

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO MATTHEW 13

**Ver. 1.** *The same day Jesus went out of the house*, etc.] Where he had been preaching, and working miracles: where this house was, is not certain; it seems to have been in one of the cities of Galilee, probably Capernaum, since that was by the sea coast: the reason of his going out of the house was, either to converse with his mother and brethren, as they desired; or to withdraw himself from company, and take some refreshment by the sea side; or because it would not hold the people, and therefore he quitted it for a more convenient place. The time he went out of it, was the same day he had cast the devil out of the man blind and dumb, and had delivered himself so freely concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, who had blasphemously ascribed that miracle to the assistance of Satan; and the same day his mother and brethren came to see him, and speak to him.

*And sat by the sea side*; either as weary, and for his refreshment, or in order to preach to the people; for, Mark says, “he began again to teach by the sea side”, (~~400~~Mark 4:1). This was the sea of Galilee, sometimes called the sea of Tiberias.

**Ver. 2.** *And great multitudes were gathered unto him*, etc.] Some on one account, and some on another; some to see his person, others his miracles; some healing for their bodies, and others for their souls; some for the loaves, and others to hear him preach; and of these there were several sorts, as the following parable shows.

*So that he went into a ship*: both for his own advantage, that he might not be crowded, and pressed by the people, and have more room, and a freer air to speak in, and for their’s, that they might both see and hear him better.

*And sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore*; as was the then custom of the Jewish doctors and hearers, the one to sit, and the other to stand. See Gill #~~400~~Matthew 5:1. Christ sat upon the deck of the ship; or perhaps this ship was no other than an open boat, which was put to sea,

some little distance from the shore; upon which the people stood in great numbers, with much convenience and attention.

**Ver. 3.** *And he spake many things unto them in parables*, etc.] For the parables of the sower, and the different sorts of ground the seed fell in, of the wheat and tares, of the grain of mustard seed, of the leaven in three measures of meal, of the treasure hid in a field, of the pearl of great price, of the net cast into the sea, and of the householder, were all delivered at this time. This way of speaking by parables was much in use among the eastern nations, and particularly the Jews. R. Meir was very famous among them for this way of teaching: they say <sup>f774</sup>,

“that when R. Meir died, *μϣל צמ יל צממ ול j b*, “they that were skilled in, and used parables, ceased”.”

The commentators <sup>f775</sup> on this passage say,

“that he preached a third part tradition, and a third part mystical discourse, *yl tm atl ytw*, “and a third part parables”.”

which method of discoursing was judged both pleasant and profitable, and what served to raise the attention of the hearer, and to fix what was delivered the more firmly in their minds: what was our Lord’s reason for using them, may be seen in (<sup><013></sup> Matthew 13:13). He begins with the parable of the sower. The design of which is to set forth the nature of the word of God, the work and business of the ministers of it, the different success of the preaching of it, and the fruitfulness of it; and to show when it is truly received, and the various degrees of fruit it produces; that the efficacy of it depends on the grace of God, which makes the heart good, and fit to receive it; and how few they be which hear the word to any spiritual advantage and benefit; and how far persons may go in hearing, and yet fall short of the grace of God; and therefore no dependence is to be had on the external hearing of the word.

*Behold, a sower went forth to sow*; Luke adds, “his seed”; as does also Munster’s Hebrew Gospel here; and Mark introduces the parable thus, “hearken, behold!” it being a matter of great importance and concern, which is expressed by this parable, it deserves the most diligent attention. By “the sower” is meant “the son of man”, as may be learnt from the explanation of another parable, (<sup><013></sup> Matthew 13:37) which is Jesus Christ himself, who is often so called on account of his human nature; and may

the rather be thought to be intended here, since the seed he sowed is called “his seed”; meaning the Gospel, of which he is the author, publisher, sum and substance; and since he is, by way of eminency, called **ο σπειρων**, “the sower”; which must be understood of him as a prophet, or preacher of the word, who was eminently sent of God, and richly qualified for such an office, and was most diligent in it, and yet his success was but small.

Indeed, every minister of the Gospel may be called a sower, who bears precious seed, sows spiritual things, and though in tears, he shall not return empty, but shall reap in joy, and bring his sheaves with him. This sower “went forth” from his own house to his field; which, as applied to Christ, may intend his incarnation, his coming into this world by the assumption of human nature, his appearance in the public ministry, in the land of Judea, and his going forth still in his ministers, and by his Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel; and, as applied to the preachers of the word, may be explained of their commission, of their being sent, and of their going forth into the field of the world, preaching the Gospel every where. The end of the sower’s going forth is to “sow his seed”: by “his seed” is meant the word, the word of God; (see <sup>4004</sup>Mark 4:14; <sup>4381</sup>Luke 8:11) so called, because of the choiceness and excellency of it in itself, that grain which is reserved for seed being usually the best of the kind; and because of its smallness, it being mean and contemptible in the eyes of those, who know not the nature of it; and because of the generative virtue it has, though not without a divine influence. Nor does it bring forth fruit, unless it is sown in the heart, as seed in the earth; where its operation is secret, its growth and increase gradual, and its fruitfulness different. By “sowing”, is meant preaching; which, as sowing, requires knowledge and skill, and an open and liberal hand; keeping back nothing that is profitable, a declaring the same doctrine in one place as another; and designs a constant ministration of it, notwithstanding all discouragements, and a patient waiting for success.

**Ver. 4.** *And when he sowed*, etc.] Or, “as he sowed”, as the other evangelists; that is, “whilst he was sowing”,

*some seeds fell*; either out of his hand, or out of the cart drawn by oxen; hence the <sup>1776</sup>Talmudists distinguish between **dy tl wpm**, “the falling of the hand”, or what falls out of the hand; and **pyrwwç tl wpm**, “the falling of the oxen”, or what falls from them; where the gloss is,

“in some places they sow the grain with the hand; and in other places they put the seed on a cart full of holes, and oxen draw the cart on the ploughed land, and it falls upon it.”

*By the wayside*; by the common road, or private paths, which led through corn fields, in which Christ and his disciples walked, (~~401~~ Matthew 12:1) and which being beaten and trodden hard, the seed must lie open on it, and so be liable to be trampled upon by men, or devoured by the fowls of the air; and designs such hearers as are careless, negligent, and inattentive, who hear without understanding, judgment, and affection; (see ~~403~~ Matthew 13:19)

*and the fowls came and devoured them*; the other evangelists say, “the fowls of the air”; and so the Vulgate Latin, and Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and some copies; and mean the devils; so called, because their habitation is in the air; hence they are said to be “the power of the air”: and because of their ravenous and devouring nature, their swiftness to do mischief, and their flocking in multitudes, where the word is preached, to hinder its usefulness, as fowls do, where seed is sowing. Satan, and his principalities, and powers, rove about in the air, come down on earth, and seek whom they may devour, and often mix themselves in religious assemblies, to do what mischief they can; (see ~~3006~~ Job 1:6,7).

**Ver. 5.** *Some fell upon stony places*, etc.] Such a place as the Jews call *tysl wj*, a barren, stony place, a place from whence, they say, they take stones, and [*l s tyb*, and which *h[yrzi ywar wnya*, “is not fit for sowing”<sup>1777</sup>; and such were those places and spots of ground, that some of these seeds fell upon; and design such hearers, in whom the natural hardness of their hearts continues, and who remain unbroken by the word, and are without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it.

*Where they had not much earth*, to cover them and take root in: this is expressive of such persons who have slight convictions of sin, and awakenings of the natural conscience; some little, light, and speculative notions of the word, in the understanding and judgment; some flashes of natural affection for it, and outward expressions of delight and pleasure in it; some show of grace, and a form of godliness, but no real heart work.

*And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth*; to strike their roots downwards: and through the reflection of the heat, upon the rocks and stones, they quickly broke through the thin surface of the

earth over them, and appeared above ground before the usual time of the springing up of seed: which may not only denote the immediate reception of the word by these hearers, and their quick assent to it; but their sudden and hasty profession of it, without taking due time to consider the nature and importance thereof; and the seeming cheerfulness in which they did both receive and profess it; though it was only outward and hypocritical, and more on account of the manner of preaching it, than the word itself, and through a selfish principle in them; and did not arise from any real experience of the power of it on their souls, or true spiritual pleasure in it: nor could it be otherwise, since their stony hearts were not taken away, nor hearts of flesh given them; wherefore the word had no place in them, and made no real impression on them; they remained dead in trespasses and sins; the word was not the savour of life unto life unto them, or the Spirit that giveth life; they did not become living and lively stones; they continued as insensible as ever of their state and condition by nature, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the danger they were in, and of their need of Christ, and salvation by him; they were as hard, and obdurate, and as inflexible, as ever, without any real contrition for sin, or meltings of soul through the influence of the love and grace of God; and as backward as ever to submit to the righteousness of Christ, being stout hearted, and far from it; and being no more cordially willing to be subject to the sceptre of his kingdom, or to serve him in righteousness and holiness, than they ever were; for the word falling upon them, made no change in them; their hearts were as hard as ever, notwithstanding the seeming and hasty reception of it; though they did not refuse to hearken to the word externally, did not put away the shoulder, or stop their ears, yet their hearts were still like an adamant stone: nothing but the mighty power of God, and his efficacious grace, can break the rocky heart in pieces; or give an heart of flesh, a sensible, soft, and flexible one, with which a man truly repents of sin, believes in Christ, and becomes subject to him.

**Ver. 6.** *And when the sun was up*, etc.] Some time, and its heat was increasing, and it began to shine out hot, and beat with some vehemency and strength; which may denote some sore temptation, or severe affliction, or fiery trial of persecution and tribulation; (see <sup><11321></sup> Matthew 13:21) for this is not to be understood of the glorious light of the Gospel, which, though very comfortable and refreshing, as well as illuminating to good men, is very distressing and tormenting to carnal minds; they cannot bear its truths and doctrines; this is the fire which comes out of the mouth of God's

faithful witnesses, and torments them that dwell on the earth, and devours their enemies, (<sup><66115></sup>Revelation 11:5-11:10). And it, moreover, like the sun, has different effects on different objects; as the sun hardens clay, and melts wax, so the Gospel is to the hardening of some, and softening of others; to the one it is the savour of life unto life, and to the other the savour of death unto death; but this cannot be intended, because the word by these hearers is first received with joy. Nor is Christ the sun of righteousness meant, who arises with healing in his wings, and gives grace and glory to his people; but the sun of persecution and affliction, in which sense the metaphor is used, in (<sup><23016></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6) the heat of which the church patiently bore, though she was made black with it: but these hearers think it strange that such a fiery trial should befall them; wherefore, as they take up their profession in haste, they as quickly drop it; (see <sup><61716></sup>Revelation 7:16).

*They were scorched, and because they had not root, they withered away:* they were offended with what they met with, for the sake of Christ, and the profession of his word; and therefore, not being rooted in him, nor in the love of God, nor having the root of the matter, true grace, in themselves, or, as Luke says, “lacked moisture”, of divine grace, of the dews and waterings of it, fell away finally and totally. This is no instance of the apostasy of real saints, or any proof of true believers falling away finally and totally; since these were not rooted, and grounded in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God, were not interested in it, or were partakers of the effects of it; had they been so, they could never have been separated from it; tribulation, distress, and persecution could never have done it; none of these would ever have moved them; had they had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they would have gloried in tribulation: nor were they united to Christ, rooted and built up in him; had they, they would have continued to have derived life and nourishment from him; in him the life of believers is hid, and because he lives they live also; as long as there is life in the root, the branches will not die; he is the root that bears the branches, the root of the righteous that yields fruit, and is never moved: nor had these the truth of grace, which is an incorruptible seed, a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; had they, they could never have withered away; to such God gives more grace, he himself is as the dew unto them, and he waters them every moment.

