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H I S T O R Y
 THE
INTERPRETER OF PROPHECY,
 OR,
A V I E W
 OF
SCRIPTURAL PROPHECIES
 AND
THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENT
 IN THE
PAST AND PRESENT
OCCURRENCES OF THE WORLD;
 WITH
CONJECTURES RESPECTING THEIR FUTURE
COMPLETION.

BY HENRY KETT, B. D.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD, AND ONE
 OF HIS MAJESTY'S PREACHERS AT WHITEHALL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

O X F O R D;

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MDCCXCIX.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
GEORGE PRETYMAN, D.D. F.R.S.
LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN,
WHOSE ARDENT AND UNREMITTING ZEAL
FOR THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION,
AND STEADY REGARD FOR LEARNING;
WHOSE CONDUCT AS A MAN,
AND WHOSE VIGILANCE AS A PRELATE,
DEMAND THE GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
OF EVERY FRIEND
TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND;
ESPECIALLY AT A PERIOD,
WHEN SUCH EXAMPLES ARE EMINENTLY USEFUL
TO
THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIANITY;
THE FOLLOWING WORK
IS, WITH PROFOUND RESPECT,
INSCRIBED,
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S
OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,
HENRY KETT.

P R E F A C E.

THE astonishing progress made by Infidelity in the present age of the world evidently requires from the friends of Christianity a peculiar degree of energy and vigilance in the cause of Religious Truth. They cannot fail to recollect, that, although Religion itself is invulnerable against every attack which artifice and violence direct against it, it is their indispensable duty to exert their utmost efforts to check the ravages of an enemy so fatal to the dearest interests of man: and no mode of protection against its contagious spirit seems better calculated for general use,

than A FULL AND CLEAR ELUCIDATION OF THE PROPHETICAL PARTS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

The evidence derived from PROPHECY in support of REVELATION, is a progressive and an accumulating evidence, which shines with increasing brightness as time advances in its course, and collects strength from each succeeding age. And as the extraordinary events NOW PASSING BEFORE OUR EYES will be found to augment the splendour of its light, and to give force to its strength, while they receive in return a ray from Divine truth, which discovers their origin, and points out their course; it may be presumed, that a summary view of the Prophecies is particularly SUITED TO STRIKE THE MINDS OF THE PRESENT GENERATION, WHO SEEK IN
VAIN

VAIN FOR ANY OTHER ADEQUATE EXPLANATION OF OCCURRENCES SO DEEPLY INTERESTING TO THEMSELVES.

HISTORY, which constitutes a material branch of our education, assumes the greatest dignity of character, when she becomes the companion of RELIGION, and the Interpreter of the Oracles of God. Her volumes present the most wonderful discoveries, and reflect the images of the prophetic parts of the Bible. The works of the writers of all ages and countries—whether Pagans—Christians—Jews—antient, or even modern; Infidels—whatever their opinions, prejudices, or designs, unfold the mysteries of prediction, show the fulfilment of the Divine will, and in reality advance the interests of Revelation.

The following Work is intended to set these truths in a striking point of view ;
IT DISPLAYS THE HARMONY OF PROPHECY — THE ONE GREAT SCHEME THAT PERVADES ALL ITS PARTS— AND THE CONCURRENCE OF ALL HUMAN EVENTS TO ACCOMPLISH ITS STUPENDOUS PLAN.

Fully aware that this work falls extremely short of that excellence which the subject demands, I lament that such a sketch of Prophetical and Historical harmony as the times seem urgently to require, delineating present as well as past occurrences with a faithful and an able pencil, and marking them with the colours of strong and vivid description, has not hitherto been offered to the public. I am persuaded, that such a work would most effectually answer
the

the ends which these Volumes are most seriously intended to promote—namely, to establish the doubtful, to recal the wandering, to awaken the thoughtless, to instruct the unlearned—and more particularly to produce in the minds of the rising generation so strong a conviction of the superintendence of the Almighty over the affairs of the world—of the Divine origin of the Gospel—and the momentous concerns of another life, that they may view the **FOLLY** and the **WICKEDNESS** of the **NEW PHILOSOPHY** in their proper light, and ever stand up as **THE FIRM SUPPORTERS OF THE SACRED CAUSE OF CHRISTIANITY.**

Before I conclude this Preface, I must make an acknowledgment, which is no less due to justice, than satisfactory to my own feelings of gratitude. I have
received

received so much assistance in the prosecution of this Work, as greatly to invalidate my claims to being reputed its Author. The plan originated with an ardent Friend to the cause of Religion, who was led, by a very extensive knowledge of History and Scripture, to consider the passing train of events with peculiar attention; and, forcibly struck by their agreement with the Divine word, was anxious to represent this enlightening and consolatory truth to the public. From this Person, whose name I am not at liberty to mention, and whose anxiety for the success of this Publication is perfectly disinterested, I have not only received many judicious corrections of what I had written, but such valuable communications as are deservedly substituted for many of the materials which I had prepared for the press. I had

also

also **the advantage** of submitting my papers to the perusal of the learned and excellent Prelate, to whom I am allowed the honour of inscribing this Work ; to whose enlightened and comprehensive views of the subject of Prophecy itself, I am happy to acknowledge my obligations ; and to whom the public are indebted for the first intimation of the **PRINCIPLE** that alone can explain the extraordinary events which excite universal attention^a. I congratulate my Readers on my having obtained such important assistance, as it has stamped that value upon the Volumes now offered to their notice, which I am confident could not have been derived from my own unaided labours.

^a See the Bishop of Lincoln's excellent Discourse on the Day of Public Thanksgiving, 1797.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

NO one, who believes in the existence of a God, can doubt the Divine Knowledge of all things past, present, and to come, or the Divine Power to reveal those things to men, in such measure and on such occasions, as Divine Wisdom directs. To God the past, the present, and the future, must be the same.—He views the greatest and most wonderful events in their remotest causes; the longest series appears but as one object to his all-seeing eye, and the whole scheme of those events is altogether presented to the Divine Mind, of which mortals only catch a glimpse, and survey the broken parts. But while the pre-
B science

science of the Almighty is universally acknowledged, his superintending Providence is frequently denied. Plunging into the abyss of metaphysical abstraction, man tries in vain to fathom its depth with the short line of his finite understanding; and unable to reconcile the superintending and directing Providence of God with his ideas of the free will of man, the mists of doubt conceal this rock of consolation, hope, and joy, to which the Scriptures point as his security; and he either struggles comfortless against the ills of life, or coldly resigns himself to the laws of fate, or the fluctuations of chance. To believe, that the Almighty Creator is also the constant Governor of the universe, is a point of considerable importance to human happiness; and to establish this doctrine upon solid ground is of considerable importance to the interests of Religion. It is the design of this work to draw conviction from the sacred source of prophecy.

prophecy.—But here it may be asked by those who freely acknowledge the power of God to declare his will to mankind by a special Revelation, whether it clearly appears, that he actually *has* done so? A satisfactory answer to this very serious question will be found in an attentive examination of those writings, which the Jewish and the Christian Church agree in believing to be prophetic. And many others have been given.—The certainty of Revelation has been variously as well as repeatedly proved. It is not the defect in proof, but the want of investigation, that produces infidelity. For notwithstanding the pretensions of the present age to zeal for truth, who now will even read the laborious researches of her faithful advocates, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Pearson, Hooker, Warburton, Cudworth, Leland, or Butler? Even Maurice is neglected, though the charms of novelty, of poetic fiction, and of a florid style unite to decorate

the pillar, which he has patiently built up in her support, from a quarry, which her enemies have long considered as their exclusive property. It is forgotten, that while nothing is more easy, than to bring forward a multitude of objections in a very small volume, it is absolutely impossible to answer them within the same compass: and the generality of readers, it is to be feared, imagine that those objections, which almost daily issue from the press, in the form best calculated for extensive circulation, are the discoveries of this enlightened age; whereas they are in fact only old arguments and objections, furbished up with the polish of modern writing, or the spirit of modern wit and falsehood, and have long ago been proved to have neither weight nor value. Let it however be remembered, that a truth once proved, is proved for ever. No rational mind will admit it possible for the utmost force which objections can muster to overthrow

throw a single *demonstration*, or what Dr. Jeremy Taylor has shown to be nearly of equal strength, a *moral certainty*.

These considerations have urged me to try whether *one* argument, which I consider as proving incontrovertibly both the certainty of Revelation and its chief design, could not be compressed within narrow limits in such a manner, as to strike, and not tire the attention. And it is with the earnest hope of accomplishing this great object, that I shall lay before the reader some few of the most remarkable Prophecies, capable of the shortest and plainest application, in two distinct classes, and subjoin the facts, which have fulfilled them. The relation of these facts I shall take from the most authentic and approved historians, both antient and modern ; and confirm every statement by observations, authorized by writers distinguished for their learning, penetration, judgment, and impartiality,

in order to give indisputable authority to each application of the Prophecies to the events, stated as their accomplishment, and to the conclusions, that will be deduced from them.

FIRST CLASS.—Prophecies which have been fulfilled,—down to the subversion of the Jewish government.

SECOND CLASS.—Prophecies relating to the reign of Antichrist, and the reign and final triumph of the Messiah.

The Prophecies which I have selected for the **FIRST CLASS** will be shown to have been accomplished, by the events, to which they are referred in the fullest sense, and most accurate manner. It will be proved, that the facts recorded have precisely agreed with the facts predicted, and the time, when time is mentioned in the Prophecy, with the time predicted.

The

The Prophecies I have chosen for the SECOND' Class are such as are in part fulfilled, and are, therefore, so far established upon safe ground by past time, and accomplishment ; and are thus rendered more clearly and certainly proper objects of our attention and inquiry. But as I shall consider them with a particular view to the present state of the world, and shall be led to offer an opinion relative to the connexion, which they appear to have as parts of one Power, and possibly to hazard a conjecture respecting the course of their completion ; I have separated this Class from the former, that the great argument to be derived from the clear and exact accomplishment of Prophecy may rest entirely upon the acknowledged truth of historical facts.

That these Prophecies were delivered at the time, and by the persons, to whom they are commonly assigned ;—that they

were delivered *before* the events they predict ; and that they professed to be prophetic at the time of their delivery, and were so understood to be, by the greatest and most learned persons, at and after their delivery, are points, that have been long esteemed established, beyond the power of controversy. But none are secure from contradiction ; and the infatuating folly of the present day makes men perpetually mistake *assertion* for *argument*. It will not be expected in a work, which professedly aims at conciseness, that what may be called a preliminary subject should be treated very fully. For the detail of proofs, I must refer the reader to those learned authors, who have collected the various evidence, and from thence have most clearly deduced incontestible conclusions in support of the authenticity of the Scriptures ; and who consequently give ample confirmation to the truth of these points. But I cannot pass them over intirely. And I wish
to

to give the reader, if yet unacquainted with their history, some information relative to those Prophets, whose writings will be the subjects of discussion—pre-mising a few observations respecting the scene of Prophecy, and saying a few words concerning the Prophets in general, before I enter upon the short account of the history and explanation of the nature and use of Prophecy itself, with which I shall conclude this *preparatory* Chapter.

The principal scene of Prophecy after the death of Moses, was the country of Judea—a country of little eminence when compared with the mighty empires of the earth ; but not so *very* inconsiderable as it is usually represented, when compared more justly with kingdoms which existed nearer to its ancient date^a. The truth is, that we annex
certain

^a Porphyry, who lived in the third century, and

certain ideas of dignity and greatness to the kingdoms of Troy, of Argos, of Crete, of Lydia, and the different states of Greece, because the poets and historians magnify their importance in our youthful minds, and because we never lose sight of them while we pursue our studies—Whereas the Israelites, separated from the rest of the world for the express purpose of preserving the Oracles of God, quietly settled in the promised land, which they had conquered in far more remote antiquity, or suffering in captivity the predicted punishment of disobedience to their Law, are seldom

was an acute and learned writer against Christianity, confessed that Moses flourished near 1000 years before any of the Greek Philosophers; and it is well known that Herodotus, the father of Grecian history, was contemporary with Malachi, the last of the Prophets, whose writings close the sacred volume of the Jewish history.—Hence Josephus speaks with great contempt of the late origin of Grecian literature.

presented

presented to our notice by those authors in whom we are accustomed to confide for our knowledge of ancient history.—

With the kingdom of Israel we are little acquainted, except as it forms a part of early religious instruction; and the reverence with which we may be disposed to remember it, is often abated when we discover the low estimation in which it is generally held with respect to the dazzling points of splendor, power, and fame. It may however be asked, which of the great monarchies of the ancient world exceeded in magnificence the Court of Solomon, and the Temple of Jerusalem? The astonishment, admiration, and awe, expressed by Alexander and by Titus, when they beheld the Temple, preclude the idea of exaggerated description, and appear to establish its claim to superior grandeur and riches, while the simple patriarchal manners of the people (manners which still prevail in Arabia and in a part of India) must

increase the wonder. With respect to power, and its attendant, fame, the Israelites were forbidden to extend their conquests beyond certain limits; for it is evident, that their reputation in the world as a people made no part of the intended object, for which they were distinguished by the Almighty—perhaps was inconsistent with it:—but nothing human could resist the power with which they were endued, whenever they were allowed to exert it. It is allowed, however, that the frequent punishments, to which they were subjected by their frequent disobedience to the commands of God, confined the nation much within the bounds prescribed, till the age when Solomon “reigned over all the kings, from the river Euphrates, even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the borders of Egypt ^b,” and “exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom,” and, it may be added, for

^b 2 Chron. ix. 26.

“ho-

“honour” or fame^c; a fact to which eastern tradition still gives testimony.—It is allowed too, that this extended greatness of the kingdom was of short duration, and that it seemed to sink into insignificance just as the kingdoms of the Heathen world rose into importance: but it is maintained, that all these circumstances confirm the credibility of the Jewish history, because they are all in strict conformity with the *conditional* promises and the *prophetic word* of God, and with the great design for which the Jews were to continue a *peculiar people*. The ignorance and the obscurity imputed to the Jewish people will, indeed, furnish no inconsiderable argument to prove the divine origin of their prophecies.—If their knowledge and their experience were limited to the narrow confines of their own country— if their means of information were small,

^c 1 Kings, iv. 34.—iii. 13. 2 Chron. i. 12.

and

and their connexions with other nations precarious and accidental, they had the less ground to foretell, with any probability of being right, the future condition of other nations; and much less to decide positively and circumstantially as to their decline, decay, and ruin. And yet we find that the great events of foreign states, the fate of Nineveh, of Tyre, and of Babylon, the revolutions of Greece, and the power of Rome, were exactly foretold, and the predictions as exactly fulfilled.—Having premised thus much concerning the *scene* of Prophecy, I now hasten to the Prophets themselves.

Moses was of the tribe of Levi, and was born in Egypt during the bondage of the Children of Israel, in the year before Christ 1567, and in the year of the World 2433^d. He was miraculously rescued

^d Calmet's Dictionary: Articles Moses, Vol. II. p. 223. Bible, Vol. I. p. 292. Prophets, Vol. II.

cued from destruction by the daughter of Pharaoh, of which circumstance his name Moses, or Moyfes, which signifies in the Egyptian language, *preserved out of water*, is descriptive; and he was educated by her direction in all the learning and accomplishments of the Egyptians. He was chosen by God to be the deliverer and lawgiver of the Children of Israel, and to conduct them to the land of Canaan, according to the promise given to their father Abraham. He died in the 120th year of his age, “when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated,” on Mount Nebo, on the borders of that land, which it was declared by the Lord he should see, but not enter. As a prophet he was eminently distinguished. The Jews have constantly attributed to him the highest degree of

p. 455. Pentateuch, Vol. II. p. 379. Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionis. Du Pin's Canon. Du Pin's Ecclesiastical History. Watson's Apology for the Bible. Gray's Key, p. 45, &c.

inspira-

inspiration ; and in the New Testament he is always mentioned with singular honour. By the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and other heathen nations, Moses was acknowledged not only as the most ancient lawgiver, and as an historian of the strictest veracity, but, according to the style, in which they expressed their veneration for the greatest characters of antiquity, he was placed among the Gods, and worshipped under various names. And writers of the earliest ages have either confirmed his history by yet earlier tradition, or have borrowed from thence the ground-work of their fictions. He has been celebrated as a general, a legislator, a prophet, and a *magician* by prophane writers of almost all descriptions, and of almost all ages ; and his character is established by the uninterrupted testimony, which the Jews have given, from the time in which he lived to the present hour. His writings we shall consider presently.

Isaiah

Isaiah was of the tribe of Judah, and of noble birth. He began to prophesy about B. C. 758, Y. W. 3246, was nearly contemporary with Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah, and, according to a tradition among the Jews, was put to death in the first year of the reign of Manasseh, B. C. 698. His name, which signifies *the salvation of Jehovah*, is strongly descriptive of the character of his prophecies, which give a remarkably clear and accurate view of the Messiah and his kingdom, and he is therefore emphatically styled by Christian writers, the *Evangelical Prophet*.

Jeremiah was of the line of the priesthood, and consequently of the tribe of Levi. He was called to the prophetic office, which he exercised for more than 40 years, nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the 13th year of the reign of Josiah. He was permitted to remain in Judea, the desolation of which he so patheti-

pathetically laments after the first conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and was afterwards carried with his disciple Baruch into Egypt, where he was put to death. The Chronicle of Alexandria relates, that the Egyptians were incensed against him on account of his predictions concerning their kingdom; but that Alexander the Great, hearing what he had foretold concerning himself, visited the place of his burial, and ordered this Prophet's urn to be removed to Alexandria, where he built a magnificent monument to his memory. Constantine the Great afterwards erected a tomb to his memory near Jerusalem, at the place where it was supposed he usually resided: but as Ptolemy received the former account as genuine, it is far more probable that he died in Egypt.

Daniel was a descendant of the kings of Judah; he was carried captive to Babylon in the fourth year of the reign of
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of Jehoiakim, B. C. 602, Y. W. 3398, when he was about 18 years of age. His illustrious birth, various accomplishments, and consummate wisdom, raised him to the highest honours, first in the Babylonian, and afterwards in the Persian court. He publicly professed and practised the worship of his God, in defiance of every danger, and boldly predicted his fearful judgments to two of the most powerful and haughty tyrants of the earth, when called upon to explain the signs which they confessed to be sent from heaven. Daniel contributed much towards spreading the knowledge of God among the Gentile nations, both during his life, which was extended to a great length, and by the number of his predictions relating to them, which soon became generally known, and some of which were soon fulfilled. It is generally believed he died at Susa, the capital of Persia, where he had built a most magnificent edifice, mentioned by Josephus,

phus, as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian kings.

