days of the Messiah, even *aml [d ybr*, “little children”, or the “babes that are in the world”, shall find out the hidden things of wisdom, and know thereby the ends, and the computations of times; and at that time it shall be revealed to all:”

and there is more truth in what they own elsewhere ^{f698}, than they themselves are aware of, when they say, that

“from the day that the temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken away from the prophets, and given *twqwnytI w pyj wçl*, “to fools and babes”.”

Ver. 26. *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*] Or, “so is the good will”, or “pleasure before thee”: thus, *Æynpl m ^wxr yhy*, “let it be the good will before thee”, or “in thy sight, O Lord”, is a phrase often to be met with in the Jews’ forms of prayer ^{f699}. Here the word designs the sovereign counsel and purpose of God, to which, and to which only, our Lord refers the different dispensations of God towards the sons of men: this is a reason which ought to satisfy everyone, and is better than ten thousand others that can be thought of, or devised by men. This difference among men, with respect to the Gospel revelation, cannot be owing to natural sagacity, prudence, and penetration; for these things are with those from whom it is hid; nor to any worthiness in those to whom it is revealed; for they are the poor, the base, the foolish things of this world, and even things that are not; nor to any foresight of their making a better use and improvement of such a revelation, but to the good will and pleasure of God only.

Ver. 27. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father*, etc.] This is to be understood of Christ, as mediator; for, as God, nothing was delivered to him; he had all things, all perfections, power, and glory his Father has; and is to be considered in the utmost extent: all persons are delivered to him, angels and men; good angels are delivered to him, to be confirmed in him, as their head, and to be made use of by him; spirits, evil spirits, which were subject to his disciples, are under him, and at his command and disposal; and their subjection to his disciples is owing to his power over them, which he communicated to them; all the elect of God are delivered to him, to be kept and saved by him; all the babes and little ones, to whom it was the Father's will to reveal the mysteries of grace, were his care and charge; all power in heaven, and in earth, are given unto him; and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid with him, which are distributed to any of the sons of men; all the blessings of grace, and the promises of the everlasting covenant, and all the glory and happiness of his people, are put into his hands:

and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; the transcendent glories and perfections of his nature, as the Son of God; nor the whole of his work and office, as mediator: or all that is committed to his charge, as such: all that he was to do, and suffer, for his people; all that he had done for them, and should communicate to, and bestow upon them.

Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son; his essence and glory, his mind and will, his purposes and decrees, his counsels and covenant; the grace and love of his heart to his chosen people; what he has prepared and laid up for them, and will make them partakers of to all eternity;

and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; both himself, and his Father, and the grace and glory of each, which he does by his Spirit; who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and which entirely depends on his own sovereign will and pleasure.

Ver. 28. *Come unto me*, etc.] Christ having signified, that the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of grace, are only to be come at through him; and that he has all things relating to the peace, comfort, happiness, and salvation of men in his hands, kindly invites and encourages souls to come unto him for the same: by which is meant, not a local coming, or a coming to hear him preach; for so his hearers, to whom he more immediately directed his speech, were come already; and many of them did, as multitudes may, and do, in this sense, come to Christ, who never knew

him, nor receive any spiritual benefit by him: nor is it a bare coming under the ordinances of Christ, submission to baptism, or an attendance at the Lord's supper, the latter of which was not yet instituted; and both may be performed by men, who are not yet come to Christ: but it is to be understood of believing in Christ, the going of the soul to him, in the exercise of grace on him, of desire after him, love to him, faith and hope in him: believing in Christ, and coming to him, are terms synonymous, (~~4165~~ John 6:35). Those who come to Christ aright, come as sinners, to a full, suitable, able, and willing Saviour; venture their souls upon him, and trust in him for righteousness, life, and salvation, which they are encouraged to do, by this kind invitation; which shows his willingness to save, and his readiness to give relief to distressed minds. The persons invited, are not "all" the individuals of mankind, but with a restriction,

all ye that labour, and are heavy laden; meaning, not these who are labouring in the service of sin and Satan, are laden with iniquity, and insensible of it: these are not weary of sin, nor burdened with it; not do they want or desire any rest for their souls; but such who groan, being burdened with the guilt of sin upon their consciences, and are pressed down with the unsupportable yoke of the law, and the load of human traditions; and have been labouring till they are weary, in order to obtain peace of conscience, and rest for their souls, by the observance of these things, but in vain. These are encouraged to come to him, lay down their burdens at his feet, look to, and lay hold by faith on his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; when they should enjoy that true spiritual consolation, which could never be attained to by the works of the law.