**Ver. 7.** *And some fell among thorns,* etc.] On a spot of ground which was full of the roots of thorns, and briars, which was not cleared of them as it should be. We often read <sup>f778</sup> of **hxwqtnc hdç**, “a field cleared of

thorns”; but such was not this piece of ground, it was overrun with them, not on the surface of the earth, but within it: for it follows,

*and the thorns sprung up*: naturally, being neither sown nor planted; either before the seed, or, at least, as soon; and however grew faster, and higher,

*and choked them*; so that they came to nothing; hence the advice, “sow not among thorns”, (<sup>401B</sup>Jeremiah 4:3) and a lost kindness, or what is bestowed in vain, is expressed in this proverbial manner <sup>f779</sup>, *yrzyj a aydçw*

*Æytwbyj hl wqç*, “thy beneficence is taken away, and cast among thorns”: these point out such hearers who seemed to be contrite, to have the low ground of their hearts broken up, their consciences tender, and to have a true sense of sin, as well as to be outwardly reformed; and yet inwardly were full of the thorns of sinful lusts, particularly of the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, the lusts of other things, and the pleasures of this life, which rendered the word useless and unfruitful; (see <sup>4032</sup>Matthew 13:22) all which are comparable to thorns; it is hardly possible to be in the midst of, and meddle with these, without being scratched by them; they pierce, afflict, and wound, even where they have not their greatest power and influence; and where they do prevail, and get the ascendant, as they are fruitless themselves, they make others so too; they choke the word, and make that, and all ordinances, and opportunities, useless, and unserviceable. Thorns are a part of the earth’s curse for the sin of man; and such persons in whom thorny cares and lusts prevail, as they are like unto the earth which beareth thorns, so, as that, they are rejected, and nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned in everlasting flames of divine wrath and fury, (<sup>306B</sup>Hebrews 6:8).

**Ver. 8.** *But others fell into good ground*, etc.] Not beaten and trodden by the feet of men, nor stony, nor thorny, but well broke up, manured, and tilled; which designs good, honest hearted hearers who become so by the Spirit and grace of God; who with a spiritual understanding, experience, savour, and relish, what they hear; (see <sup>4033</sup>Matthew 13:23)

*and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold*: some seeds produced an hundred, others sixty, and others thirty. The first of these especially was a large increase, but what was sometimes had, and which Isaac received in Gerar, in the land of the Philistines, (<sup>4032</sup>Genesis 26:12) and is what Pliny says <sup>f780</sup> of Byzacium, a country of the Lybiphoenicians, that it yielded an hundred fold to its husbandmen; and of

such fruitfulness was the land of Israel, of which the Jewish doctors say some things incredible: they tell us a story<sup>f781</sup> of

“one that sowed a measure of vetches, or pease, *ḡyas twam çl ç hç[w*, “and it produced three hundred measures”; they say unto him, the Lord hath begun to bless thee, etc.”

Here, in the parable, these various increases intend the different degrees of fruitfulness in gracious souls; for though the fruits of grace, in believers, are of the same quality, yet not of the same quantity. Some believers are grown to a greater maturity than others; some are but little children, some are young men, some are fathers.

**Ver. 9.** *Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*] Not externally only, but internally; he that has ears given him to hear, so as to understand, let him make use of them, and seriously consider of, and diligently attend to the use and importance of this parable. It is a way of speaking used by Christ, when anything of moment was delivered, and not so easy to be understood, on purpose to quicken the attention of his auditors, and stir up in them a desire of understanding what was said; which effect this had upon his disciples; (see ~~4100~~ Mark 4:10; ~~4100~~ Luke 8:9).

**Ver. 10.** *And the disciples came, and said unto him,* etc.] Not the twelve only, but others that were about him, as Mark says, who also were his disciples, and believed in him: these, when he was alone, came nearer to him, who, whilst he was preaching to the people, were at some little distance from him, either in the ship, or on the shore, though within the hearing of him, and addressed him after this manner;

*why speakest thou unto them in parables?* not that this way of speaking was new and surprising to them; but because it was not easily understood, especially not by the common people, without an explanation, which, as yet, Christ had not given: and indeed the parable was not understood by the disciples themselves; who put this question, not only for the sake of the multitude, but for their own also, hoping to be favoured with the meaning of it.

**Ver. 11.** *He answered, and said unto them,* etc.] Christ was always ready to give an answer to his inquiring disciples, concerning his ministry, and his conduct in it; which shows great respect to them, and condescension in him:



*because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven:* by the “kingdom of heaven”, is meant the Gospel, which treats of the kingdom of heaven, and of things pertaining to it; of the saints’ meetness for it, which is the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit; and of their right to it, which lies in the justifying righteousness of Christ. The “mysteries” of it intend the sublime doctrines thereof; such as relate to the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, to the incarnation of Christ, and the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him, eternal predestination, redemption by Christ, satisfaction by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and pardon through his blood, the resurrection from the dead, etc. things, though clearly revealed, yet may have difficulties attending them, and which are not very easily solved: now to know and understand the great truths of the Gospel, spiritually, savingly, and experimentally, is not from nature, or to be acquired by men’s industry, but is the gift of God’s grace, flowing from his sovereign will and pleasure; a favour which the disciples of Christ, as a chosen people, receive from the Lord, and which is denied others:

*but to them it is not given;* to the wise and prudent, to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the multitude, to the bulk and generality of the people, to the rest that were blinded. Mark calls them “them that are without”; who are not in the number of God’s elect; nor within the covenant of grace, nor among the disciples of Christ; referring to a common way of speaking among the Jews, who used to call the Gentiles, all without their land, “they that are without”; and indeed all within themselves that despised the rules and judgment of the wise men<sup>f782</sup>: but Christ here calls the wise men themselves such. Now our Lord, who was privy to the secret and sovereign dispensation of God, who, of his own will and pleasure, had determined to give a spiritual and saving knowledge of divine things to some, and deny it to others, made this the rule of his conduct in his ministry; that is to say, he preached in parables to some without an explication, whilst he spoke plainly to others; and, if in parables, yet gave them an interpretation, and an understanding of them.

**Ver. 12.** *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given,* etc.] Whoever has the true grace of God implanted in him, has a saving knowledge of Christ, and a spiritual acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, shall have more grace given him; he shall grow in the knowledge of Christ, and the Spirit of truth shall lead him into all truth:

*and he shall have more abundance:* of grace, light, knowledge, and experience: all grace shall be made to abound towards him; he shall be filled with all the fulness of God, and shall arrive to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and his light shall shine more and more unto the perfect day.

*But whosoever hath not:* the truth of grace, nor a spiritual knowledge of Christ, nor any experience of the doctrines of the Gospel,

*from him shall be taken away, even that he hath,* or “that which he seemed to have”, as Luke expresses it; for everything besides true grace is a mere show, and has no solidity in it; as natural parts, human learning, and a form of knowledge and of truth in the law, the national church state of the Jews, with all the outward privileges appertaining thereunto, all which may be here meant; and even speculative notions of the Gospel, the external gifts of the Spirit, the means of grace, the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and the ministry of it, which in process of time were wholly taken from these people.

**Ver. 13.** *Therefore speak I to them in parables,* etc.] Because it was the will and pleasure of his Father to give the knowledge of divine mysteries to some, and not to others; and because even the outward good things they had, being wrongly used or abused by them, would be taken away from them:

*and because they seeing, see not:* they saw Christ with their bodily eyes, but not with an eye of faith; they saw the miracles he did, but did not discern, at least did not acknowledge the evidence of them, proving him to be the true Messiah.

*And hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand:* they heard externally, but not internally; they heard the sound of Christ’s voice, but did not understand his words, even when he spake in the plainest and most intelligible manner; nor were they concerned to know the meaning of them: wherefore he spoke to them in this abstruse and parabolical way, that they might be what they really were, seers and not seers, hearers and not hearers, at least not understanding ones; and that what he said might remain sealed and hidden to them, as the things contained in the sealed book were to the Jews of old; the reason of which was, as a writer of their’s <sup>f783</sup> says, and which agrees with our Lord’s reason and conduct here, *hdyj w l çmb wyhç*, “because they were in parable and riddle”.

**Ver. 14.** *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, etc.*] In (<sup>2360</sup>Isaiah 6:9,10)

*which saith*, which runs, or may be read thus,

*by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.* The words are a prophecy concerning the people of the Jews, which began to be accomplished in the times of Isaiah; and were again fulfilled in the times of some after prophets; and had been in part fulfilled under the more plain and easy ministry of Christ; and was to have a further accomplishment under this parabolical way of preaching; as it also was to have, and had, a yet further completion under the ministry of the apostles; (see <sup>4836</sup>Acts 28:26,27; <sup>5108</sup>Romans 11:8) and the judicial blindness here predicted was to go on among them, until the land of Judea was utterly destroyed by the Romans, and the cities and houses thereof left without any inhabitants; all which accordingly came to pass: for that this prophecy refers to the times of the Messiah, and to the people of the Jews, is clear from this one observation made by Christ himself, that Esaias foretold those things when he saw the glory of the Messiah, and spake of him, (<sup>4924</sup>John 12:40,41) and because it was to have, and had, its accomplishment over and over again in that people, therefore the word *αναπληρουται*, which may be rendered “is fulfilled again”, is made use of. The sense of the prophecy is, with respect to the times of the Messiah, that the Jews, whilst hearing the sermons preached by him, whether with, or without parables, should hear his voice, and the sound of it, but not understand his words internally, spiritually, and experimentally; and whilst they saw, with the eyes of their bodies, the miracles he wrought, they should see the facts done, which could not be denied and gainsayed by them, but should not take in the clear evidence, full proof, and certain demonstration given thereby, of his Messiahship. In the prophecy of Isaiah, the words run in the imperative, “hear ye, see ye”, etc. but are here rendered in the future, “shall hear, shall see”, etc. which rendering of the words is supported and established by the version of the Septuagint, by the Chaldee paraphrase, and by many Jewish commentators <sup>f784</sup>; who allow, that the words in Isaiah may be so understood, which is sufficient to vindicate the citation of them, by the evangelist, in this form of them.

**Ver. 15.** *For this people's heart is waxed gross, etc.,*] Or fat, become stupid and sottish, and without understanding; and so incapable of taking in the true sense and meaning of what they saw with their eyes, and heard

with their ears; for they had their outward senses of hearing and seeing, and yet their intellectual powers were stupefied.

*And their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed;* which is expressive of the blindness and hardness, which were partly brought upon themselves by their own wilfulness and obstinacy, against such clear evidence as arose from the doctrine and miracles of Christ; and partly from the righteous judgment of God, giving them up, for their perverseness, to judicial blindness and obduracy; (<sup><B120></sup>John 12:40) and are in the prophet ascribed to the ministry of the word; that being despised, was in righteous judgment, the savour of death unto death, unto them; and they under it, as clay, under the influence of the sun, grew harder and harder by it, stopping their ears, and shutting their eyes against it:

*lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart:* which may be understood either of God's intention, and view, in giving them up to judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, under such miracles, and such a ministry, as a punishment for their wilful contempt of them; that so they might never have any true sight, hearing, and understanding of these things, and be turned from the evil of their ways, have repentance unto life, and remission of sins; which seems to be the sense of the other evangelists, (<sup><H042></sup>Mark 4:12 <sup><B180></sup>Luke 8:10 <sup><B120></sup>John 12:40) or, as if these people purposely stupefied themselves, stopped their ears, and pulled away the shoulder, and wilfully shut their eyes; fearing they should receive some conviction, light, and knowledge,

*and be converted* by the power and grace of God:

*and I should heal them;* or, as in Mark, "and their sins should be forgiven them"; for healing of diseases, and forgiveness of sins, are, in Scripture language, one and the same thing; and this sense of the phrase here, is justified by the Chaldee paraphrase, which renders it, װװי קבװצװ, "and they be forgiven", or "it be forgiven them", and by a Jewish commentator on the place; who interprets healing, of the healing of the soul, and adds װי יל שװ אװ, "and this is pardon"<sup>f785</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *But blessed are your eyes, for they see,* etc.] Which is to be understood both of corporal and intellectual sight: it was their happiness to see Christ in the flesh, and converse with him in person, be eyewitnesses of his majesty, and see with their own eyes the miracles performed by him, the

proofs and attestations of those doctrines they were to publish to all the world; and it was still their greater happiness, that they saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth: many saw him in the flesh, as they did, with their bodily eyes, but saw no beauty, nor comeliness in him, nothing amiable and desirable in him; but these saw his personal and transcendent glories, as the Son of God, his fulness as mediator, his suitableness as a Saviour and Redeemer, and all the characters of the Messiah in him; and so believed, and were sure that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God: they saw Christ, not in the promise, as Abraham, and other patriarchs did; nor through types and shadows, as the saints of the Old Testament did; to them it was given to know and understand the mysteries of grace, respecting the person, offices, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ.