Malachi lived about 400 years before the birth of Christ. His name, which signifies *his Angel or Messenger*, like that of Isaiah, alludes to the principal subject of his Prophecy. This Prophet saw the second Temple completed, and the sacred rites of worship reestablished after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and closed the series of Prophets which had been continued from the time of Moses, with the promise of another messenger, who should immediately precede the long-expected Messiah.

It must not be imagined that the Prophets were always under the influence of the divine Spirit, or exempt from the common frailties and infirmities of human nature;—but it may be affirmed, that there was not one in this long series of

1000 years, whose character does not justly command our veneration. Piety, obedience to the commands of God, indifference to the pleasures and sufferings of this life, as far as they related to themselves, united with the keenest sensibility to the misery or the happiness of their country, and the most ardent and active zeal in executing the sacred but often painful duties of their office, appear eminently, though not equally conspicuous in them all. “ They were the established oracles of their country, and consulted upon all occasions when it was necessary to collect the divine will on any civil or religious question ; and we hear of no schisms or divisions while they flourished. They even condescended to inform the people of common concerns in trivial cases, in order to preclude them from all pretence or excuse for resorting to idolatrous practices and heathen divinations ; and they were always furnished with some prescribed mode of consulting God, or obtained revelation

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velation

velation by prayer. Sometimes the Holy Spirit suggested the matter and not the words to the Prophets—sometimes by an audible voice dictated every word and expression—sometimes the Prophets were left to describe in their own language the hieroglyphical dreams and visions, which they beheld ; and hence is the style of every Prophet more or less perspicuous, according to the nature and clearness of the Revelation imparted to him, and likewise characterized with peculiar discriminations resulting from education, and particular intercourse and habits of life. But sometimes they were instructed in the very expressions they should use ; and when writing under the influence of that inspiration, they understood not always the full importance and extent of them ; writing for the advantage of those that were to come after, and to furnish evidence in support of a future dispensation, they might not perceive the full scope, nor foresee distinctly
the

the spiritual accomplishment of the Prophecies they recorded^c.”—We find them constantly appealing to well known facts, for the fulfilment of many of their predictions, and perfectly consistent in their communications of the divine will. As their number increased, the truth of their declarations was established by the course of events; and there was an accumulation of evidence to prove, that, in the emphatic language of Scripture, “Holy men spake as they were taught of God.” Influenced by the guidance of the same spirit, they united in the most perfect harmony of design; they delivered the same precepts to be observed, the same punishments to be avoided, and the same blessings to be hoped for. Considered separately, every one of them was a burning and a shining light, ordained to beam upon the dark generation, in which he lived: and, considered collectively, they form one

^c Gray's Key, p. 329, &c.

bright

bright and glorious assemblage, to enlighten and impress the world with admiration of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God.

The writings of but few of these numerous Prophets have been preserved in the Jewish Canon. Some of the earlier Prophets seem, indeed, to have been appointed for the peculiar service of the Children of Israel, and as the means of preserving them distinct from other nations: but the later Prophets were to be of more general and extensive service, as they approached nearer to that great event, in which both Jews and Gentiles were equally interested.

We have not merely as good reason to believe that “the Prophecies were delivered at the time, and by the persons, to whom they are commonly assigned,” as to believe that Cicero wrote and pronounced his orations against Catiline and
 Antony,

Antony, in the century before Christ, and that Virgil wrote his poems in the reign of Augustus ; but we have a regular succession of testimony to the truth of this proposition, which the Jews have brought down to the present times.— And the universally high estimation, in which these writings appear from various historical evidence to have been held, from nearly the time of their delivery, will assuredly establish the other Propositions stated in p. 8. in the mind of an impartial inquirer.

I shall only observe further, that they were translated into Chaldee about the year before Christ 420, and into Greek, the language then most generally understood, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus ; an era remarkable for investigation and science, and which being *after* the predictions, and *before* many of the events which have since fulfilled them, clearly prove these writings to have been

c handed

handed down to us, without alteration. Especially when we consider, that the multiplicity of copies, which were spread into all nations by the Jewish colonies, from the time of the captivity, were constantly read in all the Synagogues, and open to the perusal of all people—were translated into many different languages—quoted by many historians—and their truth doubted by none, till within a very recent period.

I shall now state very shortly as much of the history, and the nature and use of Prophecy, as will put the reader in fair possession of the subject he is called upon to consider.—A believer in the Scriptures conceives that some memory of God, and knowledge of the dispensations of his Providence having been preserved traditionally from Adam, (confirmed probably by other occasional communications of the divine will), through the antediluvian world, the few
 who

who kept up in their lives any just sense of his providence were, by means of Prophecy, and the miraculous interposition of their Maker, saved out of the general wreck of the deluge—That after a time, the impression of even that awful lesson wearing out of the mind of the greatest part of mankind, it pleased the Supreme Being not to leave himself without a particular as well as a general witness ; and therefore he again chose one of the few families, who preserved their belief and knowledge of him, and trusted them with the promises of his mercy.—And lest this again should suffer by the vague nature of all tradition ; he, before the recollection of their father Abraham had faded from the minds of any of his descendants, and while the history of the world and of the earlier Patriarchs, which had been brought down in regular succession through but
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^d The tradition was conveyed from Adam
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through

very few generations^d, was well known to them, appointed Moses to explain the creation and the state of man on earth; to record the intentions of God towards man, and to be under him the lawgiver of this family, now becoming a nation, and destined to preserve this history, these records, and these laws, to the end of the world. From this period, therefore, is to be dated the beginning of written Prophecy.

Moses, the first and greatest of the Prophets whose works have been transmitted to us, recorded the wonders of creation and providence, from the be-

through Methuselah, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Amram, to Moses, seven intermediat- persons—and of these seven, several were a long time contemporary with each other. Methuselah was contemporary with both Adam and Noah; Shem with Noah and Abraham; Isaac with Abraham and Joseph; and Amram the grandson of Levi (who was the brother of Joseph) was the father of Moses.

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ginning of time, till the arrival of the Israelites at the borders of the land promised to the children of Abraham—a period of above 2500 years—established the covenant of God with his chosen people—set before them the conditional promises of God—drew a strong and accurate picture of their national character and fate for a series of ages, which are still running their course—and predicted the appearance of another “Prophet like unto himself” (by which, according to all antient interpretation, is to be understood another *Lawgiver*) to whom he commanded them “to hearken,” under pain of the heavy displeasure of the Lord their God.—The Prophets, who followed Moses in continued succession for above a thousand years, were employed in preserving the remembrance of the gracious promises of future Redemption to fallen man, and the knowledge of a future state of retribution—in keeping up a sense of the constant su-

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perintending providence of God over all the world—in gradually explaining the spiritual and typical meaning of the Mosaical Law, and in preparing the Jews for the reception of that second dispensation, which it prefigured, and was designed to introduce at the appointed time, as the promised universal blessing. The great object of Prophecy being a description of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, the prophetic ministry ceased when that object had been sufficiently displayed.—At the period allotted by the Prophet Daniel, for “sealing up the Vision and the Prophecy”—after the peaceable reestablishment of the Jews in their own land—and within about 400 years of the time appointed for the appearance of Christ, Malachi closed the prophetic volume in a manner which strikingly confirms this truth, “that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy.” He threatens the Jews with punishment and rejection; declaring that

God

God would “make his name great among the Gentiles,” for that he was wearied with the impiety of Israel: he exhorts them earnestly to repent, and to observe the law of Moses, till that prophetic Messenger should appear, who, like, “a harbinger, was to prepare the way of the Lord, whom they sought,” i. e. for the Messiah—“who would suddenly come to his temple”—and whose approach was hailed, as that “Sun of righteousness, who should arise with healing in his wings.”

It is obvious, that if the Prophecies in the antient Scriptures relating to the first advent of the Messiah were fulfilled in Christ—and if “the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was then thrown down,” many of the principal subjects of the Prophecies under the Law can have no place in the Prophecies under the Gospel.—We accord-

ingly find the *kingdom* of Christ to be the sole great object of Prophecy in the New Testament ; and this distinction gives fresh evidence to the unity of design, which pervades both covenants—especially as it is certain that *many* of the Prophecies in *both* upon this ever important subject exactly correspond ; and none can be found, in which there is the shadow of contradiction. Of the Prophecies which are contained in the New Testament, I shall only briefly remark, that they extend to the end of the world, and particularly describe the state of the Church—its trials, increase, prosperity, corruptions, sufferings, and purification—from the time of its lowly origin (for lowly did it seem to mortal eyes) to its universal prevalence and triumphant entrance into glory—and conclude this sketch of the *history* of Prophecy with observing, that since the Revelation by St. John closed the New Testa-

Testament, 1700 years have elapsed without the appearance of any Prophet in the world.

It may be observed of the Prophecies themselves, that they were not only necessarily miraculous, but of that species of miracles which is the most lasting, and consequently the most convincing to the later ages, as well as peculiarly adapted to the keeping up among a people disposed, as the Jews were, to idolatry and rebellion, that constant dependence upon their God and King, which was necessary to preserve them distinct and separate from the rest of the world, according to the declared purpose of God.—They appear to be sometimes plain, and sometimes metaphorical—they have often a first or partial, and an ultimate completion, of which the former may generally be considered as an earnest of the latter—they having often an immediate reference to present circumstances, or to things that

were very soon to happen, and yet being in their nature predictive of remotely future events.—“ It is this double character of Prophecy, which occasions those unexpected transitions and sudden interchange of circumstances, so observable in the prophetic books. Hence different predictions are sometimes blended together, temporal and spiritual deliverances are foretold in one Prophecy, and great and smaller events are combined in one point of view. Hence likewise one chain of connected design runs through the whole scheme of Prophecy; and a continuation of events successively fulfilling, and successively branching out into new predictions, continued to confirm the faith, and keep alive the expectations of the Jews.” It is principally this double sense of Prophecy which renders it obscure: for though “ the predictions of the Prophets were sometimes positive and exactly descriptive, and delivered with an accurate and de-

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finite designation of names and times, Prophecy was not generally designed to be clear before its accomplishment. Had it been more clear, it must have controlled the freedom of human actions, or have appeared to have produced its own accomplishment, furnishing sinners with a plea of necessity. It is however always sufficiently exact in its descriptions to authenticate its pretensions to a Divine authority, to produce, when it comes to pass, an acknowledgment of its unerring certainty, and to demonstrate the wisdom and the power of God^f.”

For let it not be imagined that the obscurity, which arises from the double sense of Prophecy, at all resembles the ambiguity of the Pagan oracles. The Pagan oracles commonly related to transactions, that were carrying on at the same time in no very distant place ; or

^f Gray's Key to the Old Testament, p. 343, 345.

to some event a short time before it happened, when the causes which were to produce it had begun to operate: and it is certain, that they were in general so expressed, as to admit of double and contradictory interpretations, in order to correspond with events of a totally *opposite nature*. Whereas the double types of genuine Prophecy constantly referred to events of the *same nature*, though occurring at different periods of time.—It has been already said, that Prophecy was sometimes delivered in distinct and positive terms; as for example, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, containing the *history* of our Saviour's sufferings: and it may also be observed, that when it was delivered in highly metaphorical language, the symbols and figures admitted of the clearest explication, which was sometimes given at the same time.—Thus for instance, the four great empires of the world and their revolutions were represented to Daniel, under

under the form of certain animals, and by allusions to their nature and properties ; but these symbols are interpreted in the plainest language possible.—I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of closing this part of the subject, by quoting a most admirable description of the language of Prophecy.—“ The language of Prophecy is remarkable for its magnificence. Each prophetic writer is distinguished for peculiar beauties ; but their style in general may be characterized, as strong, animated, and impressive. Its ornaments are derived not from accumulation of epithet, or laboured harmony ; but from the real grandeur of its images, and the majestic force of its expressions. It is varied with striking propriety, and enlivened with quick but easy transitions. Its sudden bursts of eloquence, its earnest warmth, its affecting exhortations and appeals, afford very interesting proofs of that lively impression, and of that inspired conviction,

conviction, under which the Prophets wrote; and which enabled them, among a people not distinguished for genius, to surpass in every variety of composition the most admired productions of Pagan antiquity. If the imagery employed by the sacred writers appear sometimes to partake of a coarse and indelicate cast, it must be recollected, that the Eastern manners and languages required the most forcible representations; and that the masculine and indignant spirit of the Prophets led them to adopt the most energetic and descriptive expressions. No style is perhaps so highly figurative as that of the Prophets. Every object of nature and of art, which could furnish allusions, is explored with industry; every scene of creation, and every page of science, seems to have unfolded its rich varieties to the sacred writers, who, in the spirit of Eastern poetry, delight in every kind of metaphorical embellishment. Thus, by way of illustration,

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tion, it is obvious to remark, that earthly dignities and powers are symbolized by the celestial bodies ; the effects of moral evil are shown under the storms and convulsions of nature ; the pollutions of sin are represented by external impurities ; and the beneficial influence of righteousness is depicted by the serenity and confidence of peaceful life. This allegorical language being founded in ideas universally prevalent, and adhered to with invariable relation and regular analogy, has furnished great ornament and elegance to the sacred writings. Sometimes, however, the inspired penmen drew their allusions from local and temporary sources of metaphor ; from the peculiar scenery of their country ; from the idolatries of heathen nations ; from their own history and circumstances ; from the service of their temple, and the ceremonies of their religion ; from manners that have faded, and customs that have elapsed. Hence many
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appropriate beauties have vanished. Many descriptions and many representations, that must have had a solemn importance among the Jews, are now considered, from a change of circumstances, in a degraded point of view. Hence, likewise, here and there a shade of obscurity. In general, however, the language of Scripture, though highly sublime and beautiful, is easy and intelligible to all capacities^f.”

The course of Prophecy was guided by the light of previous Revelation, and thus a regular connection was preserved, which was itself a testimony to its truth. The Prophecies taken together form a connected series of the divine dispensations from nearly the beginning of the world to the end of time. Taken separately, they present detached scenes of what has been transacted, is now trans-

^f Gray, p. 351.

acting,

acting, and will hereafter take place upon the great theatre of the world, as far as they relate to the concerns of true religion. Many of these predictions are delivered with the greatest degree of accuracy, precision, and minuteness; and all of them respect one particular train of events, either directly or ultimately—many of them relate to one particular person, and to one only—and one particular period of time, and one only; but more contain a first and secondary reference to particular objects of a similar kind, at different points of time, which, far from rendering them of vague and uncertain signification, more fully establishes their title to our faith and admiration. Founded upon the basis of eternal truth, no human device can undermine, no human effort can overturn them. The declarations of Prophecy, considered with respect to their design, as well as their extent, are the most sublime that can be imagined—the most gracious for the
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Supreme Being to impart, and most beneficial for man to receive.—The seed of the woman is ordained to bruise the serpent's head, as soon as man had fallen from his original state of innocence and happiness.—Preparations are made for the Redeemer, and a more distinct prospect is given of his person, office, and dignity, as the fulness of time for his appearance approaches;—and the progress of his Religion—the sufferings and triumphs of his Church—and his conquest over Satan, and his attendants, sin and death, gradually extend to the confines of the world, and “finish the mystery of God.”—Such is the outline of the wonderful scheme of Prophecy! which is harmonious and complete in all its parts, and may be traced through almost every page of the Old and New Testaments.

It is scarcely possible to contemplate Prophecy as a regular system, without
perceiving

perceiving its direct tendency to prove the constant over-ruling providence of God, and the truth and certainty of divine Revelation, which must be considered as its most important use.—The evidence arising from Prophecy is a growing evidence.—The divine design, uniformly pursued through a series of successive generations, opens with a greater degree of clearness, in proportion to the lapse of time and the number of events.—An increase of age is an addition to its strength ; and the nearer we approach the point, towards which the dispensations of God unvaryingly tend, the more clearly shall we discern the wonderful regularity, consistency, and beauty of this stupendous plan for universal good.—Of the great use of Prophecies which have been fulfilled, as a direct and strong argument to convert unbelievers to Christianity, and to establish Christians in the Faith, we have the most ample proofs. Our Lord himself

self made very frequent appeals to Prophecy, as evidence of his divine mission ;—he referred the Jews to their own Scriptures, as most fully and clearly bearing witness of himself.—Upon them he grounded the necessity of his sufferings ;—upon them he settled the faith of the Disciples at Emmaus, and of the Apostles at Jerusalem. The same source supplied the eloquence of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the means with which Apollos “ mightily convinced the Jews.” This was a powerful instrument of persuasion in the succeeding ages of the Church, when used by the primitive apologists. Upon this topic were employed the zeal and diligence, not only of Justin Martyr, but Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. It would never have been so frequently employed, if it had not been well adapted to the desired end: and that it did most completely answer this end, by the conversion of unbelievers, is evident from the accounts of

Scripture,

Scripture, and the records of the primitive Church.—Prophecy keeps the attention of Christians alive to the truth and importance of their holy Religion—to its truth, because Prophecy and Christianity had one and the same origin, both being derived from the same Fountain of perfection;—it keeps them alive to its importance, because Prophecy shews that the Supreme Being has vouchsafed through a long succession of ages to prepare mankind, by gradual revelations of his will, for future blessings; and has proved, by sending chosen messengers to usher in this final dispensation, that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of Prophecy.”—It confirms the general belief of a God, and points out to a careless world the plain traces of his watchful providence.—It displays the counsels of inspiration incessantly directing the course of events, without violating the order of reason and of human action.—Such knowledge is too wonderful for us!

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such power is above our comprehension! But the *fact* is placed before our eyes.— We see, or may see, a regular train of Prophecies tending towards one *declared end*, accurately fulfilled and fulfilling amidst all the confusion and opposition of this tumultuous world: and we see that these Prophecies are clear, both in prediction and accomplishment, in proportion to their importance in fixing our belief in the providence of God, and in the great truths of divine Revelation.— Thus it appears, that the chief design of Prophecy is to bear constant witness to religious truth.—“To convince gainsayers of this truth,” is justly considered as its principal use. But it has another very important object, to which it well becomes us to pay attention, from motives of gratitude, as well as from fear of incurring the blame, which Scripture invariably imputes to those who neglect to take advantage of the light afforded them.—It is designed to protect be-
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lievers in the word of God from the dangers arising from the prevalent corruptions, errors, and vices of the age in which they live.—The due consideration of Prophecy will administer consolation amidst present distresses, and enliven faith and elevate hope, whilst passing through those dark depressing scenes, which, without this gracious aid, might lead through the intricacies of doubt to the gloom of despair.