And I will give you rest; spiritual rest here, peace of conscience, ease of mind, tranquillity of soul, through an application of pardoning grace, a view of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and full atonement of sin by his sacrifice; and eternal rest hereafter, in Abraham's bosom, in the arms of Jesus, in perfect and uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit. The Jews say ^{f700}, that *hrwt tj wnm*, "the law is rest"; and so explain (~~04915~~ Genesis 49:15 ~~49212~~ Psalm 23:2 ~~27213~~ Daniel 12:13) of it: but a truly sensible sinner enjoys no rest, but in Christ; it is like Noah's dove, which could find no rest for the soles of its feet, until it returned to the ark; and they themselves expect perfect rest in the days of the Messiah, and call his world *hj wnm*, rest ^{f701}.

Ver. 29. *Take my yoke upon you*, etc.] The phrase is Rabbinical. The Jewish doctors often speak ^{f702} of $\mu\upsilon\mu\zeta\ \tau\omega\kappa\lambda\ \mu\ \iota\ \omega\lbracket$, “the yoke of the kingdom of heaven”, and of persons taking it upon them; and which they exhort to, and express in much such language as here ^{f703}; $\alpha\zeta\upsilon\delta\eta\ \alpha\tau\omega\kappa\lambda\ \mu\ \iota\ \omega\lbracket\ \omega\kappa\upsilon\iota\ \lbracket\ \omega\iota\ \upsilon\beta\eta$, “take upon you the yoke of the holy kingdom”, every day. They distinguish this from the yoke of the law, and say ^{f00}

“a man must first take upon him the yoke of the kingdom of heaven, and after that take upon him the “yoke” of the commandment.”

Their sense I take to be this, that a man must first make a profession of his faith in the God of Israel, and then live conformably to his law: agreeably to this, Christ exhorts such persons who come to him for rest and happiness, to profess their faith in him, to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, to submit to his ordinances, and to walk according to those laws, commands, and orders, which he, as king of saints, has made, and requires obedience to: so those who come to him for life, and believe in him, as the Saviour of their souls, though they are not to trust in, and depend upon any duties performed by them; yet they are not to sit still, or lay aside the performance of good works, or live a licentious course of life, but are always to be doing the will and work of their Lord. And this he calls “his yoke”, in distinction from the yoke of the law of Moses, and of the traditions of the elders.

And learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart: respect seems to be had to (³⁰⁰Zechariah 9:9) where such characters as these are given of the Messiah. The meekness, humility, and lowliness of Christ appear in his assumption of human nature; in his subjection to his Father; in the whole of his deportment and conversation among men; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism; in the whole course of his obedience to God, and in his sufferings and death: and he is to be imitated herein, by all his followers, who may learn many excellent things from his example, as well as from his doctrine; and particularly, that whereas, though he was so great a person, yet condescended to perform every duty with readiness and cheerfulness, his disciples should not think it below them to conform to every ordinance of his, to every branch of his will; for he has set them an example, that they should tread in his steps, and walk even as he has walked. There never was such an instance of humility, and lowliness of

mind, as Christ; nor is there any example so worthy of our imitation as his. The Jews have a saying¹⁷⁰⁵,

“for ever let a man *l l yhk ^twwn*], “be meek as Hillel”, and let him not be wrathful as “Shammai”:]”

which two men were presidents of their universities about the times of Christ. But our Lord says, “learn of me”, not of “Hillel”, or any of your doctors,

and ye shall find rest unto your souls; referring to (²⁴¹⁶Jeremiah 6:16) and which shows the rest he speaks of in the preceding verse, to be not a corporal, but a spiritual one; and which is to be enjoyed “in”, though not “for” the observance of Christ’s commands; whose “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all” whose “paths are peace”.

Ver. 30. *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*] Christ calls a profession of faith in him, and subjection to his ordinances, a yoke, in allusion to the law of Moses, and in distinction from it; and a “burden”, with respect to the very heavy ones the Scribes and Pharisees laid upon the shoulders of the people, obliging them to a strict observance of them; though of a different nature from either of them; “for his commandments are not grievous”, hard and heavy to be borne, as their’s were, but “easy and light”: not that they are so to unregenerate men, or are easily performed by the strength of nature, and power of men’s free will: but they are good and amiable, and lovely in their own nature, and are cheerfully complied with, and abundance of spiritual pleasure and delight is enjoyed in them by believers, when they have the presence of God, the assistance of his Spirit, and the discoveries of his love. Moreover, the commands of Christ, and the ordinances of the Gospel, are so in comparison of the law of Moses; which required perfect obedience, but gave no strength to perform, and threatened with condemnation and death, in case of the least failure; and of the numerous, and some very severe rites and usages of the ceremonial law; and of the bulky and heavy traditions of the elders, and ordinances of men.