*And your ears, for they hear.* This also must be understood of corporal and intellectual hearing, another branch of their present happiness. They heard the words of truth from the lips of that great prophet Moses said should rise up among them, like unto him, whom they should hear: they heard, with their own ears, a voice from heaven, declaring him to be the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased. They heard the Gospel preached by him, not only so as to be affected with it, and give their assent to it, but also to understand it spiritually, and experimentally, and to bring forth the fruit of it; and so were that sort of hearers, signified by the good ground in the parable Christ had just delivered. The forms of speech, in which the happiness of the disciples is here expressed, seem to be in common use with the Jews, when they would extol the peculiar attainments of a man, especially in matters of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Thus, it being told R. Jochanan ben Zaccai of some persons that had expounded the work of Mercavah, that is, the beginning of Ezekiel's prophecy, and the mysterious passages in it, and what befell them, expressed himself thus concerning them <sup>f786</sup>;

“blessed are you, and blessed are your children, *war Ækç yny[ yrça*, “and blessed are the eyes that so see”.”

And elsewhere <sup>f787</sup> mention being made of a book of secrets delivered to Solomon, and which he had understanding of, it is said,

“[mçç ^zwaw harç ^y] yrça, “blessed is the eye that sees, and the ear that hears”, and the heart that understands, and causes to understand, the wisdom of it.”

**Ver. 17.** *For verily I say unto you*, etc.] This is added for the further confirmation of what is before said, concerning the happiness of the disciples, in seeing and hearing what they did:

*that many prophets, and righteous men*; Luke says, (~~4018~~ Luke 10:24) “kings”

*have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* To see Christ in the flesh, and have a clearer insight into the knowledge of the mysteries of grace, were things very desirable to men of the highest class in church and state, and of the best characters, such as Abraham, (~~4086~~ John 8:56). Jacob, (~~0498~~ Genesis 49:18). David, (~~1947~~ Psalm 14:7). Solomon, and the church in his time, (~~2188~~ Song of Solomon 8:1). Isaiah, and the saints with him, (~~2289~~ Isaiah 25:9) with many others. These indeed had a sight of Christ, but a very distant one; they saw him afar off in the promises and prophecies of him; and not very clearly, but through dark types and cloudy sacrifices; whereas the disciples saw him in person, heard him preach, took in the evidence of his miracles, and felt the power of his doctrines, and spiritually and savingly understood them. A way of speaking, somewhat like this, stands in the Talmud<sup>1788</sup>;

“Many have watched to expound in Mercavah (the beginning of Ezekiel’s prophecy), **phymym htwa war al w**, “and have not seen it all their days”.”

**Ver. 18.** *Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.* That is, the interpretation of the parable; for they had heard the parable before, and had desired an explanation of it; which, though not mentioned by Matthew, is, by the other evangelists, (~~4040~~ Mark 4:10), (~~4089~~ Luke 8:9) and since it was given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, therefore Christ calls upon them to attend unto, and hear, so as to understand the spiritual meaning of this parable. Mark relates, that he moreover said to his disciples at this time, “know ye not this parable?” Do ye not understand the meaning of it, so easy to be taken in? them as it were reproving for their dulness of hearing, notwithstanding the grace given them, and the advantages they enjoyed: “how then will ye know all parables?” all that he

had delivered, or was about to deliver at this time, or should hereafter; which were of more difficult interpretation, and not so easy to be understood as this.

**Ver. 19.** *When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom*, etc.] Hence it appears, that by the “seed” in the parable is meant the Gospel, called the “word of the kingdom”: because it treats of the king Messiah, of his person, office, and grace; and of his kingdom, and the administration of it by him, under the present dispensation; of the kingdom of grace saints enjoy now, and of the kingdom of heaven they shall enter into hereafter, through the grace and righteousness of Christ. Now such a hearer of this word is here described, who hears it accidentally, and only externally; hears the sound of it with his ears,

*and understandeth it not* with his heart. He is one that is careless and inattentive, negligent and forgetful; has some slight notions of things as he hears, but these pass away as they come; his affections are not at all touched, nor his judgment informed by them, but remains as stupid, and as unconcerned as ever; his heart is not opened to attend to, and receive the word, but continues hard and obdurate; and is like the common and beaten road, that is trodden down by everyone, and is not susceptible of the seed, that falls upon it.

*Then cometh the wicked one*, Satan, the devil, (<sup><41015></sup>Mark 4:15, <sup><41812></sup>Luke 8:12) who is, by way of eminency, so called, being the first creature that became wicked, and the worst that is so; who is entirely and immutably wicked; whose whole work and employment lies in wickedness; and who, was the original cause of the wickedness that is among men, and which he is continually instigating and promoting: so the Jews frequently call <sup>f789</sup>Samael, by whom they mean the devil, Samael, [çdh, “the wicked”. This evil spirit, as soon as ever he observes one hearing the word, especially that has not been used to attend, comes immediately, and, as he is hearing,

*catcheth away that which is sown in his heart*: not the grace of God, which being once implanted in the heart, can never be taken away by Satan; but the word which was sown, not in his understanding, in a spiritual sense, nor even in his affections, so as to love it, delight, and take pleasure in it; much less in his heart, so as to become the engrafted word able to save, or so as to believe in it, and in Christ revealed by it; but in his memory, and that but very slightly neither; for the heart sometimes means the memory;

(see ~~405~~ Luke 2:51). Besides, the word only fell “upon”, not “into” his heart, as into the good ground, as the metaphor in the parable shows; and it made no impression, nor was it inwardly received, but as soon as ever dropped, was “caught” away by the enemy; not by frightening him out of it, by persecution, as the stony ground hearer; nor by filling the mind with worldly cares, as the thorny ground hearer; but by various suggestions and temptations, darting in thoughts, presenting objects, and so diverted his mind from the word, and fixed his attention elsewhere; which is done at once, at an unawares, secretly, and without any notice of the person himself; so that the word is entirely lost to him, and he does not so much as remember the least thing he has been hearing:

*this is he which receiveth the seed by the way side*; such an hearer is comparable to such ground, on whom the word has no more effect, than seed sown upon a common beaten path.

**Ver. 20.** *But he that receiveth the seed into stony places*, etc.] Such a hearer, who is like to the stony ground on which the seed fell, is one that is not an accidental hearer of the word, as the former, but a settled constant hearer of it; and not one that is careless and negligent, but diligent and attentive, and has some understanding of what he hears;

*the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it*: he is one that not only constantly attends upon it, but he receives it; he gives an assent to it, he believes in it historically, makes a profession of his faith in it, and holds it for a while, being under some convictions of the truth of it: and having some speculative notions of it, and light in his understanding and judgment in it, he has some flashes of natural affection for it, and delivers some outward expressions of pleasure and delight in it, like Herod, and the hearers of John the Baptist; but has no heart work, and so is like to the rock in stony ground; the natural hardness of his heart continues, it remains unbroken by the word, without any true sense of sin, and repentance for it, and destitute of spiritual life, and of true faith, love, and joy: hence, as his profession is taken up in haste, immediately, upon a flash of affection, and a little head knowledge, it does not last long, nor prove honourable.

**Ver. 21.** *Yet hath he not root in himself*, etc.] Nor in Christ; the word is not rooted in him, nor has he the root of the matter, or the truth of grace in him:



*but dureth for a while*; a hearer of the word, a professor of religion, showing some outward respect to the word, and to the preachers of it:

*for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word*; which is often the case, and must be expected by those who embrace the Gospel, profess the name of Christ, and are willing to live godly in him. Tribulation may intend some lesser and lighter troubles for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; such as the revilings and reproaches of men, loss of character, and trade, etc. and persecution may design something more public and vehement; such as confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and danger of life, the most exquisite tortures, and death in the most cruel form and shape; things very disagreeable to flesh and blood, and which cannot be endured, and submitted to, by persons without a principle of grace, by one that has no root in himself. Luke calls this a time “of temptation”, or trial, as it is either way, both by private troubles, and more public persecutions: these try men’s principles and professions, and whether the truth of grace is in them or not; and where it is not in any person,

*by and by he is offended*; at the cross; he shrinks back from it, does not care to take it up, and follow Christ; but drops his religion, and the profession of it; apostatises, falls away, and comes to nothing.

**Ver. 22.** *He also that receiveth seed among the thorns*, etc.] The hearer that is like to the thorny ground, on which the seed fell,

*is he that heareth the word*; not a profane sinner, nor a reviler of religion, or a persecutor of the saints; but one that not only shows a love to the word, but who seems to have his heart broken under it, and by it, his conscience tender, and his life outwardly reformed; one, who besides his being a settled, diligent, understanding, and affectionate hearer of the word, and a believing receiver and professor of it, seems to have a thorough work of grace upon him, to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and to be truly contrite; the thorns being under ground, and not yet to be seen, but afterwards appear:

*and the care of this world*; not the care of another world, nor a care about spiritual things in this world, nor even a proper, laudable care of the things of this present life, but an anxious and immoderate care of them; which, as thorns, is very perplexing and distressing to the persons themselves, and is what is vain and fruitless.

*And the deceitfulness of riches:* in opposition to some riches, the riches of grace and glory, which have no deceit in them; and not riches themselves, bare worldly riches but the deceitfulness of them, is here taken notice of; for riches often delude, and lead persons out of the right way, out of God's way; cause them to err from the faith; they do not give the satisfaction they promise, and often do not continue, as is expected: and are as thorns, pungent to the owners of them, who pierce themselves through with many sorrows in acquiring and keeping them; and are frequently injurious to others, their fellow creatures; and in the issue are useless and unprofitable, especially with respect to the concerns of another world. Mark adds, "and the lusts of other things"; besides riches; and Luke adds, and "pleasures of this life"; meaning divers other worldly lusts and pleasures, such as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: which also, like thorns, are distracting and afflicting, sooner or later; are vain, and unprofitable, and lead to destruction: and these are called "the pleasures of this life", in opposition to, and distinction from the pleasures of that which is to come, which are real and lasting: the phrase is Jewish <sup>f790</sup>;

"says R. Judah, the prince, whoever takes upon him, **hzh ml w[h ygnw[ t**, "the pleasures of this world", to him are denied the pleasures of the world to come: and whoever does not take upon him "the pleasures of this world", to him are given the pleasures of the world to come."

Now these, all, and each of them,

*choke the word:* by overspreading all the powers and faculties of the soul, as thorns do a field; by overtopping the seed of the word, and by hiding it from the influences of the sun of righteousness, and rain of grace; and by attracting everything in the heart to themselves; and by bearing and pressing down all thought, concern, and care for the use, fruitfulness, and increase of the word.

*And he becometh unfruitful:* as in such circumstances he must needs be; or if there be any show of fruit in outward respect to the word, in an historical faith of it, in an external profession, and outward reformation, "yet brings not fruit to perfection", as Luke says; these in process of time shrivel up, wither away, and come to nothing.

**Ver. 23.** *But he that received seed into the good ground,* etc.] The hearer compared to good ground into which the seed fell, is he that heareth the

word and understandeth it; has a new and spiritual understanding given him, feels the power of it on his heart, enlightening and quickening him; has an application of it made to him by the Spirit of God, and can discern the worth and excellency of it, and distinguish it from all others; and, as Mark says, “receives it”; as the word of God in faith, and with the love of it, and with all readiness and meekness; and, as Luke observes, “keeps it”; holds it fast against all opposition with great struggling; will not part with it at any rate, nor depart from it in the least, nor entertain any doubt about it; but abides by it, stands fast in it, and is valiant for it: and this he does in and with “an honest and good heart”; which no man naturally has; nor can any man make his heart so: this is the work of God, and is owing to his efficacious grace. This is an heart of flesh, a new and right heart, and spirit; an heart to fear God, to love him, and to trust in him; in which Christ dwells by faith; in which the Spirit of God has his temple; and in which every grace is implanted: and such an one, as he hears with a strict, and an honest intention, and in the exercise of grace; so he holds fast the word he hears, understands and receives, with all faithfulness and honesty:

*which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty:* the fruit bore, and brought forth by such an hearer, is the true fruit of grace and righteousness, and is all from Christ, under the influences of the Spirit, through the word and ordinances, as means, and issues in the glory of God; and though not brought forth in the same quantity in all, yet is of the same quality; and is brought forth, as Luke says, “with patience”: constantly, and continually, in all seasons, in old age, and even unto death; and is at last brought “to perfection”, holds, and remains unto the end.