That Prophecy was intended to be a particular guard to the Church in these latter days, as well as a general light to the world, we have, I think, abundant evidence : but as this view of the subject relates more particularly to the Second Part of this work, I shall only now observe, that we have the authority of our Lord himself to consider it as a duty to study the Prophecies, with a view to present and to future times, as well as for the purpose of confirming our faith
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by a retrospect of the past.—Our Saviour reproved his Disciples and the Jews for “not discerning the signs of the times” then present—commanded them to “search the Scriptures” for information concerning them, and to “watch” for the events which should fulfil the divine predictions.—He guarded his disciples from sharing in the impending distresses of their country, by express declarations concerning the *time* and *nature* of that day of vengeance, which they fully understood, and therefore avoided the danger—and he directed St. John to warn all succeeding generations of the trials to which his Church was to be subjected in the different ages of the world.

This Chapter has run to a greater length than could have been wished: but it is hoped, that the importance of its object will be a sufficient justification; and I shall conclude it with reminding

minding the reader, that the Prophecies, which will come under our consideration, are of that kind which may be called *direct*.—They relate immediately to particular persons, events, or revolutions; and cannot, without the most evident perversion of meaning, be understood in any other sense, or be explained in any other manner, than what is applicable to those events, persons, and revolutions, to which they have been constantly referred for their first and secondary accomplishment.

FIRST CLASS OF THE PROPHECIES,
WHICH FORM THE SUBJECT OF
THIS WORK.

PROPHECIES WHICH HAVE BEEN
FULFILLED.—DOWN TO THE SUB-
VERSION OF THE JEWISH GO-
VERNMENT.

I. The Promise made to Adam,—con-
sidered as a Prophecy of general salvation
by the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

II. The Promise to Abraham of a nu-
merous posterity from his son Isaac, who
were to become a great nation, distin-
guished from the rest of the world by
their religious polity, and to be the ap-
pointed guardians of the promises of
God, till the appearance of the Messiah;
who was to be born of the race of Isaac,
and in whom all the nations of the earth
were to be blessed.

III. The

III. The Promise of *another* Lawgiver made at the establishment of the *particular* dispensation of the Law by Moses;—considered as a renewal of the promise of *general* salvation.

IV. The Promises and Threats made by Moses to the Israelites, in case of obedience or disobedience to the divine Law,—considered as proving the constant superintending care of God over a people separated from the rest of the world, for the express purpose of preserving the knowledge of himself, and of his gracious intentions towards mankind.

V. The appointment of Cyrus to be the deliverer of the Jews, and the restorer of the Temple and City,—considered as designed to prove, that the captivity of the Jews was by the especial direction of the Almighty—intended as a punishment for their idolatry, to continue only for a definite term of years; as they were destined to preserve the promises,

and remain as a separate nation in their own land, till the coming of the Messiah.

VI. The destruction and desolate state of Babylon, compared with the denunciation of the Prophets during the time of its greatest splendor—considered as an awful example of the judgments of God upon the enemies of his people.

VII. The Promise of John the Baptist, the messenger or forerunner of the Messiah, given 400 years before his birth, being the last prediction of the last of the series of Prophets under the Mosaic dispensation.

VIII. The precise time fixed for the accomplishment of the promise of the Messiah predicted by Daniel 537 years before his birth, so very distinctly as to awaken a general expectation of his arrival, not only among the Jews, but all over the East, where a tradition prevailed relative to the appearance of some great personage,

personage, about the time of the advent of our Lord.

IX. The prophetic description of the Birth, Character, Mission, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Messiah, compared with his History, written by the Evangelists after his Ascension into heaven.

X. The destruction of the City and Temple of Jerusalem,—the dispersion of the Jewish people,—the total subversion of the Jewish government, religious and civil, foretold by Christ as to happen immediately *after* the establishment of the Christian religion, and having happened exactly according to his prediction—considered as the consequence of their rejection of the Lawgiver promised by Moses, and therefore as proving him to be the promised Messiah expected by the Jews ;—And the publication of the Gospel to the Gentiles previous to the

destruction of the Jewish polity, considered as proving Jesus to be the Messiah, “in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.”

SECOND CLASS.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE REIGN OF ANTICHRIST, AND THE REIGN AND FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE MESSIAH.

I. Prophecies concerning the establishment of the Papal Power, or Popery,—considered as the scourge of the Western Churches, in consequence of the corruptions of the Religion of Christ,—and as one branch of Antichrist.

II. Prophecies concerning the establishment of the Mahometan Power, or Mahometanism,—considered as the scourge of the Eastern Churches in consequence of the corruptions of the Religion of Christ,—and as another branch of Antichrist.

III. Pro-

III. Prophecies concerning Infidelity, —considered as particularly prevalent in the last and present centuries,—as a third branch of Antichrist, and as a rising power which has already made great progress in its work, as the scourge of Popery, or the Church of Rome, has effected a considerable change among the followers of Mahomet, and has enticed a multitude of Protestants to enlist under its banners.

IV. Prophecies concerning the general diffusion of the Gospel—the conversion of the Jews—the final triumph of our Lord, and the universal happiness of his glorious reign,—considered as the accomplishment of the original Promise made to Adam,—as the ultimate meaning of the prophetic descriptions of the kingdom of the Messiah, and as tending to reconcile the different opinions of Jews and Christians upon this subject.

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

*The Promise made to Adam after the Fall—
considered as a Prophecy of general Sal-
vation by the Messiah, the Redeemer of
the World.*

AS it is the fashion of the present day, to question the truth of the narrative of which this Prophecy forms a part, I must entreat the reader to place the weight of historic evidence against the force of ridicule, before he thinks himself at liberty to reject it as false.—Without any reference to the authority of inspiration for support, he will find the testimony of all antiquity more than a balance for the cavils of modern scepticism. If it
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were within the limits of this work, it would be easy to prove, that the earliest annals of the remotest ages—the various systems of theology among the most ancient nations—the voice of tradition, and the writings of philosophy, confirm the Mosaic history of the fall of man, the antiquity of sacrifices, the flood, and the general dispersion of mankind, beyond the possibility of doubt.—And if the *truth* of this narrative can be thus established by an impartial examination of such unconnected evidence, it can scarcely remain a question in the mind of any one, who considers the *impossibility* that Moses should obtain the knowledge of these facts by any human means, and their singular agreement with the principles of the Christian religion—whether this narrative was written by inspiration?—I may therefore consider the Divine authority of this narration, as standing firm upon a mass of external and internal evidence, the combined strength

of which has never yet been shaken; whatever may be the assertions of ignorance and enmity, or however plausibly the misrepresentations of some of the *parts* may seem to contradict its claim to our belief.

Notwithstanding the obscurity which hangs over these first pages of the Mosaic history, the great truths, which it concerns us to know, are clearly discernible. We may plainly see, that God had revealed himself to Adam by actual communications, previous to the forfeiture of his happiness. The blessing pronounced, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it^a”—the authority given, “Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowl of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth”—the *single* prohibition, “Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of

^a Genesis ch. ii.

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it"—and the awful denunciation of punishment in case of disobedience, "In the day that thou eatest, thou shalt surely die," sufficiently prove, that Adam was clearly informed of the existence of God, *from* whom himself and all things had received their being, and *to* whom himself and all things were consequently subject; and thus was furnished with the best guide and support to reason, and the strongest defence against the power of temptation.

This important truth, which is confirmed by the whole tenor of Scripture, and of early history, at once vindicates the justice and goodness of God, and displays the heinous nature of man's transgression. It teaches us to consider the *declared will of God*, as the most solid foundation of *moral virtue*; for if, in his original state of innocence and perfec-

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tion, man was not trusted to the dictates or deductions of his reason, it surely looks like extreme folly to build in this our fallen state upon the weak, uncertain ground of *general expediency*.—And when we are assured, that God manifested himself *as God* to the first of the human race, before guilt had corrupted his nature, and perverted his reason; we may assert, that this original Revelation of God to man, of his own existence, and of the relation, in which man stands to God, is also the foundation of all *religion* —By thus deriving our knowledge of the Deity *immediately* from the Deity himself—not only through the medium of his works, of which men know so little, and judge so ill—and tracing our knowledge of the divine will through a *series of consistent* prophecies, and instructions, and records; Faith, Reason, and History will unite to form that “triple cord, which shall never be broken” from the anchor of
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our Christian hope.—But I proceed to observe, that Adam confessed both his *knowledge* of the voice of God, when the consciousness of guilt made him try to avoid his presence, and his *fear* of the punishment, which had been *previously* threatened, when he said, “ I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid.” The intercourse therefore, which God had vouchsafed to hold with Adam in his state of innocence, and the *change*, which he experienced in himself on transgressing the command, enabled him to judge perfectly of the Divine authority of that gracious promise of final Redemption, which began the wonderful scheme of Prophecy, and founded the hope of immortality upon the basis of Revelation.

“ *And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the*
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the field. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel^b.”—

The language of this Prophecy is metaphorical; but the metaphors used in it are by no means of uncertain signification^c.—Taking the whole account of the fall, as it stands recorded in Scripture, it is clear that Satan, or the Evil Spirit, who assumed the form of a serpent,^d was the original cause of all the
guilt

^b Genesis iii. 14, 15.

^c Sherlock on the Prophecies, Dis. III.

^d St. Paul declares it was the purpose of the Gospel of Christ “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power Satan unto God.” Acts xxvi. 18. and in his Epistle to the Romans, xvi. 20. he refers to the promise made to Adam, “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” The same Apostle, 2 Corinth. xi. 14 favours the interpretation of Patrick (see his commentary on the third chapter of Genesis,

guilt and misery of man. “And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Immediately, therefore, B. C. does the justice of God pronounce his ^{4004.} doom. The seed of the woman, whom he had tempted to disobedience, was to be instrumental in executing his punishment—a punishment far more severe than that, which disobedience had brought upon mankind.—“*Because thou hast done this,—I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*”—Thus, “in the midst of wrath remembering mercy,” God was pleased to communicate to our first parents, in the sentence pronounced upon their enemy, such a promise as would mitigate the impending horrors

Genesis, proving the word *saraph* to mean both a *serpent* and an *angel*), “And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”—Eve might be thus “beguiled” by him, who was “a liar from the beginning.”

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of their own.—When they heard that the success of their adversary was not a complete victory over themselves, or their posterity ; but that although there was to be a contest for superiority, their posterity should finally prevail, some hope of restoration to the lost favour of their Creator must have penetrated the gloom of despair.—They had exchanged happiness, innocence, and life, for pain and sorrow, sin and death. But this Prophecy, while it opened the prospect of deliverance from “ the power of Satan, and of sin,” encouraged them to place their trust and confidence in God, who could alone effect it—it was at once an earnest of pardon, and a motive for exertion in their appointed warfare—it was the foundation of hope and gratitude—the incentive to penitence and obedience.

Thus the light of Prophecy was proportioned to the wants of our first parents,

rents, and was transmitted by them to their children, as a sacred treasure of consolation amidst the miseries, which their sin had entailed upon them, and as a security for the maintenance of religion, on which their future happiness depended.—By what methods God intended to effect this wonderful restoration to his favour, he did not at that time reveal*. This was the subject of subsequent

* Eve seems to have expected her first-born son would be the *promised seed*—the *Redeemer from death*, and the *Restorer of happiness*—the *Messiah*. She called him *Cain*—signifying *acquisition*, saying, “I have gotten a man from the Lord,” according to his promise. No reason is given for the name of Abel, because his parents did not place in him their hope of the promised seed, as they did in their first-born Cain; but to the son born after the death of Abel, and the rejection and banishment of Cain, Eve gave the name of *Seth*, signifying *appointed*; as she considered this son as *substituted* by God, to be the seed himself, or the seed from whom the promised Saviour of the world should come; for, whether the promise was to be fulfilled immediately,

or

subsequent Prophecies, delivered with progressive clearness, and more circumstantial

or at a remote distance of time, they were not informed by the Prophecy, nor was this declared for many succeeding generations. Lamech called the name of his son *Noah*, which signifies *rest*, or *refreshment after toil*, or *comfort*; "Because," said he, "this name shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands." It is to be observed, there was a general curse upon the earth for the sin of Adam, and some have thought a particular curse upon some part of it for the sin of Cain. Lamech foretells, that in the time of this son God would in great measure take them both off—that he should be the restorer of the world, after the flood predicted by Enoch (Enoch had named his son *Metushelah*—*when he dies the flood shall come*. See Bochart, l. ii. c. 13.)—that he should give *rest* from confusion and desolation, and that the earth should be blessed to his posterity.—Lamech therefore, with the prospect of these mighty changes before him, might look to this son for the *completion* of the promise made to Adam, or he might foresee that *from him* the promised deliverer should proceed; but that *a deliverer* from the miseries, which sin had brought

stantial detail. This, as well as all the series which followed, found its completion when the Son of God appeared "to destroy the works of the Devil," when "the head of the serpent was bruised" by the conquest of the powers of darkness, and the redemption of the world was effected by the sufferings of
 Christ;

brought upon the earth, was *expected*, appears very evident. It is perfectly consistent with the merciful dispensations of God's providence, to suppose that these early Patriarchs, who seem to have suffered great hardships from the curse upon the ground, were permitted to indulge the hope of a speedy accomplishment of this promise; God having been pleased to take Enoch to himself, about fifty-seven years after the death of Adam, to support and comfort mankind in their state of mortality, with the assurance of a better life in another world. And it is therefore probable, that Enoch was translated in some such visible manner as Elijah afterwards was, by a glorious appearance of the *Shechinah*, or *token of God's special presence*, from whence angels were sent to convey him up to heaven. See Patrick's Commentary.

Christ ; and when He, who was in the most proper and eminent sense “ the seed of the woman,” not only withstood the temptations of Satan, but “ cast out his evil spirits, and saw him as lightning fall from heaven.” Thus, as the guilt of Adam was transmitted to all his race, so was this most antient of the Prophecies, the harbinger of that atonement, which was to be made for it “ when the fulness of time was come,” and “ God sent into the world his Son made of a woman ;” that “ as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many were made righteous ;” and that “ as in Adam all die, so in Christ all might be made alive.”

That this commonly received interpretation is undoubtedly the true and antient interpretation of the Jewish Church before the coming of Christ, is clear from their commentaries on this
part

part of Scripture. They referred the fulfilment of this promise to Christ and to Satan, as plainly appears by the Targum of Onkelos, and the Targum of Jerusalem ^f. In the latter the paraphrase

^f Targum is a Chaldee word, and signifies a translation. It is in general appropriated by the Jews to the Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament. The first Targums were composed for the use of the common people, after their return from the Babylonish captivity. The Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch is the most antient now remaining. It is rather a translation than a paraphrase. It was antiently held in such high repute as to be read alternately in the synagogues with the sacred text. Next in purity of style and antiquity is the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel. It relates to the works of the Prophets. These Targums are allowed both by Jews and Christians to be as antient, if not more so, than the time of our Saviour. It is probable, that many of the glosses and interpretations of the more antient Versions, that were in use immediately after the Babylonish captivity, are inserted in them. Many other Prophecies, in addition to those above mentioned concerning the Messiah, are explained in these Targums, exactly as they are
by

phrase of the words addressed to the serpent is exactly as follows. “ It shall come to pass, when the sons of the woman shall execute the commands of the Law, then they shall wound thee in the head, and slay thee. But when the sons of the woman shall desert the commands of the Law, thou shalt bite them in the heel, and strike them in their weakness. There shall, however, be a remedy for the sons of the woman ; but for thee, the serpent, there shall be none. It shall come to pass that they shall wound each other in the heel, in the last days, in the days of Messiah the King s.”

In the sentence, pronounced by the

by Christians. In addition to the service which they render so evidently to the Christian cause, they are of great use, as they contribute to establish the genuineness of the Hebrew text. This subject is treated at large by Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 413, 426, &c.

^s Critici Sacri, tom. i. p. 79.

God of infinite justice and mercy upon our first parents, we see the groundwork and basis of all the Prophecies. It is the foundation of the glorious hope, in the fulfilment of which, every descendant of Adam has the strongest interest. It was the first gracious intimation of peace and deliverance, of redemption and happiness, given to fallen and miserable man—the earliest ray of “the Sun of righteousness” which in the last days illumined a guilty race, and spread its light over the world.

CLASS

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

*The Promises made to Abraham respecting
his Posterity and the Messiah.*

Y. W. 2083.
B. C. 1921.

ABRAHAM, it is well known, was the most distinguished of the Patriarchs, the venerable ancestor of the Israelites and Ismaelites, or, as they are now called, of the Jews and Arabs. His name is at this day celebrated throughout the East; and various writings and traditions, carefully preserved through the long lines of his posterity, confirm and illustrate the history, which we find recorded of him in the Old Testament. From this history, every part of which is interesting, and almost every circumstance prophetic,

tic,

tic, I have selected one of the most striking examples of the truth of prophecy, still open to the eyes of man, and which is also an important link in the chain of evidence, to prove its great design.

Abraham was the 10th in regular descent from Noah, through Shem, to whom the divine promise of peculiar protection and blessing had been given, apparently as the reward of filial piety, and in whose family the worship of the true God was preserved, amidst the idolatry of the other descendants of Noah^a. At the especial

^a Upon the remarkable prophecy concerning Shem, Ham, and Japhet, Gen. ix. the learned Joseph Mede observes, Book I. Dis. xlvi. "that there never yet hath been a son of Cham, who hath shaken a sceptre over the head of Japhet. Sem hath subdued Japhet, and Japhet hath subdued Sem, but Cham never subdued either. And this fate was it, which made Hannibal, a child of Canaan, cry out with the amazement of his soul, I acknowledge the fate of Carthage." (See Livy lib. xxvii. in fine.) In the Hebrew language Shem

especial call of the Almighty, Abraham left his native country Ur of the Chaldeans, in Mesopotamia, then beginning to be infected by idolatry. And it was in consequence of his faith in God, and ready obedience to his commands, that he was favoured with the promises we are now to consider.

As this Prophecy forms, as it were, the grand outline of the building, the foundation of which we have examined in the former Chapter, I shall endeavour to draw it out distinctly, for the inspection of the reader, before his attention is called to the circumstances of its completion.