**Ver. 24.** *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,* etc.] Somewhat like the former, but with a different view: for whereas the design of the former was to show the different sorts of hearers that attend upon the ministry of the word, three parts in four being bad; this is to show the difference of members in churches, some being comparable to good seed, and others to tares.

*The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:* by “the kingdom of heaven”, is not meant the ultimate glory of the saints in heaven, or the state of happiness in the other world; for there will be no tares there; nor the Gospel, and the ministration of it, but the Gospel dispensation, and times, and kingdom of the Messiah; or rather the

Gospel visible church state, on earth, called a “kingdom”, of which Christ is king, and in which the saints are subject to him; where proper laws are made for the orderly government of it, and proper officers appointed to explain, and put those laws in execution; and which consists of various persons, united under one head, and independent of any other government: and it is styled the kingdom of heaven, in distinction from the kingdoms of this world; the subjects of it are, or should be, heaven born souls; the word, laws, and ordinances of it are from heaven; and there is some resemblance between a Gospel church state and heaven, and it is very near unto it, and is even the suburbs of it: or else the king Messiah himself is intended, who is compared to a man, a sower; and so it is explained, (<sup>4037</sup>Matthew 13:37) “he that soweth the good seed is the son of man”: which is a name and title of the Messiah, by which he is called both in the Old and New Testament; who, though the seed of the woman, yet was the son of man, as of Abraham, and David; and which denotes the truth, and yet the infirmity of his human nature: he is the sower that went about preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, in the Jewish world, or throughout Judea and Galilee, in his own person: and who also, by the ministry of his apostles, sowed the seed of the word in the several parts of the world, which was made effectual for the beginning of a good work of grace on the souls of many; for by “his field” is meant “the world”, as appears from (<sup>4038</sup>Matthew 13:38) and means either the whole world, in which both good and bad men live and dwell; and is the field Christ is the proprietor of, both by creation, as God, and by gift, as mediator: or the church, the visible Gospel church state throughout the world; which is as a field well tilled and manured; and is Christ’s by gift, purchase, and grace: and by the good seed sown in it, are meant “the children of the kingdom”; as is said, (<sup>4038</sup>Matthew 13:38) such as have a good work begun in them, and bring forth good fruit in their lives and conversations.

**Ver. 25.** *But while men slept*, etc.] Good men, ministers, and churches; whose case this sometimes is to be asleep in a spiritual sense: and which sleepiness lies in a non-exercise of grace; in a sluggishness to and in duty; in a contentment in external exercises of religion; in lukewarmness about the cause of Christ; in an unconcernedness about sins of omission and commission; and in a willingness to continue in such a state; and which arises from a body of sin and death; from worldly cares; weariness in spiritual duties; a cessation from spiritual exercises; an absenting from spiritual company; oftentimes from outward ease, peace, and plenty,

sometimes from a long expectation of the bridegroom's coming, and the delay of it; and from its being a night season, a time of darkness and security: such a case with the church, and good men, is very dangerous, as it exposes to every sin and snare; renders them liable to lose the presence of Christ, their liveliness and comfort; and tends to poverty and leanness of soul: such are in danger of being surprised with the midnight cry; and the churches are likely to be filled with hypocrites and heretics:

*his enemy came*; by whom is meant the devil, (<sup><0138></sup>Matthew 13:39) who is an enemy to Christ personally, and showed himself to be so in his infancy, by stirring up Herod to seek his life: and, when grown up, by instigating the Jews to contrive his death; which they attempted by various methods, and which, at last, he compassed by Judas, and the Scribes and Pharisees; and also to Christ mystical, to the church, and all true believers; whose adversary he is, going about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: the same came into the field, the world, and church in it;

*and sowed tares among the wheat*; by "the wheat", is meant the same with the "good seed", the children of God, true believers in Christ; who are comparable to wheat, for the choiceness of it, that being the choicest grain, so they are the chosen of God, and precious, and the excellent in the earth: and because it dies before it rises and springs up; so the saints do, and will do, both in a spiritual and corporal sense; and because of the purity and whiteness of it, so they are pure and white, being sanctioned by the Spirit, washed in the blood of Christ, and justified by his righteousness; and because of its substance, fulness, weight, and permanence, so they are filled from Christ's fulness, and with the fulness of God, and fruits of righteousness, and remain, and cannot be driven as the chaff is, but continue to live, because Christ their head lives; and because of its gradual increase, so they increase in spiritual light, grace, and experience; and because of the chaff that adheres to it, so sin and corruption cleave to the saints in this life; and lastly, because it needs both the flail and the fan, so believers need chastisements, afflictions, and corrections: by "the tares" sown among them, are meant "the children of the wicked one"; Satan, the enemy and adversary, as in (<sup><0138></sup>Matthew 13:38) who are to be understood, not of profane sinners; though these are the children of the devil; but of professors of religion, men either of bad principles, or of bad lives and conversations; whom Satan, by some means or another, gets into churches, and they become members thereof: at first they look like wheat, like true believers, have a show of religion, a form of godliness, an appearance of

grace, but are destitute of it; and prove tares, unfruitful, unprofitable, and of no account, yea hurtful, and whose end is to be burned.

*And went his way*; somewhere else, to do more mischief; and having done all he could at present here, undiscovered, not taken notice of by ministers and churches; they being all asleep, and having lost, in a great measure, the spirit of discerning. The word ζιζανια, we render “tares”, and the Ethiopic version “thistles”, probably means the same the Jewish doctors call ḥynwz, Zunin<sup>f791</sup>; and which, they say, is a sort of wheat, and not of a different kind from it; that when it is sown it looks like wheat, and is sown for it, but is changed in the earth, both as to its nature and form, and brings forth this kind. In the generation in which the flood was, they say<sup>f792</sup>, they sowed wheat, and the earth brought forth ḥynwz, ζιζανια, what we render “tares”, and bids fair to be what is here meant; and fitly expresses false professors, nominal Christians, men of degenerate principles and practices: for not what we call tares, or vetches, can be meant, which may be removed from the wheat without danger, but rather this degenerate wheat; or that wheat which is blasted, and which may be observed sometimes to grow upon the same root, and therefore cannot be taken away, without rooting up the wheat also.

**Ver. 26.** *But when the blade was sprung up*, etc.] That is, the blade of the wheat; which designs the taking up, a profession of religion on principles of grace, called a profession of faith; and when right, it springs up from, and proceeds upon a work begun in the heart: and such a profession ought to be made by all that are partakers of the grace of God; and ought to be made both verbally, by a confession of the mouth, and a declaration of the work of God upon the heart, and by deeds, by submitting to the ordinances of the Gospel; and should be sincere, and from the heart, and be visible to men, and be held fast unto the end without wavering.

*And brought forth fruit*; which intends not the conversion of sinners, nor the performance of duties, nor the perfection of grace, but the first appearances of grace under a profession, such as sorrow for sin, after a godly sort, fear and reverence of God, great humility, much self-denial, ardent love to Christ, pantings and breathings after him, and communion with him, strong affection for the people of God, some exercise of faith on Christ, zeal for his cause and interest, and a concern to honour and glorify God.

*Then appeared the tares also.* They were not discernible for some time when they were first sown; they looked like good seed when they first appeared among the people of God; they seemed to have the truth of grace, as others had; their blade of profession, when it sprung up, looked like that of true wheat; but were now discernible both by their unfruitfulness in their lives and conversations, and by their bad principles, which they now endeavoured to spread, to the hurt of the churches where they were: they always appeared to be what they were to God the searcher of hearts; but now, through the zeal of true converts, to which these opposed themselves, and the fruitfulness of their lives, from which they were so very different, they became manifest to ministers and churches.

**Ver. 27.** *So the servants of the householder came,* etc.] Christ is the “householder”; the house of which he is master is the church, called the household of God, the household of faith, the family in heaven, and in earth; in which house he bears and sustains many relations, as those of a son, a priest, a master, or governor. By “the servants” that came to him, are meant, not civil magistrates, who have nothing to do in the affairs of churches; nor the angels, though these are ministering servants to Christ, and will be employed by him, in the close of time, to gather up the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire; but the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of Christ, and of the most high God, who are made use of in planting, and sowing, and weeding his field, the church: these observing the tares, and fearing the danger the wheat was in by them, as well as troubled and surprised at the appearance and growth of them, came to him, and spread the case before him in prayer; and

*said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?* Their manner of address, calling him Sir, or Lord, is expressive of their reverence of him, and obedience to him; and which is said, not in word only, but in the sincerity of their hearts, and under the influence of the Spirit of God. They ascribe the field, the church, the good seed, converts that sprung up in it, and the sowing, or making of them such, all to Christ, and not any of this kind, or any part of it to themselves; though they were employed by him in tilling this field, in sowing spiritual things to the saints, and were useful to them in their profession of religion. Moreover, they intimate, that nothing but good could come from Christ; no bad seed, no tares could be of his sowing: and declare their ignorance of the rise of them; which ignorance was owing to their being asleep, when the enemy sowed them.



**Ver. 28.** *He said unto them, an enemy has done this,* etc.] This is the answer of the householder to the question of his servants. In the Greek text it is, “an enemy man”; and is so rendered in the several versions; meaning, not that the enemy was a man; for he was the devil, as in (<sup><133></sup>Matthew 13:39) but it is an Hebraism; such as in (<sup><706></sup>Esther 7:6), *bywaw rx çya*, “the man adversary and enemy” is this wicked Haman; and signifies a certain enemy, and one indeed that is an implacable enemy to man.

*The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?* which words express the concern of the ministers of Christ for the true members of the church, comparable to wheat, lest they should receive any damage by the ill examples, and pernicious principles of evil men among them; also their detestation and abhorrence of men of wicked lives and erroneous principles; they cannot bear them which are evil; likewise, they show great regard to the glory of God, and interest of religion, and their readiness to execute any orders Christ should give them; but not willing to proceed of themselves, ask counsel and advice of him.

**Ver. 29.** *But he said, nay,* etc.] The answer is in the negative; and which, if spoken to angels, is to be understood, that they should not inflict punishments, or pour out, their vials, as yet, on formal professors, lest the righteous should share in them; and if to magistrates, the sense of it is, that they should not persecute with the sword, or put men to death for heretical opinions; but if to ministers of the word, which sense I choose, the meaning is, that not everyone suspected to be a tare, or a nominal professor, is to be removed from the communion of the church, because there is often danger in so doing:

*lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them:* not that men of openly scandalous lives are to be tolerated in churches; they are to be withdrawn from, and put away; nor men of known, avowed, heretical principles; such, after the first and second admonition, are to be rejected: yet there may be such in churches, not altogether agreeable in principle and practice, whose character and situation may be such, that there is no removing them without offending some truly gracious, useful persons, in whose affections they stand, who may be tempted, by such a step, to leave their communion; and so cannot be done without a considerable prejudice to the church. The scope of the parable, and the design of our Lord in it, are chiefly to be attended to; which are to show, that a pure and perfect church cannot be expected in the present state of



things; and that saints should not be immoderately uneasy, but patiently bear such exercises, until Christ's time is come to relieve them, when the tares and chaff shall be separated from the wheat; when sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous, and there shall be no more a pricking briar, nor a grieving thorn in the house of Israel.

**Ver. 30.** *Let both grow together until the harvest*, etc.] By “the harvest”, is meant “the end of the world”, (<sup>(4039)</sup>Matthew 13:39) either of the Jewish world, the dissolution of their church and state, which was near; or of a man's life, which is the end of the world to him; or rather of this present world, the system of the universe, of the material world, as to its present form and use, and of the inhabitants of it, and of time in it. Now the end of the world is compared to harvest, because the time of it is fixed and settled; though it is not known when it will be, yet it is as certain as the time of harvest; and because as that is in the summer season, in hot weather, so this will be a time of wrath, when the day of the Lord will burn like an oven; and as the harvest time is a time of hurry and labour, so will it be in the end of the world, especially with the angels, who will be gathering the elect from the four winds, and all men, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ; and as at harvest the corn is cut down, the fields cleared, and all brought home, so it will be at the end of the world; the sickle will be thrust in, and the earth reaped, the tares bound in bundles, and cast into the fire, and the wheat gathered into the garner; and as the harvest, as it falls out to be good or bad, is matter of joy or sorrow, so will the end of the world be joy to saints, who will then enter into the joy of their Lord, and be for ever with him, and sorrow to the wicked, who will then go into everlasting punishment. Until this time, wheat and tares are to “grow” together. The “wheat”, or true believers, “grow” in the exercise of grace, as of faith, hope, love, humility, etc. and in spiritual knowledge of the will of God, of the doctrines of grace, and of Christ; which growth is owing to the dews of divine grace, to the sun of righteousness shining upon them, to the gracious influences of the blessed Spirit, and to the word and ordinances as means. The “tares”, or nominal professors, may “grow” in riches, in credit, and reputation among men, and in speculative knowledge; and oftentimes so it is, that they grow worse and worse, both in doctrinal and practical wickedness: when they are ordered to “grow together”, the meaning is, not that their growth is equal, or of the same kind, nor in the same way, nor in the same things; but this only notes the time and duration of their growth: nor is this suffered and permitted, because of any love God has unto them,

or any delight in, or approbation of them; but either because they are not fully ripe for ruin; or for the exercise of the saints, and for their temporal and spiritual good; for it is entirely a tender regard to the wheat, and not to the tares, that they are ordered to grow together.

*And in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers,* the angels,  
(<sup>413</sup>Matthew 13:39)

*gather ye together first the tares;* that is, formal professors, hypocrites, and heretics; whom he will have removed out of his kingdom, his church, his field, in the world: and this order shows, that the angels will have a perfect and exact knowledge of these persons; and that their work will be to separate them from the righteous; when the churches will be pure, and without spot, or wrinkle: and this will be done first; that is, these wicked men will be first removed out of the church, before their more severe punishment takes place:

*and bind them in bundles to burn them:* which denotes the power of angels over these persons, the certainty and inevitableness of their ruin, their association together, and their destruction in company with one another; which will be an aggravation of their misery, which is expressed by “burning” with fire; not material, but metaphorical; the wrath of God, which will be a consuming fire, and be everlasting and unquenchable.

*But gather the wheat into my barn;* meaning the kingdom of heaven, which is as a garner or repository, in which none but wheat is put, and where it is safe, and lies together: so none but righteous, pure, and undefiled persons, are admitted into heaven; and being there, they are safe, and out of the reach of all enemies; and what adds to their happiness is, that they are together, enjoying all satiety and fulness; and are in Christ’s barn, or garner, which he has made, and prepared for their reception. The gathering of them into it designs the introduction of the saints into heaven by angels, as their souls at death, and both souls and bodies, at the last day, when their happiness will be perfect and complete.

**Ver. 31.** *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,* etc.] As the former parable sets forth the condition of the Gospel church state until the end of the world; this expresses the small beginnings of it, and the large increase and growth of it, and its great usefulness to the saints.

*The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field:* by “the kingdom of heaven” is meant, as

before, the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church state, and the ministry of the word, and the administration of ordinances in it: by the grain of mustard seed, either the Gospel, or the people of God, or the grace of God in them; and by the man that took and sowed it, the Lord Jesus Christ; and by his field, in which he sowed it, the world, or his church throughout the world.

**Ver. 32.** *Which indeed is the least of all seeds*, etc.] So mustard with the Jews <sup>f793</sup>, is called  $\mu\upsilon[\text{r}z \text{ } \hat{\text{y}}\text{m}$ , “a kind of seeds”; and being very small, hence  $\text{l drj k}$ , “as a grain of mustard”, is often used, proverbially <sup>f794</sup>, for the least thing, as it is by Christ, (<sup><4173></sup>Matthew 17:20, <sup><2776></sup>Luke 17:6). Not but there are seeds lesser than this; but the meaning is, that this is one of the least of all seeds; or was the least of seeds, which were commonly known in Judea; or the very least which grew to the size this sometimes did, and as here related. Now this is designed to express the small beginnings of the Gospel dispensation, of the ministry of the word, of the grace of God in the hearts of his people, and of the small number of them at first. The Gospel, and the ministry of it were like a grain of mustard seed, little, mean, and contemptible; the author of it, Christ, was so to the Jews, in his birth, parentage, education, and outward appearance; the subject of it a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; and the doctrines out of the reach, and contrary to carnal reason; the preachers of it, were persons of very mean and low life, few in number, weak, illiterate, and despicable, and the whole world against them; the circumstances which attended the Gospel were very discouraging; it was charged with novelty, represented as contrary to common sense, and the reason of mankind, and as opening a door to licentiousness; and was followed with violent opposition and persecution, wherever it went. The grace of God, which under the ministry of the word is implanted in the hearts of the Lord’s people, is at first very small, like a grain of mustard seed; it is a day of small things; faith in Christ is very weak and low, spiritual strength small, comfort little, experience of the love of God not large, light and knowledge in the doctrines of grace but very obscure and glimmering: the church of God, which sprung up under the ministry of the word, and through the work of grace, upon the hearts of particular persons, was like the small grain of mustard seed; the persons of which it consisted were but few in number in Christ’s time, and at his ascension into heaven, and when the Gospel was first preached among the Gentiles; and those persons which laid the foundation, and were at the beginning of the Gospel church state,

made a very contemptible figure, by reason of their outward poverty, and mean circumstances in the world; and on account of the severe persecutions which every where attended them; and also through the errors and heresies introduced by evil men, that crept in among them.

*But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree.*

Luke says, “a great tree”, (<sup>f795</sup>Luke 13:19) for to such a size did the mustard tree grow in the land of Judea, of which take the following instances <sup>f795</sup>.

“At Shichin there was a mustard stalk, which had three branches, and one of them was cut down, and they covered a potter’s booth with it; and found in it *l drj l ç `ybq tçl ç*, “three kabs of mustard seed” (elsewhere <sup>f796</sup> it is said, nine kabs). Says R. Simeon ben Chelphetha, I have one stalk of mustard seed in my field, and I go up to it, *hnath çarb hl w[ k*, “as one goes up to the top of a fig tree”.”

And though the mustard tree grew to this height and size, it was reckoned among herbs, as here by Christ; for they say <sup>f797</sup>,

“they do not put mustard in a field of fruits, but in a field of herbs.”

All which serve to illustrate and confirm the account here given by Christ, and alluded to; and which expresses the very large growth and increase of the Gospel, and the ministry of it; of the grace of God in the heart, and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world: of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, as to its large spread in the world; which at first was confined to the Jews, but was afterwards published to the Gentiles, and carried through the whole world; and, in ages since, has made a considerable progress, particularly at the Reformation; and will make a much greater one, towards the end of time: and of the grace of God in the heart, which gradually increases to a full assurance of understanding of hope, and of faith, and to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: and of the church of Christ, and his interest in the world; both as to the large numbers it did consist of in the times of the apostles, and since, and will more especially hereafter; for the church will fill the earth, and the kingdoms of the world will become the church, and all nations of the earth will flock unto it; the people of the Jews in general will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in: as also with respect to the figure it will make through the great personages, the kings and princes of the earth, that

will be in it; the great power and authority the saints will then have; the peace and prosperity that will be enjoyed by them; the spirituality, holiness, righteousness, love, and unity, there will be among them; as also the presence of God and of the Lamb, they will be favoured with; all which glory and happiness will be brought about by a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, and by the glorious appearance of Christ.

*So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof:* by “the birds of the air”, some think angels are meant, compared to “birds” for their harmlessness and innocence; for their readiness and swiftness to do the will of God; and for their warbling notes and tuneful songs of praise; and who may be called birds “of the air”, or heaven, because of their habitation: now these delight to be in the church, to be under the shadow of the Gospel ministry, and to look into the mysteries of it. Though rather, the saints and people of God are intended, who, in Scripture, are sometimes compared to particular birds; as to the eagle, the dove, and sparrow; and to birds in general, because timorous, weak, and defenceless, are exposed to danger, and wonderfully delivered, and are very subject to wander and go astray; and because of their chirpings, and singing songs of praise to their God and Redeemer; and to birds of the air or heaven, because they are heaven born souls, are partakers of the heavenly calling, and are pressing for, and soaring aloft towards the high calling of God in Christ: now the Gospel ministry, and the Gospel church state, are very useful to these; they “come” thereunto willingly, and cheerfully, deliberately, and with dependence on the grace and strength of Christ; humbly, under a sense of their own unworthiness, and yet with joy and thankfulness; heartily, and with their faces thitherwards, and they also “lodge” therein. This is what they desire, and their hearts are set upon; here they determine to be, and it is their happiness to be here; the shadow of Gospel ordinances is very delightful, very refreshing, and very fruitful to them, and under which saints dwell with great safety; and what a coming of these birds will there be hither, and a tabernacling of them herein, at the latter day! which are greatly designed in this part of the parable.

**Ver. 33.** *Another parable spake he unto them,* etc.] To the disciples and the multitude, and which was of the same kind, to the same purpose, and relating to the same subject as the former; the spread of the Gospel, and the increase of it in the world.

*The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.* The word “leaven” is every where else used in a bad sense; and either designs immorality, as malice and wickedness, or false doctrine, such as that of the Pharisees and Sadducees: but here it seems to be taken in a good sense, and the Gospel to be compared unto it; nor for its disagreeable qualities, but on account of its small quantity; it is a little leaven that leavens the whole lump, and may express, as the grain of mustard seed does, the small beginnings of the Gospel, and its meanness in the eyes of men; and on account of its piercing, penetrating, and spreading nature: so the Gospel reaches the conscience, pierces the heart, enlightens the understanding, informs the judgment, raises and sets the affections on right objects, subdues the will, and brings down all towering thoughts, to the obedience of Christ, in particular persons; and has penetrated and made its way, under divine influence, through towns, cities, kingdoms, and nations: also on account of its heating, swelling, and assimilating nature; so the Gospel, where it takes place, warms the affections, causes the heart to burn within, inspires with zeal for God, and Christ, and the Gospel; it swells and fills churches with such as shall be saved, and assimilates the several persons it operates in, makes them like one another, one bread, one body, having like precious faith, knowledge, and experience, though in a different degree.

*Which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.* By the “three measures of meal”, are meant the elect of God; who, because of their nature and quality, are compared to meal, or fine flour; and that because of that of which it is made, wheat, to a corn of which Christ is compared, (~~412~~ John 12:24) and by whose grace the saints are what they are, justified, regenerated, and sanctified; and on account of the manner it becomes so, as by grinding the wheat, sifting it when ground, and separating it from the bran; all which may express the first convictions in the conscience of awakened sinners, the grace of God in conversion, and the separation of them from the rest of the world, in the effectual calling; as also by reason of its choiceness, purity, and goodness, the saints being chosen of God and precious, and being pure and spotless, through the grace and righteousness of Christ, and being highly valued, and had in great esteem by him; and because of their quantity, are compared to three measures of meal. The measure here designed, is the Hebrew seah, which held a gallon and an half, and three of these made an ephah; and which is often rendered by the <sup>f798</sup> Targumists, *yas tl t*, “three seahs”, or “measures”, the very phrase here used; and the reason why three are particularly mentioned is, because

such a quantity used to be fermented and kneaded by women at one time; (see <sup><1185></sup>Genesis 18:6) and for the further illustration of this, take the following passage out of the Talmud <sup>f799</sup>.

“The wise men say, that three women may be employed in one lump of dough; one may knead it, another may make it into loaves, and another may bake it — and it is a tradition, *ˆybyq tçl ç ˆyj yj b* “that in wheat they use three kabs”, or “measures”, and in barley four “kabs”.”