“ Now the Lord had said unto Abram [before the death of his father Terah] Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house,

signifies *renowned*, Japhet *enlarged*, and Canaan *abject*, or *humbled*.

unto a land that I will shew thee : and I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee ; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him ; and Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran, where Terah his father died ^b.”—

Upon his first entering Canaan, “ the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give *this land*.” Some time after his return from Egypt, whither he had been led by a famine in the land of Canaan, with which he must by that time have been well acquainted, having passed through it from north to south, “ the Lord said unto Abraham, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art [probably the mountain on the east of Bethel, where

^b Genesis xii. 1—3.

he had pitched his tent, before he went into Egypt, and had built an altar unto the Lord] northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: *for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and unto thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it [fearless of danger from its inhabitants]: for I will give it unto thee^c.*"

—These promises were repeated after the victory obtained by Abraham over the Kings, and his refusal of the spoil offered him by "Melchisedeck the King of Salem, and Priest of the most high God." The time of the captivity in Egypt was exactly predicted; the limits of the land they were afterwards to possess, were exactly determined; and the nations they were to destroy, were enu-

^c Genesis xiii. 14—17.

merated.

merated. *Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years: and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge, and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full....Unto thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites*^d. Abraham had as yet no son to inherit these promises; but his faith in the word of God remained unshaken. When he was 99 years old [13 years after the birth of Ishmael] “the Lord appeared

^d Genesis xv. 13—21.

again unto him, and said unto him : I am the Almighty God : walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly^e....*Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham : for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and Kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.....*Sarah thy wife

^e Genesis xvii. 1—8.

shall bear thee a son indeed^f; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: *and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.* And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; *Behold I have blessed him—and will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac,* whom Sarah thy wife shall bear unto thee, at this set time in the next year.” And when Abraham, soon after the birth of Isaac, was hesitating whether he should comply with the request of Sarah, to send Ishmael away, “the Lord said unto Abraham...hearken unto her voice, for in Isaac shall thy seed be called;” ac-

^f In the early part of the history the sacred writer informs us that “Sarah was barren, she had no child”—The expression implies that she laboured under some natural defect. Both Abraham and Sarah were far advanced in age, when this promise was given; so that the birth of Isaac is represented in Scripture as a miraculous event. “The Lord visited Sarah as he had said...she bore Abraham a son....and Abraham was one hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born.” Gen. xvii. and xxi.

companying this command with an assurance of protection and blessing to his son Ishmael.—When it had pleased God to afford Abraham an opportunity of exhibiting the most eminent example of faith and obedience we can imagine in the power of man^s, these promises were renewed with yet greater solemnity, and more striking marks of approbation and favour. “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; because thou hast obeyed my voice^h.”

^s Abraham's trial may be supposed to be prophetic, even in the words, “God will provide for himself a victim.” Our Lord declares, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.” John viii. 56.

^h Genesis xxii. 16—18.

Little need be said in explanation of this prophecy—A numerous posterity to Abraham—a separation of the descendants of Isaac from the rest of the world—a preservation of the worship of the true God among this selected people—peculiar protection, direction, and blessing to be vouchsafed to them from “*their God*” for ever, and the glorious privilege of giving birth to the Saviour of the world, are clearly predicted.—These promises were renewed to Isaac after the death of Abraham, and to Jacob after he had obtained the blessing from his father Isaac, to which his brother Esau’s unworthy resignation of his birth-right had given him a claim; and they were certainly understood by these Patriarchs, as confirming the tradition they had received from their fathers, of the restoration of universal happiness, at some future period.

We are now to look for the fulfilment
 E 5 of

of this comprehensive Prophecy.—And here we may venture to appeal to every one at all acquainted with the subsequent history of the children of Abraham, whether his mind has not already recognized that history in these predictions? The value of such involuntary testimony to the truth and exactness of Prophecy is obvious; and if it be farther observed, that every succeeding prediction has its place in filling up this wonderful sketch of the Divine design, the strength, the harmony, and beauty of the whole, must irresistibly convince us, that it *is the work of God*.

In the histories of the Arabs, and of the Jews, we find ample proof in every age, that the promise of a numerous posterity to Abraham, has been most wonderfully fulfilled.

As most satisfactory evidence concerning the *Ishmaelitish* race of his descendants.

scendants, I shall cite a very extraordinary passage from an Historian, whose enmity to the cause of religion has led him to assert in one sentence, what the power of truth obliged him to absolutely deny in the next. His concessions as to *facts*, anxiously as he endeavours to ward off their effect upon every candid mind, by the supposition of causes wholly inadequate to account for them, sufficiently establish the *multitude*, the *antiquity*, and the *character* of this *literally* singular people—their *uninterrupted independence*, and their *unchanging manners*. And thus the truth and accuracy of this descriptive Prophecyⁱ is confirmed by the involuntary testimony of one of the most artful opponents to the truth of Revelation.

The *doubt* he has expressed relative to their *origin* is undeserving notice, as unsupported by argument or autho-

ⁱ Genesis xii. 16.

rity : but the reader who is inclined to examine this point, and to enter more fully into the subject of this Prophecy, will find it clearly and concisely stated by many writers, and particularly by Bishop Newton.

^k “The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives ; and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle, in favor of the posterity of Ismael. Some exceptions, that can neither be dissembled nor eluded, render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous : the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the Sultans of Egypt ^l, and

^k Gibbon's Roman History, vol. v. chap. 50. p. 178—194.

^l “It was subdued A. D. 1173, by a brother of the great Saladin, who founded a dynasty of Cuds or Ayoubites. See Guigne's Hist. des Huns, Tom. i. p. 425. D'Herbelot, p. 477.”

the Turks^m: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant; and the Roman province of Arabiaⁿ embraced the peculiar

^m “ By the lieutenant of Solyman I. A. D. 1538. and Selim II. 1568. See Cantemir’s Hist. of the Othman Empire, p. 201—221. The Pasha who resided at Saana commanded 21 beys, but *no revenue was ever remitted to the Porte*, and the Turks were expelled about the year 1630. Niebuhr, p. 167, 168.”

ⁿ “ Of the Roman province under the name of Arabia, and the third Palestine, the principal cities were Bosra and Petra, which dated their era from the year 105, when they were subdued by Palma, a lieutenant of Trajan. Dion Cassius, l. 68. Petra was the capital of the Nabathæans; whose name is derived from the eldest of the sons of Ismael. (Genes. xxv. 12. &c. with the Commentaries of Jerom, Le Clerc, and Calmet.) Justinian relinquished a palm country of ten days journey to the south of Ælah (Procop. de Bell. Persic. l. i. c. 19.), and the Romans maintained a centurion and a custom-house (Arrian in Periplo Maris Erythræi, p. 11. in Hudson tom. i.) at a place (λευκη κωμη, pagus albus Hawara) in the territory of Medina. (D’Anville Memoire sur l’Egypte, p. 243.) *These real possessions and*
some

liar wilderness, in which Ismael and his sons must have pitched their tents, in the face of their brethren.

Yet these exceptions are temporary and local; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies: the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia; the present Sovereign of the Turks may exercise the shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people, whom it is dangerous to provoke, and fruitless to attack. The obvious causes of their freedom are inscribed on the character and country of the Arabs.... Their spirit is free, their steps are unconfined, the desert is open, and the tribes and families are held together by a mutual and voluntary compact.... The separation of the Arabs from the rest of mankind has accustomed them to some naval inroads of Trajan (Peripl. p. 14, 15.) are magnified by history and medals into the Roman conquest of Arabia." Gibbon's Notes to the Decline and Fall, &c.—vol. v. p. 179.

confound the ideas of stranger and enemy.... They pretend, that in the division of the earth, the rich and fertile climates were assigned to the other branches of the human family, and that the posterity of the outlaw Ismael might recover, by fraud or force, the portion of inheritance, of which he had been unjustly deprived. According to Pliny the Arabian tribes are equally addicted to theft and merchandise: the caravans that traverse the desert are ransomed or pillaged: and their neighbours, since the remote times of Job and Sesostris, have been victims of their rapacious spirit.... Whatever may be the pedigree of the Arabs, their language is derived from the original stock, with the Hebrew, the Syriac, and Chaldean tongues.... The same hospitality, which was practised by Abraham, and celebrated by Homer, is still renewed in the camps of the Arabs.... The religion of the Arabs as well as of the Indians consisted in the worship of the sun, the moon, and stars.... In a remote period of antiquity, Sabianism was dif-

diffused over Asia, by *the science of the Chaldeans*, and the arms of the Assyrians. . . . *In the tradition of the creation, the deluge, and the patriarchs, they held a singular agreement with their Jewish captives.— They appealed to the secret books of Adam, Seth, and Enoch. . . . From Japan to Peru, the use of sacrifice has universally prevailed° The life of a man is the most precious oblation*

° There can hardly be a doubt that sacrifices were instituted by the direction of God himself. It cannot be supposed that Adam or Abel would have *presumed to kill* any creature, or could suppose the offering such a victim, or the shedding of blood (death being their allotted punishment, and what they must hold in abhorrence) would be acceptable to God, unless such a sacrifice had been specially appointed. It is not impossible from the Apostle's expression Heb. xi. 4. "Abel's sacrifice was made acceptable by faith;" that the design of this institution, and the necessity of the sacrifice, which was to redeem the world, was revealed at the same time; and this conjecture is strengthened by the similar tradition, which is proved, by the recently discovered Sanscrit writings, to have existed in the East, in India, in times coeval, if not prior, to the
time

oblation to deprecate a public calamity; the altars of Phenicia and Egypt, of Rome and Carthage, have been polluted with human gore. . . . The cruel practice was long preserved among the Arabs. . . . In the time of ignorance, the Arabs, like the Jews and Egyptians, abstained from the use of swine's flesh; they circumcised their children at the age of puberty^p; the same customs, without the censure or the precept of the Koran, have been silently transmitted to their posterity and profelytes."

The distinguished posterity of Isaac, the child of promise, exhibits a yet more striking example of the accurate

time of Moses. God testified his acceptance of the sacrifice, by fire from heaven, or (as is more probable during the times of the constant, or stated appearance of the Shechinah, or divine splendor of light, by which God manifested his especial presence) by a stream of flame from the visible glory of the Lord, which burnt up the sacrifice. See Patrick's Commentary upon Genesis, vol. i. c. iv.

^p Ismael was circumcised at this age.

fulfilment of this Prophecy. Jacob removed into Egypt with 66 persons: When Moses gave an account of the condition of the Israelites in Egypt, he declared, that after the death of Joseph “they were fruitful, and increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed mighty, and the land was filled with them.” At their departure from Egypt they amounted to 600,000 men able to bear arms, exclusive of old men, women, and children, so that the whole number may be computed at two millions⁹. During their journey to the promised land, Balaam the Prophet exclaimed, when summoned to a *High place*^r by Balak, “to curse him a people, who covered the face of the earth” 39 years after their departure from Egypt, “Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the num-

⁹ See Patrick's Commentary.

^r The High places mentioned in Scripture, were places set apart for religious worship. See Patrick's Comment. and Prideaux's Connection.

ber of the fourth part of Israel?" And Moses, remarking their increase with a reference to the promise made to Abraham, said, addressing himself to the people on a subsequent occasion, "Behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude."

When David in the pride of his heart numbered his people, his subjects fit to bear arms amounted to 1,300,000. Upon the dispersion of the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel, and the captivity of the people of Judah, numerous colonies were established in all parts of the East, from whence multitudes came annually to celebrate the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem. In the various countries in which the Apostles first preached the Gospel, they found synagogues, which had been for ages established^s.

^s See Philo, Josephus, Justin, Tacitus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, in confirmation of these accounts from Scripture.

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The vast numbers who were slain or taken prisoners by Titus, at the siege of Jerusalem, and of those afterwards destroyed in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian; the horrible massacres and persecutions, to which they have been subjected in almost every age since their dispersion; and the numbers, which struggling with peculiar hardship and oppression, in all the various countries wherein they are scattered, are supposed by some authors to be as great as during the time of their establishment in Palestine, at once declare the exact agreement of history with prophecy, and the superintending providence of God over “*the seed of Abraham—in their generations—forever.*”—The learned Basnage, who wrote a sequel to the history of Josephus, remarks, that there are grounds for computing at not less than three millions of people, those who are of Jewish extraction, and [as their own expression is] “are
wit.

witnesses of the Unity of God in all the nations of the world.”

The constant “separation of the descendants of Isaac from the rest of the world” is evident from the most cursory view of history, and the slightest acquaintance with the present state of the Jews. The means by which this distinction has been produced and preserved, and the end for which it was appointed, will appear in the course of our inquiry; and we should find upon examination, every circumstance of this distinction either immediately subservient to this great end, or resulting from the means necessary to preserve a perverse people from breaking down the wall of partition, which separated them from their idolatrous neighbours. But I must content myself with asserting—what cannot be denied—that the Jews, notwithstanding the varieties of times, circumstances, climates,

climates, and countries, through which they have passed in the course of 3288 years, have ever been, and are to this hour, distinctly different from every other people upon the face of the globe, in person, manners, laws, and religion.

The third point in the Prophecy, that “the worship of the true God should be preserved among this selected people,” is necessarily connected with the fourth, relating to “the peculiar protection, direction, and blessing, to be vouchsafed to them from their God,” and I shall briefly consider them together.—It is well known, not only from Scripture, but from the testimonies of Josephus, Cheremon, Manetho, and Sanchoniathon, that the reason assigned by the Hebrews to Pharoah for their request to go three days journey into the wilderness, was, that they might worship the Lord their God—the God of their fathers—That
soon

Soon after they had been rescued from their Egyptian bondage by a series of miracles, Moses established the law "with signs and wonders, and mighty deeds," which directs, even to the minutest circumstances, their civil polity, religious worship, and private conduct; and promises conditional blessings and threatens conditional punishments to obedience and disobedience, which, as we shall find hereafter, were invariably performed—That this people drove out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan (who had then filled up the measure of their iniquities) with signal marks of supernatural power, and continued there under signal marks of supernatural protection, till their sins exiled them for 70 years to Babylon—That there was a succession of Prophets from Moses to Malachi, who maintained the worship of the true God among a part of the nation, even when most ad-
dicted

dicted to idolatry, and foretold events *near* as well as *remote*, to prove the authenticity of their mission, and recall the infatuated people to the worship of the Lord Jehovah—and that since their return from the Babylonish captivity, this people, prone, as they had ever been before, to worship the Gods of the heathen, have never once departed from the worship of “*their God*,” and the observance of *their law*. Now considering the visible tokens of the Divine presence and protection, with which they were favoured, previous to the captivity, and that these were in a great measure withdrawn after the building of the second temple, which had neither the cloud and glory that overshadowed the Ark, nor the Urim and Thummim, by which the High Priest received an answer from God to the enquiries he was authorized to make, and that “no Prophet arose in Israel” for 400 years, i. e. from Malachi

lachi to John the Baptist; considering too, the difference of national circumstances, every thing in one case tending to preserve them in their own land, apart from every other people; and in the other, every thing tending to mingle them as slaves, outcasts, and traders—with the nations who have conquered them, and among whom they have dwelt and suffered, since their general dispersion;—the former prevalence of idolatry, and the latter inflexible adherence to their law, equally contradict all our notions of probability arising from human experience.

Where then shall we seek for an explanation of this uniform, this wonderful singularity of fate and character? It is written in this promise, “IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED.” To this people was assigned, as we have seen, the glorious privilege of giving birth to the Sa-
 F viour

viour of the world; and I trust the evidence, which will be produced as we proceed in this little work, will indubitably prove, that this Prophecy was clearly accomplished in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth—the Christ—the Son of God—whose name be blessed for ever!

With respect to the continuance of this wonderful distinction from the birth of the Messiah to the present hour, we must look to succeeding Prophets for as clear an explanation, as we can obtain from them, relative to events, which are not yet fulfilled. The everlasting covenant, which God was pleased to make with Abraham and to his seed for ever, to be their God, and to give them the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, would sufficiently account for this continued separation from the rest of the world; and this marked distinction might be considered as a sufficient pledge of the future accomplishment of this
and

and other prophecies, relative to the return of the Jews to their own land. But we are authorized to believe, that they are thus preserved to be yet further instrumental to the execution of the great design of universal salvation. And thus will this Prophecy appear to extend the peculiar covenant with the children of Abraham, to the final developement of the mysteries of God, concerning the present world. The consideration of this part of the subject must however be deferred to the second part of this work.

C L A S S I.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

*The Promise given by Moses of another
Lawgiver.*

Y. W. **T**HE Lord thy God will raise up unto
 25¹³. thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of
 B. C. thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye
 1491. shall hearken. According to all that thou
 desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in
 the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not
 hear again the voice of the Lord my God;
 neither let me see this great fire any more,
 that I die not. And the Lord said unto me,
 They have well said that which they have
 spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet
 from among their brethren, like unto thee;
 and will put my words in his mouth, and
 he

he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him^a.

It is supposed by some learned Christians, and by the Rabbis of the later ages, that Moses in these words intended to presignify the whole succession of Prophets, who after him arose among the Jews. The antient Jewish church understood the expressions at the conclusion of the Book of Deuteronomy, "And there arose not a Prophet like unto Moses," as immediately referring to the Messiah. Indeed this opinion was so firmly established, that we find the learned Josep and Akiba, two eminent Doctors of the Law, who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, expressly asserted, "that a Prophet like unto

^a Deut. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.

Moses, or one greater, must at some time arise; and that Messiah the King will be like unto him, or greater than he was^b." The former of these interpretations is not however inconsistent with the latter. The Prophecy *may* in its first and general sense point out a succession of Prophets, though in its principal and ultimate sense it points to the Messiah. But as *one* individual Prophet is clearly mentioned in the original Hebrew text, and as the constant interpretation of the early Jewish church refers the accomplishment of this Prophecy to the appearance of the Messiah, we might, I think, rest satisfied that this is the true meaning of the promise, if we had no other authority; and the evidence in favour of this interpretation will surely appear incontrovertible, when we further consider the particular, close, and striking resemblance which subsists between

^b Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 307.

Moses and Christ. St. Stephen and St. Peter declared that Jesus Christ was the Prophet foretold by Moses ; and our Lord himself appears to have had the passage before mentioned in view, when he said, “ If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.”

The resemblance between Moses and Christ is so very strong, that it is impossible to consider it fairly and carefully, without acknowledging that he must be *foretold*, where he is so well *described*.

The first great point of resemblance is, Moses was a lawgiver, and the mediator of a covenant between God and man : Christ was the mediator of a better covenant than that which was established by the sacrifice of bulls and goats. The one was mortal, the other divine ; the one performed a mediatorial

F 4

office

office that was temporary and transient; the other “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Other Prophets were only interpreters and enforcers of the Law, and in this respect were greatly inferior to Moses. This is of itself a sufficient proof, that a succession of Prophets could not be *solely* alluded to. The person who was to be raised up, could not be like Moses in a strict sense, unless he were a legislator—he must give a law to mankind, and consequently a more excellent law; for if the first had been perfect, as the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews argues, there could have been no room for a second. Christ was this legislator, who gave a law more perfect in its nature, more extensive in its application, and more glorious in its promises and rewards.