These measures, as here used parabolically, may design the small number of God’s elect; and, as some have thought, may have respect to the three then known parts of the world, where they were, or should be: by the woman that took and hid the leaven in these measures, is meant, either the church, sometimes compared to a woman in Scripture, (<sup><611></sup>Revelation 12:1) or the ministers of the Gospel, wisdom’s maidens; or rather, Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God; (see <sup><100></sup>Proverbs 9:1-3) and the reason why a woman is mentioned is, because it was, with the Jews, the work of women to ferment the flour, knead the dough, and make the bread: and this action of taking and covering the leaven in the meal, may denote the power of Christ, in opening the heart, and putting in the Gospel, which unless he takes in hand, and uses, is ineffectual; as also the passiveness of men, under the first workings of the Spirit of Christ upon their souls, by the Gospel; and likewise, the secret and invisible power of divine grace, operating by the ministry of the word, upon the heart.

*Until the whole was leavened:* to be “leavened” by the Gospel, is to be evangelized by it, to be brought into the life and liberty of it, to a Gospel way of living by faith on Christ; to derive all peace, joy, and comfort from him, and not from any works of righteousness; and to have a man’s obedience influenced by the love of God, so as to do it cheerfully, and without dependence on it. Now the Gospel, where it has entrance and takes place, powerfully and effectually, continues to operate more or less, as the leaven in the meal, until the whole man, soul and body, all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body, are influenced by it; and will continue with power and efficacy in the world, and church, until all the elect of God are wrought upon by it, and are brought in. There is a late ingenious interpretation <sup>f800</sup> of this parable, which, since the word “leaven” is elsewhere always used in a bad sense, deserves consideration; according to which, this parable expresses not the spread of truth, but of error; by



“the woman” is thought to be meant, the Apocalyptic woman, the woman spoken of in the Revelations, the whore of Rome, the mother of harlots; and the “leaven” which she took, the leaven of false doctrine and discipline; by her “hiding” it, the private, secret, artful methods, false doctrines, and bad discipline were introduced, and the gradual progress thereof; and by the “three measures of meal”, the bishops and doctors of the church, among whom this leaven was spread, and who were fermented with it; particularly those three bishops of Rome at first, Sosymus, John the faster, and Boniface the third; which by degrees spread itself, until the whole Christian world was affected with it; and for a long time lay hid and undiscovered, till the Lord raised up Wyclif, John Huss, Jerom of Prague, Luther, and other reformers. The reader may choose which interpretation he likes best.

**Ver. 34.** *All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude*, etc.] In the hearing of his disciples, whilst in the ship, the multitude being on the shore, *in parables*; in the four foregoing ones;

*and without a parable spake he not unto them*: not that he never had preached but in a parabolical way unto them, or that he never did afterwards use any other way of speaking; for it is certain, that both before and after, he delivered himself plainly, and without figures: but the meaning is, that in that sermon, and at that time, he thought fit to make use of no other method, as appears from the many other parables he afterwards delivered; and though he explained the meaning of some of them to his disciples, at their request, yet he dismissed the multitude without any explication of them.

**Ver. 35.** *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet*, etc.] Not Isaiah, as some copies in the times of Jerom read, but Asaph, who is called Asaph the seer, (<sup>1428D</sup>2 Chronicles 29:30) which is all one as a prophet; vision is one sort of prophecy<sup>f801</sup>; and there was such a thing as prophesying with harps, psalteries and cymbals, as well as in other ways, and with which Asaph and his sons are said to prophesy, (<sup>1320D</sup>1 Chronicles 25:1-3) so that he is very rightly called a prophet by the evangelist, who is cited, as

*saying*, (<sup>198D</sup>Psalms 78:2)

*I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world*: which Psalm, though a history of



the dealings of God with the people of Israel, and of the many deliverances wrought for them, yet as the<sup>f802</sup> Jewish writers observe, contain many things in it, expressed in a parabolical and enigmatical way; such as God's furnishing a table in the wilderness, kindling a fire against Jacob, opening the doors of heaven, giving the corn of heaven, and angels' food, and delivering his strength into captivity; and besides, the very historical facts recorded of the people of Israel, were types of things future under the Gospel dispensation: now as Asaph, by divine inspiration, delivered these parables and dark sayings, so Christ expressed the Gospel, and the mysteries of it, in a parabolical way, which were hid in God, and under the shadows of the law; and so were kept secret from the beginning of the world, and from the multitude, though now made known to the apostles, and by them to others, according to the will of God.

**Ver. 36.** *Then Jesus sent the multitude away*, etc.] That his disciples might have the opportunity of conversing with him alone, about the sense of the parables he had delivered; and that he might instruct them by some others hereafter mentioned.

*And went into the house*: left the ship in which he had been preaching to the multitude, came on shore, and returned to the house he came out of, (~~413~~ Matthew 13:1)

*and his disciples came to him*; and being alone, make an humble request to him,

*saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field*: by which they mean, not a rehearsal of it, but an explication of the sense and meaning of it: they ask nothing about the parables of the mustard seed and leaven, either because they better understood them; or because there were some things very remarkable and striking in this, which made them very desirous to be particularly informed of the several parts of it, and their meaning.

**Ver. 37.** *He answered and said unto them*, etc.] Being very ready to answer their request, and willing to communicate spiritual knowledge to them; thereby showing great condescension, and humility in himself, and great affection to them:

*he that soweth the good seed, is the son of man*; he that is signified by the man that sowed good seed in his field, is "the son of man"; by whom he means himself, the seed of the woman; and the son of David; who being anointed with the Holy Ghost without measure, went about Judea and

Galilee, preaching the everlasting Gospel, to the conversion of sinners, thereby making them good seed; though this may be understood of him, as including his apostles and ministers, whom he makes use of as instruments for the good of souls, by preaching the Gospel.

**Ver. 38.** *The field is the world*, etc.] That which is represented by “the field”, in which the good seed is sown, is not only the land of Judea, where Christ preached in person, but the whole world, into which the apostles were afterwards sent; or the church of Christ, in the several parts of the world:

*the good seed are the children of the kingdom*: they which are designed by the good seed, are such, for whom the kingdom of heaven is prepared, to whom it is bequeathed, and who are appointed to it; who are possessed of the kingdom of grace here, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory; and have both a meetness for it, and a right unto it, being the children of God by adoption, and that appearing by regeneration:

*but the tares are the children of the wicked one*: the persons intended by “the tares”, are such professors of religion, as both by their principles and practices, manifestly show that they are of their father the devil; they resemble and imitate him, and do his works; and plainly declare, that they were never born of God, and are in no better state, though under a profession, than openly profane and immoral persons; and are more hurtful and scandalous to the interest of Christ, than such are.

**Ver. 39.** *The enemy that sowed them is the devil*, etc.] He that is designed by the enemy, who sowed the tares in the field among the wheat, is no other than the devil; the enemy of Christ, of mankind in general, of God’s elect in particular, and the accuser of the brethren; and his getting of hypocrites and heretics into churches, is no small proof of his implacable enmity to Christ and his interest; and shows what an adversary he is to the peace, comfort, and fruitfulness of the churches of Christ.

*The harvest is the end of the world*; that which is meant by “the harvest”, until which time wheat and tares, good and bad men, under a profession of religion, are to be together, is “the end of the world”; meaning either the day of wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation; when those that truly believed in Christ were separated from the rest, and that hypocritical generation of men were utterly destroyed; or else the day of judgment, the great and last day, when the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein,

shall be burnt up; when the righteous will enter into life, and the wicked go into everlasting punishment:

*and the reapers are the angels*; the persons signified by “the reapers”, who shall put in the sickle, cut down the tares, bind them in bundles, and cast them into the fire, and who shall gather the wheat into the barn; that is, who shall be the executors of God’s wrath, upon wicked professors of religion, and who shall be the means of introducing the saints into the heavenly kingdom, are “the angels”; the holy and elect angels, who are the ministers of Christ, and ministering servants to them, who are the heirs of salvation; and are opposite to all secret and open enemies of Christ and his people; and will be employed in the end of time, against the wicked, and for the righteous.

**Ver. 40.** *As therefore the tares are gathered*, etc.] As it is represented in the parable, that in the time of harvest, the tares shall be gathered out from the wheat first; and being bound in bundles, shall be

*burnt in the fire*, prepared for that purpose,

*so shall it be in the end of this world*; hypocritical and heretical men, and all formal professors, shall be gathered out from among the saints, and the several churches, among whom they have been; and shall be together cast into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels, whose children they are.

**Ver. 41.** *The Son of man shall send forth his angels*, etc.] Meaning himself, whose ministers the angels are; who wait upon him, and are at his beck and command; even the thousand thousands that minister unto him; these will be sent forth by his orders, into the several parts of the world, where he has any churches, or an interest;

*and they shall gather out of his kingdom*: the Gospel church, over which Christ is king, where he rules and governs in the hearts of his people; and who are cheerfully and willingly obedient to his laws, under the influence of his Spirit and grace: but all who are in the visible Gospel church state, are not such; some are wicked and rebellious, and though they are suffered to continue, yet not always; for if not removed by censures and excommunications, they will be at last by angels; who will separate them from the saints:

*even all things that offend*; who are scandals to Christ, his church, and Gospel, by their wicked principles, or infamous practices; and who give offence, not only to God, and his righteous law, but lay stumbling blocks in the way of the children of God, and are the authors of divisions and offences among them:

*and them that do iniquity*; that do nothing else but iniquity; and who, though they profess to be religious persons, are secretly, or openly, workers of iniquity; and are even doing iniquity, in and whilst they are professing religion.

**Ver. 42.** *And shall cast them into a furnace of fire*, etc.] Not a material, but a metaphorical one; denoting the wrath of God, which shall fall upon wicked men, and abide upon them to all eternity: which is sometimes called hell fire, sometimes a lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and here a furnace of fire, expressing the vehemency and intenseness of divine wrath, which will be intolerable; in allusion either to Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, or as some think, to the custom of burning persons alive in some countries; or rather, to the burning of chaff and stubble, and the stalks of any unprofitable things that grew in the field <sup>f803</sup>, for the heating of furnaces, and is the very language of the Jews, who used to compare hell to a furnace; so (<sup><0157</sup>Genesis 15:17) is paraphrased by them <sup>f804</sup>.

“And behold the sun set, and there was darkness; and lo! Abraham saw until the seats were set, and the thrones cast down; and lo! “hell”, which is prepared for the wicked in the world to come, **arwntk**, “as a furnace”, which sparks and flames of fire surrounded; **hwgbd**, “in the midst of which”, the wicked fell, because they rebelled against the law, in their lifetime.”

Which is expressed in much the same language, and conveys the same ideas as here; and no wonder is it that it follows,

*there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth*; declaring the remorse of conscience, the tortures of mind, the sense of inexpressible pain, and punishment, the wicked shall feel; also their furious rage and black despair.

**Ver. 43.** *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun*, etc.] The time referred to is, when the tares shall be separated from the wheat: when they that offend and do iniquity, shall be gathered out of Christ's kingdom; when the wicked shall be cast into hell: then the “righteous”, not who are

so merely in their own apprehensions, and in the judgment of others; nor by their obedience, legal or evangelical; but who are made so, by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them: these, though they have been in this world loaded with reproaches, and attended with many afflictions and persecutions; and have been despised for their poverty and meanness, and want of outward glory, honour, riches, and prosperity; shall now “shine forth” in the robe of Christ’s righteousness, in perfect holiness of nature, in all felicity and prosperity of soul; and in the shining dazzling robes of glory, incorruption, and immortality, on their bodies; even

*as the sun*, having no spot in them, or upon them, and without any clouds of darkness: they will be as Christ himself, the sun of righteousness, with whom, and in whose glory they shall appear, both in soul and body,

*in the kingdom of their father*; meaning either the same with the kingdom of Christ, the Father’s and his, being one and the same; or as distinct from Christ’s, (see <sup><413></sup>Matthew 13:41) the church, and the government of it in this world, in all ages of time, and especially in the latter day, and during the thousand years, Christ and his saints shall reign together, may be peculiarly called the kingdom of Christ; when it will be delivered to the Father, and God shall be all in all: so that the ultimate glory may, though not to the exclusion of the Son, be styled the kingdom of the Father; of God, who is the Father of Christ and of his people; and which is observed, to assure the saints of their interest in it, right unto it, and certain enjoyment of it. Some copies read, “the kingdom of heaven”. Much the same images, here made use of, to set forth the glory of the saints, both in soul and body, in the world to come, are expressed by the Jews.