Other Prophets had revelations in dreams and visions—but Moses talked with God face to face. Christ spake that
which

which he had seen with the Father. Moses and Christ are the only persons recorded in sacred History, who had this *immediate* communication with God. Moses delivered his people from cruel oppression and heavy bondage—Christ from the far worse tyranny of Satan and sin. Moses contended with the magicians, and had the advantage over them so manifestly, that they could no longer withstand him, but were forced to acknowledge the divine power by which he was assisted—Christ ejected evil spirits, and received their acknowledgments, both of the dignity of his nature and the importance of his mission.

Moses assured the people whom he conducted, that if they would be obedient, they should enter into the happy land of Promise, which land was usually understood by the wiser Jews to be an emblem and a figure of that eternal and celestial kingdom, to which the

Messiah was to open an entrance—Christ brought life and immortality to light, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers^c.

Moses wrought a great variety of miracles, and in this particular the parallel is remarkable: since besides Christ “there arose not a Prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, and all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do.” Moses was not only a lawgiver, a prophet, and a worker of miracles, but a king and a priest. He is called king^d, and he had indeed, though not the pomp and the crown and the sceptre, yet the authority of a king, and was the supreme magistrate: and the office of priest he often exercised. In all these offices the resem-

^c Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. i. p. 200. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 156.

^d Deut. xxxiii. 5.

blance between Moses and Christ was striking and exact.

Moses fed the people miraculously in the wilderness—Christ with bread and with doctrine; and the manna which descended from heaven, and the loaves which Christ multiplied, were proper images of the spiritual food which the Saviour of the world bestowed upon his disciples.

Moses foretold the calamities that would befall his nation for their disobedience—Christ predicted the same events, fixed the precise time, and enlarged upon the previous and subsequent circumstances.

Moses chose and appointed 70 Elders to preside over the people—Christ chose the same number of Disciples. Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land which was to be conquered—Christ sent his

12 Apostles into the world, to subdue it by a more glorious and miraculous conquest. Moses interceded for transgressors, and caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God by lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness—Christ was himself lifted up, and was the atonement for the whole world.

Moses instituted the Passover when a lamb was sacrificed, none of whose bones were to be broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction—Christ was himself that Paschal Lamb. Moses had a very wicked and perverse generation committed to his care; and, to enable him to rule them, miraculous powers were given to him, and he used his utmost endeavours to make the people obedient to God, and to save them from ruin; but in vain: in the space of 40 years they all fell in the wilderness except two—Christ also was given
to

to a generation not less wicked and perverse; his instructions and his miracles were lost upon them; and in about the same space of time after they had rejected him, they were destroyed.

Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth—Christ was meek and lowly; mildness, patience, and resignation were conspicuous in all his actions; he submitted with the most perfect composure of mind to every indignity; when he was reviled, he answered not again, but resigned himself to him who judgeth rightly.

The people could not enter into the land of promise till Moses was dead—by the death of Christ “the kingdom of heaven was opened to believers.”

In the death of Moses and of Christ there is also a resemblance of some of the circumstances. Moses died in one sense
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for the iniquities of his people ; it was their rebellion, which was the occasion of it, which drew down the displeasure of God upon them and upon him : “ The Lord,” said Moses to them, “ was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou shalt not go in thither, but thou shalt die^c.” Moses therefore went up in the sight of the people to the top of Mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigour, “ when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated”—Christ suffered for the sins of men, and was led up in the presence of the people to Mount Calvary, where he died in the flower of his age, and when he was in his full natural strength. Neither Moses nor Christ, as far as we may collect from sacred History, were ever sick or felt any bodily decay or infirmity, which would have rendered them unfit for the toils they underwent. Their sufferings were of another kind.

^c Deut. i. 37.

As Moses a little before his death promised the people that God would raise them up a Prophet like unto him—so Christ, taking leave of his afflicted Disciples, told them, “I will not leave you comfortless; I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.”

Moses expressly declares, “that it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which the Prophet shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.” The Jews rejected Christ, and God rejected them. In the whole course of the history of the Jews there is no instance recorded, where, in the case of disobedience to the warnings or advice of any Prophet, such terrible calamities ensued, as those which followed the rejection of the Messiah. The overthrow of the Jewish empire, the destruction of so many Jews at the siege of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the surviving people, and the history of the Jews
down

down to the present day ;—calamities beyond measure and beyond example—fulfilled the Prophecy of Moses.

Is this similitude and correspondence in so many particulars the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a person who was so like to Moses as was Christ, and so like to Christ as was Moses. If we cannot find such an one, then have we found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, “ Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.”

The great design of this Prophecy seems to have been to intimate to the Jews, that at some future time some new lawgiver would arise, “ like unto Moses;” and consequently it must appear, that his Law was not to be of perpetual obligation, but was intended to be superseded by one that was to be of the greatest consequence to mankind;

as the Almighty announced its future promulgation, even at the time when he gave his express commands to his chosen people. The Law of Moses was confined to the children of Israel; the Law of Christ was universal, designed to illuminate every part of the earth, and to fulfil the promise originally made to Adam, and repeated to Abraham. The promise of another Lawgiver and Prophet was a continuation of the great chain of Prophecy, intended to keep in the view of the contemporaries of Moses and the succeeding generations, the assurance of the coming of the Messiah.

CLASS

C L A S S I.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

*The Fulfilment of the conditional Promises
and Threats pronounced by Moses to the
Israelites.*

Y. W. 2513.
B. C. 1491.

IF we consider Moses as a patriot, an historian, a philosopher, and a founder of a state, independently of his character as “a Prophet and a Teacher sent from God,” it will be acknowledged that he stands unrivalled in the annals of mankind. Of all lawgivers he was the most virtuous and the most sublime. In times of the most remote antiquity, when the grossest corruption of manners and the most irrational and cruel superstition prevailed in all the surrounding nations, this great Legislator arose to confirm his

his

his countrymen in the worship of the true God, and give them a rule of conduct, in which religious, moral, and civil duties were so intimately blended, as to preclude any attempt to separate them, and to which their descendants have continued to adhere for above 3200 years. His laws are transmitted perfect to the present age, whilst nothing remains of the productions of other legislators but a few fragments and the names of their authors. A great part of the inhabitants of the globe revere them, and have adopted them in many points into their own civil and religious institutions.

But it is not possible to account for the superior wisdom, the perfect consistency, and the singular fate of the laws of Moses, without the acknowledgment that he received them, by an especial revelation for an especial purpose, from God himself. The uninterrupted attachment

tachment indeed of the Jews, and the general veneration in which Moses and his laws have ever been held, have arisen from the persuasion, that this great Legislator was divinely inspired: a persuasion founded upon the sublime nature of his laws, the miracles he wrought to establish in his countrymen the belief of their divine origin, the solemn and tremendous sanctions which he prophetically annexed in confirmation of their divine authority, and the *fulfilment* of the conditional promises and threats to which every age has successively borne witness. This last circumstance may be considered as proving not only the divine mission of the Jewish Lawgiver, but as proving also the constant superintendance of God over the people he had chosen^a, to distinguish by this peculiar dis-

^a “The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not
set

dispensation according to the promise, which, as we have seen, was given to Abraham. To this point then we shall at present confine our attention.

Moses, after he had delivered particular instructions relative to political and religious duties, and had fixed the particular punishments and rewards which were best calculated to secure public order and domestic happiness, pronounced in the most explicit terms to the Israelites, that prosperity, peace, and abundance should be the certain national rewards of their piety and observance of the Divine commands; and that misery and war, attended with every public calamity and private affliction, should be the certain national punishments of their

set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you." Deut. vii. 6, 7, 8. See likewise 1 Cor. i. 27. James ii. 5.

dis-

disobedience. Predictions in general do not include such an alternative; since they have commonly a view to one fixed train of events, and to no other. But we here find a twofold condition proposed, and the event was to be determined by the manner in which the Israelites should act—"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you," said their great Lawgiver, "that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:" The sanctions thus annexed to the objects of choice, are peculiar to the laws of Moses. Other Lawgivers had a view only to the immediate punishment of any individual subject;—the Hebrew Legislator goes much farther; his declarations are extended to the future fortunes of his people in their collective and national capacity. He marks out the precise mode in which they were afterwards to be happy or miserable, and the particular
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circumstances in which they were to be involved in the course of a long series of ages. No legislator, who was not inspired, could possibly have anticipated a history so singular, so faithful, and so minutely accurate.

A scene of wonder is here opened to us; for in the awful declarations of this Prophecy we read the complete account of the most remarkable events in the history of the Jews. It is a recital, that agrees exactly with their subsequent situations, at various periods of time extremely remote from the date of the Prophecy—a recital that has no reference or application whatever to any other people. No nation was so peculiarly circumstanced, no one was so distinguished from the rest of mankind by remarkable laws, government, customs, and character. The conclusion therefore is obvious, that at the time when Moses flourished, he could not have the example

ample

ample of any other nation before his eyes, whose vicissitudes of fortune furnished any grounds for the conditions he proposed to his countrymen. The uncommon fate of an uncommon nation is pronounced at a distance of time, when no reach of human foresight, no calculation of chances could possibly extend to the successive and distant events of their history.

A commentary on this Prophecy of Moses is the history of the Jews brought down from their establishment in Canaan to the present times. Referring to authentic writers^b for more particular completions of its other parts, we hasten, in conformity to the confined plan of this work, to select some of those great events, and most striking circumstances,

^b Patrick's Commentary on the Bible, vol. iii. Parker's Commentary, vol. v. p. 551. Jackson's Works, vol. i. p. 92.

which

which seem to have pressed most forcibly upon the mind of the great Lawgiver of Israel, and which are illustrations of the following declarations^c.

Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, and the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my

^c Deut. xxviii. 4, 5, 11, 12. Levit. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.

commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

When the Israelites obtained possession of the promised land, these assurances were realized; they found the soil favourable to the production of the various fruits which are common in the East, and well adapted to pasturage and agriculture. As their numbers were considerable, they found it necessary to practise every method by which the various fruits of the earth could be best cultivated, and produced in the greatest abundance. Their labours were crowned with success. Such was the plenty of corn in one period of their history, that they were not only furnished with a sufficient

ficient quantity for their own consumption, but were enabled to supply the Tyrians with it. The woods and aromatic plants were favourable to the increase of bees, and olives thrived in the dry parts of Judea; and hence they were well supplied with honey and oil. The sides of the mountains and rocks were covered with vines. The gardens produced melons, gourds, cucumbers, and figs, which were at that time, and now continue to be, the favourite fruits of the natives of that warm climate. The palm-trees that grew around the green pastures of Jericho, yielded a considerable profit; and the balsam of Gilead, the most valuable shrub of the kind, was famous for its delicious fragrance, and medical uses.

The cultivation of the soil was favoured by the peculiar nature of the institutions of Moses. To each Israelite was allotted his portion of arable land,

at the time of the first settlement under Joshua. And to each district were assigned common pastures for the support of their numerous flocks and herds. The express laws of the Jubilee revoked all alienations of estates every fifty years. Every inhabitant was therefore confined to his patrimony, and laboured to improve it with the greatest diligence. In the reign of David the Jews were nearly upon an equality with respect to the possession of land. If, by the increase of a family, it was necessary to divide an estate into shares, the smallness of each of them was compensated by breeding large flocks of cattle in the common pastures.

Thus were opened to the children of Israel the peculiar sources of affluence promised in their laws. They were not taught to expect gold, silver, or the benefits of commerce. What they were promised they received in abundance;

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—the luxuriant produce of fruits and vegetables, of sheep and oxen, of the olive grounds and the pastures, of the harvest and the vintage^d.

This representation of the improved state of Judea in its most flourishing time, is collected partly from the Bible itself, and partly from the works of Strabo, Josephus, Hecatæus and Tacitus, who possessed the best means of accurate information, and fully confirm the accounts of the sacred writers^e.

And

^d Some medals are still remaining as old as the time of the Maccabees, upon which are to be seen ears of corn and measures, to show the fertility of the country, and the honour in which agriculture was held. History of the Israelites, by Fleury, p. 42, 221, &c. 1 Maccab. xiv. 8, &c.—Josephus says, that in his time the country round Jerusalem was well planted, and interspersed with gardens for more than eleven miles round the city. Newcombe on the Conduct of our Lord, p. 227.

Deut. xxviii. 1. 7. 12. 8, 9, 10.

^e Josephus contra Apion. lib. 1. sect. 22. Ta-

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto: and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep

citi Hist. lib. 5. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 228, &c. Strabo, p. 763, 749. Edit. Paris, 1620.

the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee.

For the fulfilment of these promises we may look to many of the most interesting parts of the Old Testament. The time of the government of the first Judges was remarkable for the happiness of the Jewish people. The promises made in the wilderness relative to the rains, the harvests, the sabbath-day, and the seventh year of rest to the land, were then fulfilled: whilst the people, impressed with the novelty of these especial blessings of divine Providence, walked with little interruption in the commandments of their God. The reigns both of David and Solomon were distinguished by much prosperity and happiness. The government was then firmly established, the Jews were victorious over their ene-

B. C.
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B. C.
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mies, enjoyed a long continuation of peace, and great temporal comforts attended their obedience to the divine commands. The building of the Temple was a signal indication of the piety of its founder, and the favour of the Almighty. The subjects of Solomon lived in security, reaping the fruits of plenty and opulence, and every one reposed under his own vine, and his own fig-tree: this was the most splendid era of Jewish glory. The riches and magnificence of the court of Solomon were superior to those of all the kings of the earth. His renown was extended to distant countries; “His name went far unto the islands, and for his peace he was beloved^f.” He was celebrated, and still continues to be so, among the inhabitants of the East, for his power, his wisdom, his extensive territories, and his

^f 1 Kings iv. 5, 6, &c. Eccclus. xlvii. 16. Univ. Hist. vol. i. p. 802. Calmet's Dict. Art. Solomon.

supposed control over evil spirits and the elements. They still give his name, as a title of the highest honour, to their most powerful sovereigns; and they believe that this illustrious monarch of Israel possessed an universal empire.

The reign of Jehoshaphat^s, who was remarkable for his zealous attachment to the religion of his ancestors, was likewise attended with various blessings. Hezekiah^h, preserved in a wonderful manner from the invasion of the Assyrians, and under such circumstances as had a peculiar reference to a deliverance from dangers foretold by Moses, united with his people in the observance of the Divine commands with the most fervent devotion. During this auspicious period the Jews enjoyed the festivity and

^s 2 Chron. xvii.

^h 2 Kings xviii, xix. Isaiah xxxvi, xxxvii.

the grateful repose of the sabbatical and jubilee yearsⁱ.

Josiah,

ⁱ The sabbatical year was celebrated every seventh year, when the land was left without culture. At that time slaves were set at liberty, debts were remitted, and every one regained the inheritance that had been alienated. Its observance was appointed by God to preserve the remembrance of the creation of the world, to enforce the acknowledgment of his sovereign authority over all things, and particularly over the land of Canaan, which he had given to the Hebrews by delivering up the fruits of their fields to the poor and the stranger. *Exod. xxiii. 10. Levit. xxv. 2, 3, &c Calmet, vol. ii. p. 569.*

The jubilee year was the fiftieth year which happened after seven weeks of years, or seven times seven years. *Levit. xxv. 10.* The proclamation of this happy season was made by the priests and people, who resorted to the Temple in a grand procession, attended with every circumstance of pomp and festivity. Its commencement was celebrated with the greatest demonstrations of joy. Several privileges belonged to this, which did not belong

to

Josiah, emphatically styled the good, by his profound humility and exemplary piety,

to the sabbatical year, and the latter had likewise some small advantages over the former. The sabbatical year annulled debts, which the jubilee did not; but the jubilee restored slaves to their liberty, and lands to their original owners: besides, a restitution of lands was made immediately upon the beginning of the jubilee—whereas in the sabbatical year, the debts were not discharged till the end of the year. The estates which had been purchased, or given, were returned to their old masters; those which came by right of succession, continued with those who enjoyed them; contracts of sale, wherein a certain number of years was expressed, subsisted during all those years, notwithstanding the approach of the jubilee. But it annulled absolute and unlimited contracts. It was the principal design of its institution, to prevent the destruction of the partition of lands, that was made by Joshua, and the confusion of tribes and families. After the Babylonish captivity, these points could no longer be attended to—many who returned into their native country, settled as they could; and a number of families, perhaps whole tribes, continued in the place of their captivity. Archbishop Usher places the first jubilee observed after the promulgation of

piety, suspended through a reign of more than 30 years, the evils that were hovering over his idolatrous subjects^k. It is expressly mentioned in this period of the Jewish history, that they were destined to suffer the calamities denounced in their laws, against their departure from the worship of Jehovah.

B. C.
536. The unhappy times of the Babylonish captivity were succeeded by that auspicious epoch of Jewish happiness, when Cyrus, the most renowned monarch^l of the East, permitted the Jews to return from captivity, in order to rebuild their City and Temple. The lively pictures, which the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel^m had previously drawn of the happy days that should succeed the captivity, were

the Law, Y. W. 2609. B. C. 1595. Calmet, vol. i. p. 888.

^k 2 Kings xvii, xxiii.—2 Chron. xxxiv, xxxv.

^l Ezra i, ii, &c.

^m Isaiah xlv. 28. Ezek. xxxvi. 10, &c.

realized;

realized; and the people returning to their own country, enjoyed the blessings of liberty and affluence. “The men were multiplied, the cities were inhabited, and the wastes were builded; and man and beast were multiplied, and they were settled after their old estates. The desolate land was tilled, and the ruined cities were inhabited; and the Heathen knew that God was the Lord.”

In a subsequent period Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, established many colonies of Jews in his dominions^a; caused the sacred books of the Law and the Prophets to be translated into the Greek language, and sent magnificent presents to the Temple at Jerusalem.

B. C.
246.

In the latter times of the Jewish government a remnant only, as had been

^a Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 7, &c.

fore.

foretold by the Prophets, remained faithful to their God amidst the general depravity of the people—among these the family of the Maccabees^o were most distinguished for valour, as well as for piety; and by them Jerusalem was recovered from the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Temple was purified, its worship restored, and tranquillity reestablished. But the majority of the people pursued their progress in wickedness, till the cup of their iniquity was filled by the rejection and the crucifixion of the Messiah.

The great Lawgiver of the Jews, when he proceeds to the alternative of the case just considered, is much more severe in pronouncing denunciations of punishment; much more circumstantial in his detail of public calamity, private distress, and affliction both of mind and

^o Calmet, vol. i. p. 891. Maccab. b. i, ii. Prieux, vol. ii. p. 136, 145, &c.

body,

body, than he was in the detail of rewards; as if he had foreseen, that the disobedience of the Jews would far exceed their observance of his laws^p.