“The faces of the “righteous”, they say, <sup>f805</sup> in time to come, shall be *hmj l twmwcl*, “like to the sun”, and moon, to the stars and planets, and lightnings, and lilies, and to the lamp of the sanctuary.”

And elsewhere <sup>f806</sup> they observe, that

“God in time to come, will beautify the body of “the righteous”, as the beauty of the first man, when he entered into paradise, according to (<sup><2881></sup>Isaiah 58:11) and that the soul, whilst in its dignity, shall be sustained with the superior light, and be clothed with it; and when it shall enter into the body hereafter, it shall enter with that light; and then shall the body shine, [*yqrh rhzk*, “as the brightness of the firmament”: as is said in (<sup><2713></sup>Daniel 12:3)”

And a little after<sup>f807</sup> it is said, that when

“the soul goes out, the body is left, which shall be there built again, **açmçd arhnk**, “as the light of the sun”, and as the brightness of the firmament.”

*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear*; and seriously consider of the several things said in this parable, concerning the wheat and tares, the righteous and the wicked, as being matters of the greatest moment and importance.

**Ver. 44.** *Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure*, etc.] By which is meant, not eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, riches of glory, treasure in heaven; nor Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and all the riches of grace and glory; but the Gospel, which is a treasure consisting of rich truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; of the most valuable blessings, and of exceeding great, and precious promises; and reveals the riches of God, of Christ, and of the other world; and is a treasure unsearchable, solid, satisfying, and lasting: this is said to be

*hid in a field.* The Gospel was in some measure hid, under the former dispensation, from the Old Testament saints; and for a long time was hid from the Gentile world; and is entirely hid from them that are lost, who are blinded by the god of this world; and even from the elect of God themselves, before conversion: this is sometimes said to be hid in God, in his thoughts, counsels, and purposes, and in the covenant of his grace; and sometimes in Christ; who is the storehouse of truth, as well as of grace; and may be thought to be hid under the Mosaic economy, in the types and shadows of the ceremonial law: but here “the field” means the Scriptures, in which the Gospel lies hid; and therefore these are to be searched into for it, as men seek and search for silver and hid treasures, by digging into mines, and in the bowels of the earth:

*the which when a man hath found*; either with or without the use of means, purposely attended to, in order to find it; such as reading, hearing, prayer, and meditation: for sometimes the Gospel, and the spiritual saving knowledge of it, are found, and attained to, by persons accidentally, with respect to themselves, though providentially, with respect to God; when they had no desire after it, or searched for it, and thought nothing about it; though by others it is come at, in a diligent use of the above means:

*he hideth*; which is to be understood not in an ill sense, as the man hid his talent in a napkin, and in the earth; but in a good sense, and designs his care of it; his laying it up in his heart, that he might not lose it, and that it might not be taken away from him: and

*for joy thereof*; for the Gospel, when rightly understood, brings good tidings of great joy, to sensible sinners;

*goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth the field*: which is not to be interpreted literally and properly; though a man that knows the worth and value of the Bible, rather than be without one, would part with all his worldly substance for one; but figuratively, and denotes the willingness of such souls, who are led into the glory, fulness, and excellency of the word of God, the scriptures of truth, and of the immense treasure of the Gospel therein, to part with all that has been, or is dear unto them; with their sins, and self-righteousness; with their good names and characters; their worldly substance, and life itself, for the sake of the Gospel, and their profession of it: and may also design the use of all means, to gain a larger degree of light and knowledge in the Gospel. It seems by this parable, according to the Jewish laws, that not the finder of a treasure in a field, but the owner of the field, had the propriety in it; when it should seem rather, that it ought to be divided. Such that have ability and leisure, may consult a controversy in Philostratus<sup>f808</sup>, between two persons, the buyer and seller of a field; in which, after the purchase, a treasure was found, when the seller claimed it as his; urging, that had he known of it, he would never have sold him the field: the buyer, on the other hand, insisted on its being his property; alleging that all was his which was contained in the land bought by him.

**Ver. 45-46.** *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man,* etc.] This parable may be understood of Christ's seeking, finding, and purchasing his elect: for, certain it is, that he has sought after them; which implies, that they were lost and going astray; expresses his great love to them, value for them, and desire after them; in doing which, he took much pains, and used much diligence: and certain it also is, that he finds them in redemption, and in effectual calling; and that they are to him a pearl of great price; as very precious to God, so highly esteemed of by Christ, as his portion, his inheritance, and his jewels. He has also parted with all he had for the sake of these persons; he became poor, emptied himself of everything, even gave himself a ransom for them, and so made a purchase of them, with the price of his own blood: though to this sense it may be

objected, that it does not seem so agreeable, that Christ should be compared to a merchant man, which better suits with those that deal with him, than as he is concerned with them; nor does he seek after any other than his elect: whereas this merchant man is said to be

*seeking goodly pearls*; any pearls that were so: nor is Christ's finding his elect a chance business; nor have they any intrinsic excellency in them, to denominate them pearls, but by his grace. The more common interpretation of it is, that it designs a sensible sinner, seeking after the true way of salvation, and finding Christ, and parting with all for him: such a man is a spiritual merchant, who trades in foreign parts, and in things of worth and value; and such an one seeks after a variety of things, which at first sight seem "goodly", in order to obtain salvation by; as civility, morality, a legal righteousness, fasting, watchings, prayer, a profession of religion, and a submission to external ordinances; but at length finds Christ,

*the pearl of great price*: who is of an unspeakable brightness and glory, of intrinsic worth and value; who is enriching to those that possess him, and precious to them that believe; and of such a price, that no valuable consideration can be given for him: wherefore such a soul is willing to part with all for him; with sinful self, and righteous self; and with the honours, riches, and profits of this world; and buy him, his grace and righteousness, without money, and without price. Though I rather think, that in connection and agreement with the other parables, this is to be understood of such, who are seeking after knowledge in every branch of it, natural, moral, and spiritual; and so may be compared to a "merchant man, seeking goodly pearls"; and who find the Gospel, and prefer it to everything else.

*Who when he had found one pearl of great price*: for such who seek after wisdom and knowledge in the use of proper means, are like merchant men, that trade abroad, and for things of value; and these, under divine direction, find in the Scriptures, and through the ministry of the word, and by prayer and study, the truths of the everlasting Gospel, respecting Christ, his person, office, grace and righteousness; which are equal to, yea transcend a pearl of the highest price; for their original, coming from a far country, from heaven; for their brightness, clearness, and perspicuity; for their ornament and glory; for their firmness and solidity; for their virtue and value, to them that know the worth of them; and such will buy, but not sell them; reckon all things but loss and dung, in comparison of them; and will contend for them, and stand fast in them.



(See Gill on “~~4135~~ Matthew 13:45”)

**Ver. 47.** *Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net*, etc.] By which also is meant, the Gospel, and the ministry of it. This may be compared to a net, for its meanness in the esteem of men; being despicable, and of no account in the eyes of the world: and yet like a net, a piece of curious artifice and workmanship, being the produce of the grace of God; in which his manifold wisdom is displayed, and is what angels desire to look into: it is designed, and purposely contrived, for the gathering in of sinners to Christ, and to his churches, though by accident, it has other uses; such as troubling of the world, as the net does the waters of the sea, and drawing out the corruptions of the men of it, as that does weeds, stones, etc. and which, like a net, can do nothing of itself, unless cast; and not then neither, unless succeeded with a divine blessing:

*that was cast into the sea*; by “the sea” is meant the world, so called, for the storms and tempests of afflictions, and persecutions the saints meet with, and for the continual troubles that are in it; for the restlessness and instability of all things therein; for the dangers of it; and for its being the proper place and element of fishes, as the world is to the men of it. The casting of it into the sea, designs the opening of the Gospel, and the unfolding the mysteries of it, and the preaching it in all the world; and supposes persons qualified for it; such were the patriarchs and prophets under the Old Testament; and particularly Christ, John the Baptist, and the Apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers under the New Testament; and requires art, skill, and wisdom, might and strength, industry, diligence, and patience; and which is done at a venture, whether there are fish or not; and sometimes succeeds, and sometimes not:

*and gathered of every kind*; the Persic version adds, “of animals”; but much more agreeably Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and the Vulgate Latin, add, “of fishes”; and so some copies read. The preaching of the Gospel, is the means of gathering souls to Christ, and into his churches; and those that are gathered into a visible Gospel church state, are of every kind, of all nations in the world; Jews and Gentiles: of all ranks and degrees of men, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; of all sorts of sinners, and of men good and bad; some who have the truth of grace in them, and others that are only hypocrites: profess in words, and deny in works; have nothing more than a form of godliness, and name to live, and are dead.

**Ver. 48.** *Which when, it was full*, etc.] As the Gospel, and the Gospel church state may be said to be, when all the ends of the preaching of the word are answered; when all are called by the one, and into the other, that were designed to be called; when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all Israel shall be saved.

*They drew to the shore*; which will be done, when the end of the world comes; then will an end be put to the Gospel ministry, the net will be drawn to shore; the preaching of the Gospel will cease, and no more use be made of it:

*and sat down*; the ministers of the word having done their work, enter into the joy of their Lord, and rest from their labours:

*and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away*; as fishermen used to do; though this last office seems, by the application of the parable, to be what will be performed by angels; who, as many as they find to have a good work of grace wrought and finished in their souls, they will gather into Christ's barn, into the everlasting habitations, the mansions in Christ's Father's house, he is gone to prepare: but as for the bad, who shall appear to be destitute of the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, notwithstanding their profession of religion, they shall be rejected, as good for nothing, and shall be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

**Ver. 49.** *So shall it be at the end of the world*, etc.] As the fisherman, when he has drawn his net to shore, picks out the good fish, and puts them into proper vessels, and casts the dead, putrid, and useless fish away; so, at the close of time, in the last day,

*the angels shall come forth* out of heaven, from the presence of God and Christ, and by his orders, as the judge of all the earth,

*and sever the wicked from the just*; with whom they have had not only civil conversation, but have been joined in a Gospel church state; but now these ungodly shall not stand in judgment with them; nor these sinners, these hypocrites, in the congregation of the righteous: the one will be set at Christ's right hand, the other at his left; the one will go into life eternal, and the other into everlasting punishment; and their separation from one another will be for ever.

**Ver. 50.** *And shall cast them into the furnace of fire,* etc.] (See Gill on “~~413D~~ Matthew 13:42”)

**Ver. 51.** *Jesus saith unto them,* etc.] This is left out in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, and in Munster’s Hebrew Gospel, and in some Greek exemplars; though it is necessary to the connection and sense of the words:

*have ye understood all these things?* All the parables Christ had delivered, besides those he had given a particular explanation of; as of the mustard seed, and leaven, of the treasure hid in the field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea: Christ’s putting this question to the disciples, shows that the things delivered, had some difficulty in them; that they were of moment and importance to be understood; and how concerned he was, that they should understand them; and how ready he was to communicate the knowledge of them, which he knew would be useful to them in their after ministrations:

*they say unto him, yea, Lord.* This answer, which was truly and faithfully made, is a proof of their close and strict attention to the words of Christ; the quickness of their understandings, at that time, being in a very special manner opened and illuminated by Christ; and which he knew, when he put the question to them; but was willing to have it owned and expressed by themselves, that he might have the opportunity of saying what follows.

**Ver. 52.** *Then said he unto them,* etc.] Since the disciples had such a clear understanding of the above parables, and were by them, and by other things, so well furnished to preach the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to others, Christ stirs them up by the following parable, to a diligent exercise of their gifts, and to a large, free, and cheerful communication of their knowledge to others.

*Therefore every Scribe;* meaning not legal ones, Scribes in the law of Moses, a sort of letter men, often mentioned by the evangelists, and the same with the lawyers, who were conversant with the letter of the law, and only understood that; as for the kingdom of heaven, they were so far from being instructed unto it, that they shut it up, and would neither go in themselves, nor suffer others; but evangelical Scribes are here meant, (see ~~413E~~ Matthew 23:34) the preachers of the everlasting Gospel, now everyone of these,

*which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, as each of them be more or less; that is, understands the nature of the Gospel church state, the discipline, laws, and rules of Christ's house, the doctrines of the Gospel, the way and things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven; as Christ and his righteousness, and the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit: such an one,

*is like unto a man that is an householder*; that has an household or family under his care, as the ministers of the Gospel have, and which is the church of God; called the household of God, the household of faith, a spiritual house, and a family; consisting of fathers, young men, and children; of which indeed Christ is properly the householder and master, but Gospel ministers are deputies and stewards under him, and under him preside over the household, and have the government of it, provide food for it, and protect and defend it; all which require large gifts and abilities, great love and affection, both to Christ and his people; much wisdom, prudence, and knowledge; and great faithfulness and integrity, courage and firmness of mind.

*Which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old*: by "his treasure" is meant, either Christ, who is the great treasury and storehouse of grace and truth; from whence his ministers receive all their gifts, grace, light, and knowledge; or the word of God, the Scriptures of truth, by which the men of God are thoroughly furnished for every good work; or the treasure of the Gospel, which is put into their earthen vessels, into their own hearts, and that stock of Gospel knowledge and experience they are blessed with; a large competency of which is necessary to these householders since they are to give out, not niggardly, but largely, and plentifully, and in great variety. The Syriac version reads it, *htmys ^m*, "out of his treasures", and so may include them all. "Things new and old": not the new Gospel and the old law, for the law is not old, nor the Gospel new; the Gospel is much older than the law, being hid of God, and ordained before the world was, to our glory; and was even promulgated, long before the law was on Mount Sinai: nor things out of the Old and New Testament, for the New Testament was not yet in being; though it is right, and is the business of Gospel preachers, to bring forth such truths and doctrines, as are contained in both: rather truths that are old in themselves, but newly discovered to them, may be intended, and every new acquisition of knowledge and experience, added to the former stock and fund: the phrase seems to denote the plenty and variety of Gospel

provisions, which the ministers of it are to bring forth, suited to the various cases of such who are under their care. The allusion is either to a good provider for his family, who lays up stores for them of all sorts, and upon proper occasions brings them forth for their relief; or to the people under the law, bringing their offerings out of the fruits, both of the old and new year; concerning which, take the following rule <sup>f809</sup>.

“All offerings, both of the congregation and of a private person, came from the land (of Israel), and without the land,  $\hat{c}y\hat{h} \hat{m}w \hat{c}d\hat{j} \hat{h} \hat{m}$ , “from the new and from the old” (i.e. from the new and old stock, the increase of the new and old year), except the sheaf of the first fruits, and the two wave loaves; for they come only from the new, and from the land of Israel.”

The place where fruits of any kind were laid up, was called a treasure; hence it is said <sup>f810</sup>, the palm tree has its fallen fruits, which they do not bring  $rxwal$ , “into the treasure”; and it produces dates, which they put into the treasure: perhaps some reference is had to (<sup><2713></sup>Song of Solomon 7:13) where mention is made of fruits new and old, and which the Jewish writers <sup>f811</sup> interpret of the words of the Scribes, and of the words of the law; the fruits “new”, are the words and sayings of the Scribes, their doctrines and decisions; and the “old”, are the words of the law; and one that was well versed in both these; was with them a well instructed Scribe. Unless the allusion should rather be thought to be to old and new wine, (see <sup><487></sup>Luke 5:37-39), it being usual to call a wine cellar a “treasure” <sup>f812</sup>, in which all sorts of wine were kept; and a well instructed Scribe is full of matter, and, like Elihu, his belly is as wine that has no vent and is ready to burst like new bottles, (<sup><829></sup>Job 32:19) and, like Jeremy, he is weary of forbearing, and cannot stay, (<sup><209></sup>Jeremiah 20:9) and, like David, his heart indites a good matter, and his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, (<sup><981></sup>Psalms 45:1).

**Ver. 53.** *And it came to pass that, when Jesus had finished these parables,* etc.] Which he spoke both to the multitude from the ship, and to his disciples in the house,

*he departed thence;* from the house in which he was, and the city of Capernaum, where he had some time been.

**Ver. 54.** *And when he was come into his own country,* etc.] Not where he was born, Bethlehem, for it is never observed, that he went thither; but

where he was educated, and where his parents and near relations, according to the flesh, lived; who had been some little time ago seeking for him, and desirous of speaking with him, even Nazareth:

*he taught them in their synagogue*, it being the sabbath day; (see <sup><400></sup>Mark 6:1,2). The Vulgate Latin, and all the Eastern versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read, "in their synagogues"; but as Nazareth was so mean and obscure a place, it is not likely that there should be in it more synagogues than one; and of no more do we read in (<sup><400></sup>Luke 4:16,20,28) where an account is given of Christ's preaching in this place before this time.

*Insomuch that they were astonished*; at the doctrines he taught, which were new and unheard of to them; and were delivered in such a graceful manner, and with so much power and authority; and also at the miracles he wrought, in confirmation of what he delivered; and said,

*whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?* They knew his education, how that he had not been put to school, had never learned letters of men, or received any instructions from their learned doctors; and therefore could not imagine, how he came by such sublime and divine knowledge, and by what power he performed such wonderful things; looking upon him to be a mere man, and a very mean, and contemptible one: not knowing that he was the wisdom of God, and the power of God; which had they been acquainted with, there would have been no room, nor reason, for such questions.

**Ver. 55.** *Is not this the carpenter's son?* etc.] Meaning Joseph, who was by trade a carpenter, and whose son Jesus was supposed to be; and who very probably was now dead, which may be the reason he is not mentioned by name. The Greek word here used, signifies any mechanic, or artificer. The Syriac expresses it by a word, which signifies both a carpenter and a blacksmith; and Munster's Hebrew Gospel renders it, *aj pn ˆb*, "the blacksmith's son". But the generally received notion of the ancient Christians is, that he was a carpenter, and that Jesus was brought up to the same business, which lay in making ploughs and yokes <sup>f813</sup>. This also appears, from the answer the Christian schoolmaster at Antioch gave to Libanius the sophister; who being big with expectation of Julian the apostate's getting the victory, asked the schoolmaster, what he thought the carpenter's son was doing? To which, after a short pause, he replied; O

sophister! the Creator of all things, whom thou callest the carpenter's son, is making a coffin for Julian; who accordingly died in a few days after <sup>f814</sup>. The Jews make mention of one Abba Joseph, **yanbh**, "the builder", or carpenter <sup>f815</sup>; but whether the same, is not certain. What they here say, was no doubt by way of derision and contempt; and yet the same phrase is used by them of a person of great note and fame, for his wisdom and knowledge: thus speaking of a difficult point, they <sup>f816</sup> say,

"**rgn rb al w rgn tyl** , "no carpenter", or smith, or a carpenter's son, can solve this: says R. Shesheth, I am neither a carpenter, nor a carpenter's son, and I can solve it."

The gloss upon it is,

"a wise man, the son of a wise man."

*Is not his mother called Mary?* Plain Mary, without any other title, or civil respect; a poor spinstress, that got her bread by her hand labour: the Jews say <sup>f817</sup>, she was a plaiter of women's hair, and treat her with the utmost scorn.

*And his brethren;* not strictly so, but either the sons of Joseph by a former wife; or Mary's, or Joseph's brothers or sisters sons, and so cousins to Christ; it being usual with the Jews to call such, and even more distant relations, brethren:

*James;* the son of Alphaeus, or Cleophas, one of Christ's disciples, (<sup><400B></sup>Matthew 10:3) called the Lord's brother, (Gal 1:19) and the same that wrote the epistle that bears his name:

*and Joses;* or Joseph, as the Vulgate Latin, and Munster's Hebrew Gospel read; and which two names are one and the same: hence, in Talmudic writings, we often read of R. Jose, who is the same with R. Joseph <sup>f818</sup>: this Joses is, by Dr. Lightfoot, conjectured to be the same with Joseph, called Barsabas, who was put in nomination for apostleship, after the death of Judas, (<sup><402></sup>Acts 1:23)

*And Simon;* or Symeon, the son of Cleophas, who is said <sup>f819</sup> to succeed James, as bishop of Jerusalem, and to be Christ's cousin, being son of Cleophas, the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of Christ:

*and Judas;* the same that is called Lebbaeus, and Thaddaeus, (<sup><400B></sup>Matthew 10:3) and the brother of James, (<sup><406></sup>Luke 6:16) and the same that wrote



the epistle that goes by his name. The Jews ought not to have made these remarks, since many of their great doctors were of mean parentage; as R. Zachariah was a butcher's son <sup>f820</sup>, and R. Jochanan a blacksmith's son <sup>f821</sup>; hence that advice of R. Juda ben Bethira <sup>f822</sup>,

“take heed that ye do not reproach the sons of the common people, for from them comes forth the law.”

**Ver. 56.** *And his sisters*, etc.] Whose names, according to Epiphanius <sup>f823</sup>, were Mary and Salome; whom he supposes were the daughters of Joseph, by a former wife; but rather of Alphaeus or Cleophas.

*Are they not all with us?* Lived in the same town with them, were well known by them, and familiar with them.

*Whence then hath this man all these things?* His wisdom and his mighty works; for since he had not them from any of their schools, and nurseries of learning, from their learned doctors and wise men; and could not have received them from his parents, and near relations, they could not devise from whence he should have them.

**Ver. 57.** *And they were offended in him*, etc.] It was a stumbling to them, how he came by his wisdom and power; since he had not these things from men of learning, and could not have them from his relatives: and therefore, rather than believe he had them of himself, or from God, they chose to indulge at least a suspicion, that he had them from the devil, and so were offended in him: or this offence was taken at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, though without reason; for if without the advantage of an education without human literature, and the instructions of men, he was able to expound the Scriptures, preach such doctrine, and deliver such words of wisdom, and confirm all this by miracles, and mighty works, they ought to have considered him as a divine person, and all this, as a demonstration of it, and of his having a divine mission at least, and of his being raised up by God for extraordinary purposes.

*But Jesus said unto them*; being unmoved at their offence in him, and contempt of him, which was no other than what he expected:

*a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house*; which seems to be a proverbial speech in common use, though I have not met with it in Jewish writings; showing, that a prophet, or any teacher, or preacher, generally speaking, is more esteemed among

strangers, who have no personal pique, nor prejudices against him, and who judge of him, not by what he has been, but by his present abilities, doctrine, and conduct, than among his countrymen; who are apt to think meanly of him, because familiarly acquainted with him, and knew, if not his vices, yet his infirmities, and envy him any superior degree of honour to them, he has attained unto. I say, generally speaking, for this is not always the case on either side; sometimes a prophet is affronted and abused in strange places, as Christ himself was: and sometimes is received with esteem and applause among his countrymen, relations, and acquaintance; but this is rare and uncommon; the proverb respects what is usually and ordinarily done, and the truth of it is easy to be observed.

**Ver. 58.** *And he did not many mighty works there*, etc.] Some he did, though not many; partly that they might be left inexcusable, and partly that it might not be said, he did not wish well, to his own country: what he did, were not of the first class, and greatest note; he only “laid his hands”, as Mark says, (~~406~~ Mark 6:5) “upon a few sick folk, and healed them”; and yet these were such as raised their wonder and astonishment, but did not command their faith, and were rather stumbling blocks unto them; such were their prejudices, their unbelief, and the hardness of their hearts: and the reason indeed why he did no more was,

*because of their unbelief.* These words in Mark are joined with this expression, “he marvelled”; showing, that their continued unbelief in him, notwithstanding his ministry and miracles among them, was matter of surprise to him; but here they are given as a reason why he did no more mighty works among them: and which Mark says he could not do, not for want of power, or as if their unbelief was too mighty for him to overcome; but he would not, because he judged them unworthy, and that it was not fit and convenient to perform any more, since they were offended with what was done; and that their condemnation might not be increased.