But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee: The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not, eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway. And thou shalt become an astonish-

^p The promises of plenty, prosperity, and temporal good are limited to *fourteen* verses; the threats of destruction and war are extended to *fifty-four*. Deut. xxviii. 15. 28. 43. 33. 37. 49. 50, 51, 52. 63, 64.

ment,

ment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation, whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young. And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you: so the Lord shall rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land
whither

whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other Gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stones.

Such are some of the most striking parts of the menacing prediction. And if the professed brevity of this work did not prohibit the detail, it would be easy to go through their whole history, and point out the different seasons at which their idolatry and disobedience brought upon them different manifestations of the divine displeasure, in all the ordinary calamities of war and famine⁹. But it will suffice for the object of this Chapter, to advert only to those remarkable instances when the Jews were conquered by the Assyrians and the Romans; be-

⁹ 1 Chron. xxi. 12. Ruth i. 1. 1 Sam. xxi. 1.

² Kings vi. 25. xxv. 3. 1 Kings xx. 1. 2 Kings xvii. 6.

cause

cause it is plain that the Prophecy principally relates to the invasion of a formidable enemy, and the disasters peculiar to the sieges of great and populous cities. The Jews, as we see above, are threatened, in case of their rebellion, with captivity : and the character and remote situation of the hostile nations by whom they were to be taken captive, are particularly described. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and other Prophets, treading in the steps of Moses, but nearer the event, repeat many striking parts of the Prediction, and expressly declare the cause of the impending danger to be, the prevailing idolatry of their countrymen, and their attachment to the prophane rites and customs of the Heathen. Accordingly, in the reign of Zedekiah, a nation [the Assyrian] agreeing with the inspired descriptions, invade Judea, and, fulfilling the Prophecy, pillage and burn the Temple, put persons of both sexes and all ages to the sword, and carry away
mul-

multitudes as slaves to Babylon. But fulfilled as the Prophecy may seem to have been, and actually was, in this and many instances, the Jews were not therefore released from the power of it. Temporal blessings when obedient, and temporal punishments when disobedient, are the terms of the Jewish covenant; in force from the time of the Egyptian bondage, to the present hour. When by their repentance, which the Divine prescience foresaw, when 70 years were fixed as the limits of their punishment, the Babylonian captivity was terminated, their return to their own land (where for a time they enjoyed signal marks of the Divine favour was not followed by any long continued obedience; and the threats and even the terms of the Prophecy again attached upon them. Their adversity accordingly increased by degrees, as their wickedness became more and more general, and more and more enormous. After the death of Alexander,

ander,

ander, their country suffered severely by the wars which ensued, between the princes who divided the Grecian Empire. Ptolemy Soter took possession of Jerusalem on the sabbath-day, and carried a great number of the Jews captive into Egypt : and the peace and the privileges they enjoyed during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, were followed by the extreme miseries inflicted by the execrable tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes. From that period of their history, excepting only the brilliant scene of happiness, which the piety and valour of the Maccabees were allowed to open, for this once more repentant people, we see them immersed in crimes, confusion, and tumult ; constantly subject to the Syrian, the Egyptian, or the Roman power ; and continually a prey to plunder, slavery, and massacre, till, by rejecting the Messiah, they became liable to the punishment denounced by Moses against those who should “ not hearken

to the Prophet whom the Lord should raise up, like unto him ;” and in consequence have suffered, and are still suffering, the severest chastisement a nation can undergo.

To the accounts of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and the entire conquest of Judea by the Romans, and the state in which the country and the people have ever since continued, are we then to look, for the most minute and complete accomplishment of these awful predictions ; and here we shall indeed find the agreement between facts and Prophecies most strikingly exact. The remote situation, the unknown language, the “fierce countenance,” and the martial character of the Romans are strongly marked in this Prophetic description, as if designed to distinguish them from the Asiatic conquerors of the Jews^r.

They

^r Several Jewish Expositors are cited by Patrick and Parker, in their Commentaries upon this Prophecy.

They came from far—from the end of the earth. Not only the distance of Rome from Jerusalem is thus marked, but this intimation of remoteness is peculiarly applicable to the generals and armies by whom Judea was conquered. In order to carry on war against that country, Pompey left a very distant province, and Vespasian and Julius Severus conducted their troops from the island of Britain. Adrian and Trajan, by whom they were finally subdued, were natives of the distant country of Spain.

They came as swift as the eagle flieth. The rapid flight of the most ravenous bird of

phesy. Manasseh ben Israel, a very learned and acute Rabbi of the Spanish Synagogue in Amsterdam, who flourished in the beginning of the last century, is of opinion, that at the forty-ninth verse commences the Prophecy of the calamities under the second Temple. He refers all the latter part of the chapter to the invasion of the Romans, and the misfortunes that followed it. Parker's Commentary, vol. v. p. 576.

prey

prey may be considered as a just emblem of a destroying army; and the eagle as peculiarly applicable to the Roman standard. But the allusion has also an exact historical propriety; as Titus^s, being eager to return to Rome, pressed on the siege of Jerusalem with the greatest vigour and alacrity, and preferred an attack by storm to the slow operations of a blockade.

A nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand. The tongue of the Romans the Jews did not understand. There certainly was some similarity in the languages of the Jews and the Assyrians; but previous to the invasion of Judea by Pompey, there had been no intercourse between the Jews and the Romans: and the Jews were utterly ignorant of the dialects of the western troops, which composed the Roman armies.

^s Tacit. Hist. lib. v.

That

That the Romans were *a nation of a fierce countenance*, remarkable for their manly and stern features, and intrepid aspect, might be easily proved at large, from the representations of sculptors and medallists, and the descriptions of their poets and historians. And their haughty and inflexible character is no less forcibly delineated in the following sentence: *Which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.* Besides the reference to the indiscriminate slaughter and cruel treatment of the Jews of all ages, both at and after the siege of Jerusalem.

It ought to be observed, that at the time when Moses uttered this Prophecy, the children of Israel, so far from having any fenced cities, had no fixed place of residence, but were travelling through the wilderness. The threats of their Lawgiver could not therefore result from any circumstances of their situation at that particular time: yet still he describes

scribes every circumstance in the same manner as Josephus, who wrote the account of these wars nearly 1500 years after the prediction.

The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness. At the time when Jerusalem was closely pressed on all sides by the Roman armies, three factions, influenced by the most bitter rancour and malice, carried on a civil war within its walls. In proportion as safety became more improbable, their audacity, or rather their infatuation, increased, and extended to all ranks, from the rulers to the common people. All were equally blind to their dreadful situation; and internal discord conspired with their ferocious enemies to hurry them down the precipice of destruction. Josephus^t, after relating that the besieged, elated by a repulse given to the Romans, persuaded

^t De Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 8.

themselves that the city could never be taken, adds, in a strain of observation that throws the strongest light upon the Prophecy of Moses, that God had so darkened their minds with extreme blindness, on account of their numerous transgressions, that they did not calculate the superior force of the Romans, or reflect on the dreadful effects of a stubborn opposition to their arms.

The regular train of the Prophetical declarations leads us to a remarkable threat in the speech of Moses, most striking for its singularity; most shocking for its opposition to the feelings of nature; and most improbable ever to happen^u.

And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons, and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the straitness where-

^u Deut. xxviii. 53. 56, 57.

with thine enemies shall distress thee.....The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter, and towards her children, which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

The fact nevertheless did happen; first in Samaria, the capital of the idolatrous tribes, when besieged by Benhadad, king of Assyria: a second time in Jerusalem, when besieged by Nebuchadnezzar: and Josephus particularly relates a third instance of the fulfilment of this Prediction during the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans*. Throwing a veil over a story at which humanity

* Josephus, lib. vi. c. 3.

shudders, we shall only observe, that the rank of the lady mentioned by Josephus, agrees precisely with prophetic description¹; that the fact predicted is perhaps the only one of the kind in history so circumstantially recorded²; and that these facts happening in conformity to the Prophecy, are perhaps the only ones of the kind in the history of the world.

And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy and to bring you to nought; and ye

¹ Deut. xxviii. 56. The word translated "delicate," may be better rendered, voluptuous, luxurious, accustomed to a life of pleasure and indulgence, העבנה. The root is עבג pleasure, joy. Deut. xxviii. 54. Jer. vi. 2.

² The Historian deploras the cruel deed, as a most flagrant violation of nature; such as was never perpetrated by Greek or Barbarian; and such as he expressly declares he would not have related, if there had not been many credible witnesses of its truth. Josephus, lib. vi. c. 3. sect. 8.

shall

shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Romans expelled the inhabitants that survived the siege of Jerusalem, and forcibly carried away great numbers of them into different countries. When the Emperor Hadrian built a city upon the foundation of Jerusalem, he called it by the new name of Elia Capitolina; and forbade the Jews, on pain of death, to approach within sight of it. From that time to the present day, Judea has been subject to foreign Princes; and few Jews, and those of low condition who live as strangers in their own country, are to be found among its inhabitants^a. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is acknowledged to have been far more fatal in its effects, than any preceding event of the kind, that ever happened

^a See the Travels of Sandys, who visited the Holy Land in the last century; and Volney, who accurately surveyed it in 1783; and the accounts of preceding historians and travellers.

to the Jews : it was therefore, in the opinion of both Jews and Christians, the memorable occasion, in which the Prophecy was accomplished in its fullest extent and most signal manner, and it was followed by a train of the most remarkable consequences^b.

And if ye will not hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins ; your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And I will bring the land into desolation ; and your enemies, which dwell therein, shall be astonished at it. And your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Such has been the state of the Holy Land ever since the judgments of God have fallen upon the Jews. After their expulsion by Titus, it was left a prey to neglect and barrenness. During the crusades, it was ravaged by the hostile ar-

^b Levit. xxvi. 18. 20. 32, 33. Deut. xxix. 22. 24, 25.

mies of Saracens and Christians : and since it became a province of the Ottoman Empire, it has exhibited the same scene of desolation. The face of the country, once so populous and flourishing, has for many ages presented nothing to the eye of the traveller, but mean villages, thinly inhabited, ruins of ancient buildings, fields uncultivated, naked hills, and barren rocks.

Judging by the present forlorn and desolate state of Palestine, the infidel is disposed to call in question the truth of the Scripture history. He maintains, that it never could have been a fruitful land, and that the people who settled in it, exhausted by the oppressive labor of its cultivation, could not enjoy, in any fair sense, the *rest* promised them in the wilderness. But of all objections this is surely the most futile. The present state of the islands in the Archipelago, of Greece, and of the country around

H 4

Rome,

Rome, formerly so fertile and productive, contradicts all accounts of their ancient condition, as much as the present state of Judea can possibly do. Travelers agree that a great part of the rocky soil of Judea is composed of Tufa; and volcanic matter is known to be fertile in the highest degree, after a certain period of time when it has gathered soil^c. Is it incredible that the children of Israel found the land of Canaan in the highly fertile state, known to be common upon the sides of volcanic mountains, where the ashes, that have fallen during an eruption, in a series of years have been mellowed into a productive mould? and that the earthquakes and various convulsions of nature that happened at and since the destruction of Jerusalem (many of which are recorded in history) have entirely changed the face of the coun-

^c Tufa is a name given to stone formed of volcanic ashes, concreted with other species, in which argil prevails.

try?—

try?—Maunderell's description greatly strengthens the supposition of such changes. "Not far from Bethany^d you arrive at the mountainous desert in which our blessed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil; a most miserable, dry, barren place it is, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned upwards." And Volney^e, an intelligent traveller, but an enemy both to the religion of Moses and of Christ, has the candour to confess, that the present fertility of some parts of Syria corresponds with the account given of it in the Old Testament. In the course of his accurate survey, he remarked that an almost total neglect of agriculture, and of every improvement of the soil, prevailed throughout Palestine. If the land be unfruitful, it ra-

^d Maunderell's Travels, p. 79.

^e Voyages en Syrie, tom. ii. p. 302. 330. 338, &c.

ther proceeds from the nature of the despotic government, which checks industry, than the want of a prolific power in the earth. Patches of soil that formerly crowned them, were to be seen in the last century upon the rocky mountains of Palestine; and the rows of stones could clearly be traced, that were used to support the soil upon the slope of the hills. Upon the sides of Libanus there are the remains of antient cultivation; a circumstance which confirms the accounts given by writers of the antient state of the country as to its fertility and population. We may form some opinion of the success which crowned the labours of the antient inhabitants of Judea, by observing the present state of Switzerland, and some parts of Spain, where the industrious natives reap a harvest from the rocky soil, and obtain wine, corn, and fruits, from spots which, if left to themselves, would be the most unproductive.

It

It is difficult however, for the inhabitants of this and many other nations in Europe, where the attention is so much confined to manufactures, arts, and commerce, to calculate the produce and effects of agriculture, when the labour of a whole people is directed to it, as was the case of the Israelites, when settled in the land of Canaan. It is then evident, that the accounts given in Scripture, and by antient profane writers, of the former fertility of the country, are perfectly reconcileable with its present appearance, from the operation of merely natural causes. But as a miraculous interruption or suspension of the course of nature is in perfect conformity with the divine dispensations towards the children of Abraham, we must admit that Providence may have made the once fruitful land of Judea barren, “for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein.” If this desolation had not been ordained as a punishment of the Jews, a

H 6

warning

warning to other nations, and a fulfilment of Prophecy ; a variety of natural causes might have conspired (as we have already observed) to restore its original fruitfulness : so that its present state can no way be brought as an objection to the truth of Scripture. Whether indeed we consider the present state of Judea, as owing to natural or supernatural causes, it equally fulfils the Prophecy concerning it.

Can we, however, avoid ascribing its barren and deserted condition to a more than ordinary interposition of the Deity, when we find even the sentiments arising in the minds of inquisitive travellers, while contemplating with *astonishment* the scene of desolation presented in the Holy Land, described with such inimitable accuracy and animation^f? *The stranger that shall come from*

^f Deut. xxix. 22.

a far land shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto the land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then shall men say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, and he rooted them out of their land in anger, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.

The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other. That the Jews are dispersed all over the world, is a fact to which the various accounts of historians and travellers give the fullest confirmation. In the countries of the East they abound; they are settled in various parts of Africa and America, and in the kingdoms of Europe^s. They exist as a conspicuous
mo-

^s One million is supposed to be resident in the various provinces of Turkey—three hundred thousand in Persia, India, and China—and seventeen
hundred

monument of Prophetical truth and Divine justice, to every nation in which they dwell.

And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly. No proofs drawn from history are wanted to illustrate this part of the Prophecy. After the long series of oppression and misery to which they have been exposed, ever since their dispersion ; after having been given up to fire, famine, and pestilence ; to massacres and persecutions, as the objects of hatred and malice to every people among whom they have settled, they are so far

hundred thousand in Christendom, Africa, and America. Their outward condition and circumstances are generally tolerable, except in Portugal and Spain. Brown's Harmony of Scripture Prophecies, p. 322. This statement is confirmed by other writers. See the Jews' Letters to Voltaire, vol. ii. p. 175.

from

from being destroyed, that they not only exist as a separate people, but in many places form opulent and flourishing communities.

And thou shalt be an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. This has literally been the case at all times, since their national punishment has been inflicted. The very name of a Jew has been used as a term of peculiar reproach and infamy. Their avarice, usury, and insensibility have long been in a manner proverbial; being considered as more peculiarly marking their character, than that of any other people in the world.

Reflexions upon the common course of events would *naturally* have induced Moses to draw conclusions very different from the fate which we have seen he denounced against the Israelites, in case of disobedience. It was natural to suppose,
that,

that, if they were reduced to subjection, it would be by some neighbouring power, with whom, and with whose appearance, they were well acquainted; that if they were driven from their country, another people would possess it, and the land itself preserve the same character and description as before; and if they were completely dispersed and carried captives into foreign countries, that they would suffer the common lot of other captive nations, and be blended with their conquerors; and in time entirely lose their peculiar name and character. The fact, as well as the prediction, has been directly the reverse. According to the Prophetic words of the inspired writers, they have been twice enslaved by distant and unknown nations; their land has become not only desolate, but barren; and they exist at this day dispersed among all nations, but not destroyed; the living, conspicuous, and well-known witnesses of the truth of Prophecy. The
long

long period of three thousand years has passed since this Prophecy was delivered, which the lapse of ages, and the revolutions of human events, have only served to confirm and to fulfil.

CLASS

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

The Fulfilment of the Prophecy, that Cyrus was to be the Conqueror of Babylon, and the Deliverer of the Jews.

THE Prophecy which is next to be the subject of our attention, is in itself a peculiar one: clear and explicit in its language; important in its reference to the great design for which the Jews were distinguished from the rest of the world; and an epitome of some of the most signal events recorded in antient history. It was delivered by Isaiiah, according to the shortest computation, more than an

hun-

Isaiiah delivered the Prophecy,
Y. W.
3292.
B. C.
712.

hundred years^a before the birth of the elder Cyrus; and represents the Almighty as calling upon him expressly by his name as the future deliverer of his people from their allotted captivity; and as the mighty conqueror of nations, led on by the Omnipotent Ruler of the universe, to execute his sovereign will, while unconscious of guidance or assistance in the rapidity and extent of his victories—it minutely describes the siege of Babylon and the conquest of the Assyrian Empire; and distinctly affirms that Cyrus shall issue a decree for the rebuilding Jerusalem, and publish to the Gentile nations the greatness and the power of the God of Israel—the Lord of the whole earth^b.

Cyrus
was born
Y. W.
3405.
B. C.
599.

Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and

^a Josephus places this Prophecy two hundred and ten years before the birth of Cyrus. Critici Sacri, tom. iv. p. 5190.

^b Isaiah xlv. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked

crooked places straight : I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron : and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name : I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me : I girded thee, though thou hast not known me : that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me : I am the Lord, and there is none else.

Concerning the application of the name, which it may be observed, is *twice* mentioned, no cavil can be raised, or doubt entertained. The Greek and Latin vary very little, either in orthography or pronounciation from the Hebrew text, and the antient Chaldee Paraphrase; and
in

in the various editions of the Hebrew Bible it is uniformly found to be the same^c. At the time when this Prophecy was delivered, the Assyrian Empire had reached the summit of its glory; and the Medes and Persians, although making some advances towards the establishment of a rival power in Asia, were, in comparison, very inconsiderable. The final union of these kingdoms, which effected the conquest of Assyria was occasioned by a circumstance, to which, from the extreme distance of time at which Isaiah prophesied, no human foresight could possibly look forward. Cambyses King of Persia married Mandane the daughter of Astyages king of the Medes, and the offspring of that alliance was the renowned Cyrus. When appointed general of the confederate forces

^c See the Hebrew text and the Chaldee Paraphrase, Waltoni Polyglot. vol. iii. p. 120. Vitringa, tom. ii. p. 491. Critici Sacri, tom. iv. p. 5190. Poli Synopsis Critic. tom. iii. p. 430.

of the East, by his uncle Cyaxares, who is called in the book of Daniel, Darius the Median, he extended his conquests from the Egean Sea to the Euphrates^d. He derived much of his success, as the antient writers inform us, from being the first to establish the use of cavalry in the Persian army. *His people rode upon horses^e*. An assembly of great nations, as the Prophets had likewise foretold, came up against Babylon. It was the only place that for any considerable time resisted the attacks of Cyrus and his allies. *They set themselves in array against her, because she had sinned against the Lord—a standard was set up in the land—the nations were prepared*

^d Newton, vol. i. p. 276.

^e Jerem. l. 42. Xenophon mentions at large the great attention paid by Cyrus to the training his cavalry—a species of military force totally unknown in Persia before his time. To the superiority of his horsemen, he was chiefly indebted for his victory over Cræsus; and the numerous troops of them which he led to the siege of Babylon, are particularly described. Cyropæd. lib. i. lib. iv. p. 366. lib. vii. p. 632, 669. Edit. Zeunii.
against

against her^f—the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; [the Armenians, Phrygians, and other neighbouring nations;] and they appointed a captain against her.

The vast dimensions of the celebrated capital of the East; the loftiness and strength of its walls and towers; its riches; the number of its inhabitants, and the ample means of their subsistence, in case of a tedious siege, supplied by large and cultivated fields inclosed within the city, inspired Belshazzar and his subjects with the greatest confidence. Presuming that they could hold out against the most furious assaults, or the most tedious blockade of the enemy, they derided the operations of the Persians, and scoffed at their hostile attempts. *The mighty men of Babylon forebore to fight—they remained in their holds.*

Cyrus was employed for two years;

^f Jerem. li. 27, 30, &c.

first,

first, in an attempt to take the city by storm; and next, in endeavouring to compel the Assyrians to surrender, by cutting off all foreign assistance. At length, tired with making these ineffectual attempts, Cyrus put a stratagem in execution, which rendered him master of the place. By the efforts of his numerous army, he turned the course of the Euphrates into the spacious reservoir which Nitocris, the mother of Belshazzar, had caused to be dug to receive its waters while a stupendous bridge was building; and through the bed of the river he opened a passage for his forces into the midst of the city. *The deep was dry, and the rivers were dried up: a snare was laid for thee; thou wert taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware.*

He entered it in the night, when the inhabitants were celebrating a great and general feast, with every circumstance of conviviality and riot. *They prepared a*
I
table;

table; they watched in the watch-tower; they eat and drank. They made their feasts, and their princes were made drunken.

The hand-writing was seen by the astonished Belshazzar upon the wall of his palace; but *the astrologers^f stood up, and could not save him from those things that were come upon him.*—The gates of the city, composed of solid brass, that led from the river to the streets, were carelessly left open. “If the gates had not been left open,” says Herodotus, “the Persians would have been shut up in the bed of the river and taken as in a net, and all destroyed.” Alarmed by the tumult occasioned by the approach of the invaders, Belshazzar ordered the gates of his palace to be opened, and sent persons to enquire into the cause. *The Lord opened before Cyrus the two-leaved gates, and the gates were not shut. One messenger ran to meet another, to*

^f Isaiah xlvii. 13.

shew the King of Babylon that his city was taken at one end. The troops of Cyrus seized the advantage, and rushing in, slew the monarch, and quickly gained complete possession of the city. Therefore evil came upon her, she did not know from whence it arose ; mischief fell upon her, and desolation came upon her suddenly, which she did not know. Her young men fell in the streets, and all her men of war were cut off in that day.—

The treasures taken by the conquerors were immense, as Babylon was the magazine of all the spoils of Judea, as well as of the other rich provinces of the East. Chaldea was for a spoil, all that spoiled her were satisfied. A sword was upon her treasures, and they were robbed. Here Cræsus gave an exact account of his riches, and surrendered all his vast possessions to Cyrus. Thus *the treasures of darkness, and hidden treasure of secret*

1 2 places

places were given to him by the God of Israel, who called him by his name^s.

Soon after the taking of Babylon, Cyrus published a Decree, acknowledging that “the Lord God of heaven had given him all the kingdoms of the earth^h,” and had appointed him to build the

^s Bossuet's Universal History, p. 442, 443. Prideaux, vol. i. p. 92, 93. Uffer Annales, tom. i. p. 144. Xenophon's Cyropedia, lib. vii. Herodoti lib. i. c. 190, 191. Jerem. l. li. 32, 36, &c. Dan. v. Berosus quoted by Josephus contra Apion. lib. i. c. 20. Eusebii Præp. Evang. l. ix. c. 40.

^h Xenophon gives the following list of the nations conquered by Cyrus. The Syrians, Assyrians, Arabians, Cappadocians, both the Phrygians, Lydians, Carians, Phœnicians, and Babylonians. He moreover reigned over the Bactrians, Indians, Cilicians, the Sacæ, Paphlagones, and Mariandyni. Cyrop. lib. i. p. 4.

“Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who

is

the Temple at Jerusalem; and *therefore* commanding all the people of Israel “to go up to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.” Josephusⁱ says, that Cyrus was shewn the Prophecy of Isaiah, wherein his name was expressly mentioned. It is probable that Daniel, who had obtained the highest reputation in the court of Babylon for his piety, and extraordinary wisdom, had not only shewn to the king the Prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, but had related to

is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.” 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23.

“Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia; The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.” Ezra i. 2, 3.

ⁱ Josephus, Ant. Jud. lib. xi. c. 1.

him the wonderful history of the people, “for whose sake he had been girded” with the sword of victory. It is evident from the remarkable words of the Decree (“he is the God”) that the mind of Cyrus was sufficiently enlightened to understand, that there was but one Supreme God—*He* whom the Jews worshipped, and who spake in those holy books which were shewn him; though the opinions and habits, which prevailed in the Heathen world concerning the different gods which presided over different nations, might induce him to consider a species of inferior worship as allowable. The 70 years, predicted by the Prophets for the continuance of the captivity, were now accomplished. The captives were set free, and the precious vessels of gold and of silver, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, and had placed in the house of his gods, were restored by the munificent conqueror

queror of the East, to the people whom he sent to their own land, by the especial direction of *their God*.

Thus did Cyrus, “the shepherd of the Lord, subdue nations before him, and perform all the pleasure of the Lord,” by whom he had been named more than 100 years before his birth, as the instrument which should execute the designs of his Providence. Exactly at the time, and exactly in the manner predicted, he conquered the vast Assyrian Empire, and restored the people of Israel to their own land, where they again *inhabited Jerusalem, built the cities of Judah, and raised up the decayed places thereof. The house of God was builded and the daily sacrifices were renewed.*

Thus were the people re-established in their own land at the expiration of the allotted punishment for the transgression of that Law, which was ordained to con-

tinue till the Lord should raise up a Prophet “like unto Moses.” And thus the partial dispersion of the people destined to preserve the promises of God, became the means of spreading the knowledge of the most High among the nations of the East, preparatory to the coming of the Messiah, to whom all nations were to be gathered.

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

The Destruction and desolate State of Babylon considered as an awful Example of the Judgments of God upon the Enemies of his People.

THE Prophets point out various reasons, on account of which the Assyrians were made the signal objects of divine displeasure. Nebuchadnezzar was remarkable for excessive pride, and the most gross and intolerant idolatry, notwithstanding the certain information he received from his Jewish captives concerning the true God. Belshazzar his successor, equally well acquainted with the true religion, and a witness of the

15

awful

awful punishment which had been inflicted upon Nebuchadnezzar, preferred his false deities to Jehovah, the God of Israel, and profaned at his riotous feasts the consecrated vessels of the Temple. The Babylonians were marked by blind superstition, practised various magical arts, and confided in the pretended discoveries of judicial astrology. Their vices far exceeded their credulity and their folly. They indulged in excessive luxury, were avaricious and arrogant, and oppressed the surrounding nations with excessive tyranny. Their cruelty was in a peculiar manner directed against the Jews. In their invasion of Judea, they laid the country waste, put both old and young to the sword, profaned the Temple, and detained all whom they led away captives in a state of ~~the~~ most rigid bondage. For these reasons, the denunciations of Divine vengeance were pronounced with particular severity against them.

We

We have seen the city of Babylon taken, and the “chosen people of God” delivered from bondage by Cyrus, “according to the sure word of Prophecy.” We shall now survey this Metropolis of the World as it stood at the summit of its greatness, and follow it to the gulph of oblivion, from whence Prophecy and History recall its existence.

According to the most authentic accounts that have come down to us, Babylon contained the astonishing space of sixty miles, and was adorned in every part with gardens, palaces, and temples. Around it were extended walls of stupendous height and thickness, composed of large bricks cemented with bitumen, that by time acquired a solidity harder than stone. One hundred gates of solid brass commanded the approaches to the city; two hundred and fifty towers of vast dimensions and elevation were
16 placed

placed at equal distances along the walls. The buildings most remarkable for size and magnificence were, the bridge erected over the Euphrates, the spacious palaces of the Kings, and the ancient temple of Belus, composed of eight towers, rising one above another, and diminishing in proportion to their prodigious elevation. Such were the majestic edifices of this extensive and populous capital of the Assyrian Empire; which, at a distance, to use the comparison of ancient writers, had the appearance of lofty mountains. They were calculated to brave the fiercest attacks of hostile power, and to withstand the ravages of remote ages.

The lofty terms in which Babylon is described in Scripture, corresponds with the account of profane writers. It is called by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, “the golden city,” “the glory of kingdoms,”

doms," "abundant in treasures," and "the praise of the whole earth^a." Berosus, Herodotus, Strabo, and Diodorus Siculus, some of the most antient and most authentic writers, represent it as "the most glorious metropolis upon which the sun ever shone, and rank it high among the wonders of the ancient world." At the precise time when it was rising to this state of grandeur, when the dominion of its sovereigns was spreading over all the surrounding provinces, and power, opulence and prosperity combined to ensure the long continuance of its empire and glory, Isaiah thus pronounced its total ruin^b.

And

^a Isaiah xlvii. 5. xiv. 4. Jer. li. 41, &c. Gouguet's Origin of Laws. Prideaux, vol. i. p. 75. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 276, &c.

^b Isaiah xiii. 19, 20, 21, 22. xiv. 23. For a more full anticipation of the destruction of Babylon, see Isaiah xiii, xiv, xxi, xlvii. In chap. xiii. the Medes, then an inconsiderable people, are brought forward as the great agents in the overthrow

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged... I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep

throw of the Assyrian Monarchy. Chap. xiv. contains the triumph of the various nations of the earth over the fallen King of Babylon. This description, consisting of the most bold and striking images, is truly sublime. See Lowth on Isaiah, xxi, xlvii.

it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts.

A series of ages was necessary to give this Prophecy its full accomplishment. And if we carefully follow the stream of history, we shall find that a series of ages has completely verified the awful menace of the Prophet.

The conquests of Cyrus extinguished the glory of the Assyrian empire, and the splendor of Babylon was eclipsed by the removal of the seat of government to Susa in Persia. The waters of the Euphrates were never restored to their proper channel, from the new course which Cyrus had given them to facilitate his entrance into the city. *A drought^c was upon her waters, and they were dried up.* By their stagnation the whole country became unwholesome, and assumed the form, and communicated the effects, of an extensive and pestilential morass. *The*

^c Jerem. l. 38, &c.

sea came up upon Babylon; she was covered with the multitude of the waves thereof^d. The immense slaughter of the inhabitants of the city was an additional cause of its decline and ruin. *All her men of war were cut off*. To punish the inhabitants for an insurrection, Darius Hyftaspes, King of Persia, demolished the gates, reduced the height of the walls, and lessened the number of the citizens. Alexander the Great, indeed, formed the design of making it the seat of his empire; but death put a sudden stop to his intention. The rival city of Seleucia, sometimes called by the name of Babylon, and erected upon the neigh-

^d The sacred writers frequently use the word *sea* in a limited sense; they give it to great rivers, which, in consequence of their inundations, appear like seas. The country around Babylon which was watered by the Euphrates, is called the *desart of the sea*, Isaiah xxi. 1. Jer. li. 36. The same name is given to a lake. The Sea of Galilee is strictly the Lake of Galilee. Compare Matt. iv. 18, viii. 32. with John vi. 1, 18.

bouring

bouring banks of the Tigris, gradually drew away its inhabitants; and the city of Ctesiphon, afterwards built by the Persian Kings, who succeeded the Macedonian empire, completed its ruin. Herodotus, the most antient of the Greek historians, who visited Babylon about a century and a half after the time of Cyrus, mentions, that even at that period the walls were in a great degree decayed^e. Strabo, the accurate Geographer, who flourished in the reign of Augustus, six centuries after the conquests of Cyrus, relates, that a great part of the city, once so splendid and populous, was then a mere desert. Even then *her foundations were fallen, and her walls were thrown*

^e The walls of Babylon were built partly of brick and bitumen, and partly of brick alone. The bricks were made upon the spot, and hardened in the sun. When a wall of this sort comes to be out of repair, and is neglected, in no long course of ages it must be totally destroyed by the heavy rains, and at length washed away, and reduced to its native earth. Lowth's Isaiah, p. 95. Notes.

down.

down. Pausanias, a celebrated Greek traveller and author, who flourished in the third century after Christ, records, that of “ Babylon, the greatest city that the sun ever shone upon, nothing remained but some of its walls.” Jerom, an eminent Father of the Church, in the following century saw it when reduced to ruins, and remarked, that the part of the walls which remained, served only as an inclosure for a royal park. Benjamin of Tudela, a learned Jew, in his Journal, written more than seven centuries ago, has recorded, that “ Babylon was then laid waste, but that some remains might be traced of the royal palace of the antient Kings. Persons feared to approach too near to this spot, as it was infested by serpents and other venemous animals.” *The wild beasts of the desert laid there, and the houses were full of doleful creatures.* From the accounts of more modern travellers, it appears that the traces of this once magnificent city
are

are become less and less visible. Rauwolf, a German, who travelled at the close of the sixteenth century, relates, that some parts of what he supposed to be the celebrated Tower of Belus, remained ruinous, low, and full of poisonous animals. Petrus Vallensis, a noble Roman, reported at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that a huge pile of ruins remained upon the same spot, and within fifty or sixty paces were traced some foundations of buildings. Succeeding travellers have asserted, that even the ruins were so much decayed as to leave very slight traces of the situation of the city. *Every one that goeth by is astonished to behold her that was queen among nations, now a wilderness, a dry [or barren] land, and a desert^f. The daughter of Babylon has long sat in dust; there has been no throne for the queen of the Chaldeans. She has not been inhabited from generation to*

^f Jer. l. 13, &c.

generation, except by the wild beasts. The Almighty has executed his awful purpose declared by the mouth of his holy Prophets. *This great city has been swept with the besom of destruction,* and hardly a memorial of it remains but in history, in the denunciations of the Prophetic writers, and in the accounts of their accomplishment.

The truth and perspicuity of these Prophecies concerning Cyrus and Babylon, and the corresponding historical facts, are so well known and so generally acknowledged, that a short statement of the principal circumstances has been deemed sufficient. Many other particulars relating to the siege of Babylon, the time and manner of its reduction, and the various nations that joined in the *confederacy* against it, are mentioned by the Prophets, and confirmed with equal exactness by both sacred and profane historians. But, as the subject of the preceding

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ing is closely connected with that of the present Chapter, I shall beg permission to consider them together.

It may be remarked, that Cyrus, the generous deliverer of the Jewish people, was equally celebrated in profane and in sacred history for his eminent virtues and extensive conquests. He was at once *the shepherd of the Lord* to gather his flock into their fold; and *the sword of his vengeance* against an impious nation, who had filled up the measure of their iniquities. The apostasy and wickedness of the children of Israel required especial correction; but to prove to them and to the world, that they still were under his peculiar care (as destined to fulfil the gracious designs of his Providence) and subjected to the power of an idolatrous nation by the *express appointment* of their God, and *not* by what is called the chance of war, or the superior force of the Assyrians, it pleased
 God

God to declare by his servants the Prophets, while his people dwelt in peace and safety, previous even to the threats of the King of Babylon, the *name of the nation* by whom their city and temple were to be destroyed, and themselves conquered and carried away captive—the *time* when this event was to take place—the *term of years* during which their captivity was to last—the *name* of their deliverer, *Cyrus*, by whose authority they should be restored to their own land at the appointed time, with signal marks of favour, allowed to rebuild Jerusalem, and afterwards to enjoy a period of security and happiness. And, notwithstanding the high improbability that a people so long and so perversely addicted to idolatry, should renounce the worship of idols, in a city where every enticement must have been offered; at a time too, when they *seemed* to be forsaken by their God, and when many of the visible demonstrations of his presence

were

were withdrawn—these people, it was also declared, should remain for ever free from the sin for which they had so severely suffered; and faithful to the Law, which, after their residence in the capital of Asiatic luxury and vice, it must have been more difficult to obey.

Is it possible to doubt this people's conviction of the Divine authority of the Law of Moses, and the Divine inspiration of their Prophets? Can any rational ground be assigned for this conviction, except the continuity of positive evidence?

Cyrus, who was thus to “proclaim liberty to the captive,” and to “break their bonds in sunder,” was also announced as the “scourge” of their oppressors. He was to “take the city of Babylon,” and to “cast down the throne of the Chaldees.” The mighty conqueror of the East was to “give glory
to

to the God" of the obscure and captive children "of Israel," for the victories and the dominions he had obtained by his arms ; and to "publish among the Gentile nations, the greatness and the power of the Lord Jehovah," whose name, from the success of the Babylonians against his chosen people, they had ignorantly blasphemed, and levelled with the imaginary deities of the numerous kingdoms, which had fallen victims to Assyrian tyranny.

Could any thing but absolute conviction of the truth of the wonderful history of the Jews, and demonstrative evidence of the accurate fulfilment of the Prophetic word of their God, have induced the enlightened Cyrus to send forth an edict for such a purpose to the nations, who would probably esteem it as derogatory to his own glory ?

The fate of Babylon was distinctly pronounced at the same distance of time,
and

and the causes of her exemplary punishment particularly explained as a warning to all generations, who are solemnly called upon to *remember* both the Prophecy and the judgment against the city which had impiously “striven against the Lord:”—“Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from antient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”

“Sit thou silent^f, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for thou shalt be no more called the lady of kingdoms. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, which destroyest the whole earth, for thou art proud against the Lord, against the Holy

^f Isaiah xlvii. 5. x. 5, &c.

One of Israel. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and *given* them into thine hand, O *Af-syrian, the rod of mine anger: howbeit thou meanest not so, nor doth thine heart think so, but it is in thine heart to de-stroy, and cut off nations not a few—*thou sayest, Are not my princes altogether kings—shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?—Thou didst show my people no mercy, upon the antient hast thou very heavily laid the yoke, and thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever—Thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, **N**one seeth me: *thy wisdom, and thy knowledge it hath per-verted thee, and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me—*therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off: and de-solation shall come upon thee *suddenly,*
which

which thou shalt not know—Thou didst not lay these things to heart, neither didst thou remember the latter end of it—Wherefore it shall come to pass, that *when* the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks; for he saith, *By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent—Shall the ax boast itself against him that beareth therewith?*—Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the fighting which she was the cause of have I made to cease. Repence her according to her work—because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his Temple—the day of the Lord is at hand, a day cruel with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land desolate; behold I will punish the King of Babylon, as I have punished the King of Assyria [in the destruction of Nineveh] I will cut off from Babylon the

name and the remnant, from generation to generation shall it lay waste."

What a description is this of the Prescience, the Omnipotence, the retributive Justice, and the over-ruling Providence of God, directing all things, even the opposing springs of human action, to execute the uniform design of his unchanging will! Can the best wrought veil of Metaphysics obscure these radiant characters of truth? Can the utmost strength or art of infidelity prevent their indelible impression on the mind of unsophisticated man, when thus united with the power of *Facts*?

CLASS

C L A S S I.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

The appearance of the Messiah according to the precise Time predicted by Daniel 537 Years before his Birth.

DANIEL was favoured with many revelations of the Divine will, and supported by the Divine power in a very remarkable manner. He was honoured with the first distinctions in the court of Persia, and his piety and his wisdom were equally conspicuous. In one point he differs from all other Prophets, and becomes an object of attention peculiarly interesting to us ; for to him was communicated the exact *time* when the

Messiah would appear: and he likewise predicted the *time* of many of the principal events which were to take place after the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, with such accuracy, as to run parallel with the Revelation of St. John, and extend to the end of the world. In the following Prophecy we shall find the exact time of the manifestation of the Messiah, clearly determined*.

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the

* Daniel ix. 24, 25, 26, 27.

Street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

The leading circumstances to be considered in examining the accomplishment of this prediction, are, the completion of the time specified, and the events connected with it. All agree that these 70 weeks are weeks of years, that is, every day in the week is reckoned as a year, which makes the whole number

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amount to 490 years. This computation is not unexampled in profane authors^b, and is used elsewhere in Scripture. It is used in reckoning the years of the jubilee^c—the time of sojourning in the wilderness^d, and in the Prophecy of Ezekiel^e. These 70 weeks commence in the Jewish month Nisan, or March, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, King of Persia, in the year of the world 3547, as is clearly shown by many accurate Chronologists, and proved at large by the learned Prideaux, in his *Connection of the History of the Old and New Testament with Profane History*^f. This was the distinguished

^b See Apthorpe's *Dissertations*.

^c Levit. xxv. 28.

^d Numb. xiv. 34.

^e Ezek. iv. 5, 6.

^f Prideaux, vol. i. p. 208. Bossuet, p. 228. Smith's *Summary View*, p. 165. Usser *Annales*, tom. i. p. 195. tom. ii. p. 568. Josephi *Antiq. Jud.* l. xi. c. 5. Gray's *Key to the Old Testament*, p. 414.

guished year and month in which Ezra, the Leader of the Jews, obtained a commission for his return to Jerusalem, in order to restore the government of that city and the service of the Temple. And the 70 weeks were completed in the month Nisan in the year of the world 4037. This was the ever memorable year and month, when Jesus Christ, the Messiah, closed his Divine mission, and suffered death upon the cross.

It is evident that various events are predicted by Daniel in this remarkable Prophecy. *The Messiah shall be cut off—The people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary—Desolations are determined, and the sacrifice and the oblation shall cease for the overspreading of abominations.*

Now there are no occurrences in the

p. 414. Mede's Works, p. 857. Calmet's Dict. vol. i. p. 398.

Jewish history, to which these circumstances can be at all applied except to the crucifixion of Christ—the final destruction of the City and Temple of Jerusalem, and the desolation of Judea by the Romans. But to those great events the words of the Prophecy apply with such singular exactness, that they give a very energetic and lively description of them. And it may be farther observed, that this Prophecy very plainly delineates the spiritual purposes of the Gospel: for, at the completion of this great epoch of the 70 weeks, it is determined *to make reconciliation for iniquity—to bring in everlasting righteousness—and to seal up the vision and the Prophecy.*—Thus pointing out Christ, the Messiah, who died as the propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world—rose again to certify that he had made atonement for sin, and had established the promised, “kingdom of everlasting righteousness and life”—and *sealed up the vision and the prophecy* by
his

his final revelation of the Divine will to his beloved disciple St. John, the *last* of the Prophets.

Three different periods of time are included within the 70 weeks, and each of them is connected with an important event—The *seven weeks* to restore and rebuild Jerusalem—the *threescore and two weeks* in addition to these seven weeks, after which the Messiah was to be cut off:—and *the midst of the week*, in which he should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The first series of seven weeks, being 49 years, relates to the restoration of the Jews, and the rebuilding Jerusalem, begun by Ezra, and completed by Nehemiah. The opposition which the Jews, when returned from captivity, met with from the Samaritans, prolonged this sacred work exactly for that period of time, and the obstacles with which they had to contend, fully confirmed the words of the Prophet, that *the*

K 6 *wall*

wall should be built in troublous times. The threescore and two weeks that succeeded added to the foregoing seven, or in other words 483 years, bring the calculation of time down to the year 4739 of the Julian period, which was the exact year in which the Gospel began to be announced to the world—John the Baptist having been sent to prepare the Jews for its reception by his public ministry, which continued for the space of three years and a half. Its commencement at this period is accurately marked by the words of Christ, who said expressly, “the Law and the Prophets were until John, since that time the kingdom of God is preached^g.” And our Lord himself, in the midst of the week, *caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease*; for at that time, having completed the exercise of his Divine mission in exactly the space of three years and a

^g Luke xvi. 16.

half, he fulfilled the great object of the ceremonial Law, which was, the type of atonement for sin, by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

The facts thus predicted by Daniel will not agree with the ravages committed by Antiochus Epiphanes in Judea, great and atrocious as they were. He proceeded indeed to pollute the Temple, but he did not entirely destroy it; neither did he exhaust Jerusalem of all its inhabitants. The Jews at the close of his wars were restored to peace,—but, on the contrary, at the period foretold by Daniel, the desolation was to *begin*, and the city and sanctuary were to be destroyed. So confident were the Jews, as to the precise application of the Prophecy, that this saying is still extant in the Talmud, as the tradition of very antient times^h. “In Daniel is delivered

^h Chandler's Defence, p. 116.

to us the end of the Messiah ;”—that is, the period at which he ought to come, as Jarchi, a celebrated doctor of the Law, explains it. Nehumias, likewise a learned Rabbi, who lived fifty years before the Christian era, declared, “ that the time fixed by Daniel for the Messiah, could not be more than fifty years before it was accomplished.” Josephus observesⁱ, that “ Daniel did not only predict things to come, which was common to him with other Prophets, but also a certain fixed *time* when they were to take place. He did not only foretel the calamity that afflicted our nation by Antiochus many years before it happened ; but he also wrote of the dominion of the Romans, and of the great desolation they should hereafter bring upon Judea.” In no passage, except in this Prophecy of the 70 weeks, does Daniel speak of the desolation which his country was to suffer from the Romans,

ⁱ Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. x. c. 11.

and

and in no other passage is a precise time fixed for these events. We may therefore be confident, that Josephus referred to this particular Prophecy. And, indeed, it is acknowledged by the Jews themselves, that at the time when Jesus appeared, the Messiah was expected; and that the period, which Daniel had fixed, expired a short time before the City and Temple were destroyed by Titus—before the customary sacrifices were abolished—and before the Jewish government was overthrown^k.

How strong this expectation was among the Jews, and how general

^k Ferguson, the celebrated Astronomer, wrote a Treatise on the year of our Saviour's crucifixion. He illustrates this Prophecy of Daniel by applying to it the rules and calculations of his favourite science. He concludes his Treatise with the following words—"Thus we have an Astronomical demonstration of the truth of this antient Prophecy, seeing that the Prophetic year of the Messiah's being cut off was the very same with the Astronomical."

throughout

throughout the world, is evident from both sacred and profane historians. The Scriptures inform us, that at the precise time when our Saviour appeared, the Jews expected some person endowed with such qualities, and distinguished by such actions, as the sacred writers attribute to the Messiah. Not only Simeon, and Anna the Prophetess¹ “waited for the consolation of Israel,” but many other devout persons were inspired with the same hope, and thought that the Kingdom of God was at hand. This expectation was not confined to the vulgar and illiterate; for as soon as John the Baptist began to preach, a deputation of Priests and Levites was sent to ask him, whether he was the Christ^m. When the people saw the miracles of our Lord, they concluded that their promised king would immediately be manifestedⁿ.—And

¹ Luke ii. 25, &c.

^m John i. 19.

ⁿ Luke xix. 11.

constantly cherishing the pleasing hope of his arrival, they asked the Scribes and Pharisees that remarkable question, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?°”

Convinced by his wonderful works, many openly acknowledged “this is in truth the Prophet who was to come into the world.” The jealousy, which Herod entertained against Christ, proceeded from an apprehension that he would declare himself the expected King of the Jews; and Josephus expressly says^p, “That the chief motive, which instigated the Jews to rebel against the Romans, was, a Prophecy found in the Scriptures, that at that time a person should arise from their country, who should obtain the empire of the world.” The Samaritans entertained the same

• John vii. 31.

^p Joseph. de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 5.

hope,

hope, not so much derived from the Jews, whom they hated, as from the testimony of the Scriptures themselves, and the most antient traditions and interpretations of Scripture.

It is a very striking fact in proof of the general belief of the Jewish nation respecting the time of the Messiah's appearance, that from the death of Herod the Great, when Judas of Galilee and Simon first assumed the title of Kings and Deliverers of the Jews, to the destruction of the Temple, the Jewish history is filled with the names and actions of false Christs and false Prophets, who deceived both the Jews and the Samaritans—None appeared *before* this period, and not more than one for five or six centuries *after* it.

According as the Reader shall reject or admit the hypothesis concerning the religion of the eastern nations, which
many

many learned authors⁹ have laboured to establish, he will suppose the general expectation which prevailed among the heathen nations to owe its origin to the dispersion of Daniel's Prophecy by the Jews, or he will trace it to the Patriarchal ages. The universality of this expectation would alone render it highly probable that the knowledge of Prophecy confirmed and corrected tradition, rather than produced it. But if it be granted, and I see not how it can be denied, that the hope of a Redeemer was given in the very earliest times, and continued to exist throughout the world, though obscured and deformed by allegory and idolatry, probability rises almost into certainty.

⁹ See Maurice's Indian Ant. and Hist. and Asiatic Researches, where the mass of evidence collected upon this curious and important subject will be found sufficiently strong to baffle the attacks of modern philosophy.

The confidence and eagerness with which the Pagans looked for this “mighty Prince, who was to restore the golden age,” is scarcely to be accounted for upon the supposition, that they received the *first* intimation of this great event from the Jews, who were too much accustomed to interpret the promise of the Messiah as exclusively beneficial to themselves. But when, by the translation of the inspired writings into a language very generally understood, and by the increased intercourse among the learned of all countries, it was found that the Prophecies contained in the writings of this singular people (whose wonderful history must add authority to their Scriptures) perfectly agreed with a tradition which had existed from the most remote antiquity, hope would gradually gain strength, and spread itself among the people. The particular information given by Daniel concerning the time when “the *Desire*
of

of all nations" was to appear, would animate enquiry, and the general state of the world was calculated to heighten expectation. Thus the common belief asserted by the historians who wrote concerning this remarkable period, becomes clearly explicable—the worship of the Magi will cease to excite surprise,—and the dying injunction of Confucius in the distant regions of China, will no longer appear incredible. "A great Legislator—a mighty conqueror, who was to deliver the world from evil—establish the kingdom of peace and bliss—renew the happiness of the golden age, and extend his auspicious dominion over the whole earth," are terms in which this expectation is expressed by many very antient authors^r. And we find this subject particularly mentioned

^r Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 492. 1 Macc. iv. 46. xiv. 41. Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part i. p. 13. Chandler's Defence, c. i. The Indian Vedas.

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by the historians who wrote near the time of our Lord's appearance.

Julius Marathus, quoted by Suetonius in his life of Octavius, mentions a Prophecy which then prevailed, that "Nature was about to bring forth a son, that should be King of the Romans^s." It is true, *Flattery* applied this Prophecy to the Emperor; but she borrowed it from Public Opinion, drawn from a higher Source. Tacitus affirms^t, "that a persuasion prevailed with great numbers, that it was evident *from the antient books of the priests*, that at the time when Titus conquered the Jews, the East should have the pre-eminence,

^s This phrase expresses something more than ordinary both in the cause and the effect; for here nature herself, or the God of nature, is made the immediate agent of his birth; and *he* must far exceed the condition of mere humanity, who was to derive his origin from such a parent. Prideaux, vol. ii. p. 492.

^t Taciti Hist. c. xiii.

and

and *that those, who came from Judea should obtain the empire of the world.*" An antient and general opinion (says Suetonius^u) had very much prevailed over all parts of the East, that it was ordained by the fates, *for those who came from Judea to obtain the supreme dominion.*" It should be observed, that Suetonius, Tacitus, and Josephus, were by no means inclined to favour the Christian cause;—that their opportunities of being well informed rendered them fully competent to speak to the *Fact*—and that this expectation *did* generally prevail at the precise time when Jesus Christ, the Messiah—the Prince—so particularly described by Daniel, was manifested to the world.

^u In Vespasian, c. 4.

C L A S S I.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

The Promise of John the Baptist, the Messenger, or Forerunner of the Messiah, given 400 Years before his Birth.

BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's sope: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they
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may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse^a.

There can be no question concerning

^a Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. iv. 5, 6.

the application of this Prophecy to some person who was to be of Jewish extraction, and who was to appear before the destruction of Jerusalem, because this *messenger was to prepare the way for the Lord, who was to come suddenly to his Temple.* The disputes, whether this Temple was identically that which was built immediately after the Babylonish captivity, or whether it was rebuilt rather than repaired by Herod, are not material; it is enough for us to know that a Temple, dedicated to the worship of God according to the Mosaic institutions, was standing from the time of Malachi to the time of John the Baptist—that Jesus was acknowledged by those “who had waited for the promises of God,” to be the Christ when first presented in the Temple;—and that soon after the rejection of this Messiah by the Jews, this Temple was destroyed, and no other has ever been since rebuilt. In all the compass of the Jewish history for the intermediate space of 400 years, no
 person

person can be found to whom this Prophecy can be applied with any degree of probability ; except to John the Baptist, who appeared at the time which had been expressly marked for the coming of the Messiah, as we shall see in the following chapter. To him it applies so closely as to point out with singular precision his office and character, and the substance of his precepts and exhortations.

There were many proofs sufficiently clear to have satisfied all the Jews, if their prejudices had not been of the most stubborn nature, that a Prophet similar to Elias, and not Elias himself, was intended to be announced by Malachi. The angel sent to Zecharias, made a declaration to this purpose the most full and direct. At the time when he expressly ordained that the name of the promised child should be *John*, he declared *as* expressly the nature of the

commission which he was to execute, in the very words of Malachi^b, “and he shall go before him [the Lord] in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” When the disciples of John came to Jesus for complete satisfaction whether he was the expected Messiah or not, our Lord took occasion to give the most full and illustrious testimony to the dignity of their master, and the most clear decision of the point in question^c. And after the glorious transfiguration of our Lord upon the mountain, when Moses and Elias, or Elijah, the two greatest Prophets under the Law, had held a divine conference with him, our Lord expressly affirmed, “Elias is come already, and they knew him not,

^b Luke i. 17.

^c Matt. xi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Luke vii. 26, &c.

but

but have done unto him whatsoever they listed." This allusion is considered as sufficiently plain, for it is immediately added by the sacred historians, that the disciples understood that he spake of John the Baptist^d."

The resemblance between the office and character of the Elijah foretold by Malachi, and of John the Baptist as described in the Gospels, is indeed exact. The Prophet declares that Elijah was to come *before the great and terrible day of the Lord*, which time has ever been understood to refer, in its primary sense, to the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The Evangelists assert, that when John appeared, *the day of wrath was coming—the ax was laid at the root of the tree*. Malachi predicts that a messenger shall be sent *to prepare the way of the Lord*. John exhorted the people to repent

^d Matt. xvii. 12, 13.

with more than common earnestness, “*because the kingdom of heaven was at hand,*” or *immediately coming*. From this, and from other Prophecies^e, the Jews expected that Elias would be the precursor of the Messiah, that he would publicly announce his approach, anoint him King, and introduce him to the people. John was the *voice crying in the wilderness, that one was coming mightier than himself, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear*. In obedience to the request of Him whom he knew to be the Messiah, John baptized Jesus in the river Jordan, before he entered upon his publick ministry, and testified in the presence of the assembled multitudes, that “he saw the spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove,” (emblematic of the character of the Christian dispensation) “and that it rested upon *Him,*” whom he declared to be “the Lamb of God which taketh away the

^e Isaiah xl. 13.

sins of the world—the long expected King of Israel—even the Son of the most High.” It is evident then, that the particular nature of an office, or commission, and not the exact identity of a person, was the point which the Prophet Malachi had in view.

The testimony of the angel, and the declaration of Christ himself, explaining the nature of the mission of the Baptist, and shewing the strict reference of the Prophecies to him, agree precisely with his manner of life and general conduct.

The external appearance of John, his unremitting austerity of life, his active zeal, his bold rebuke of vice, and his exhortation to the degenerate race of his countrymen, to repent of their sins, that they might avoid impending judgments, were circumstances perfectly similar to the history of Elias. It is therefore *also* evident,

dent, that the Prophecy of Malachi was fully accomplished in the person of John the Baptist, the messenger, or forerunner of the Messiah, who, in conformity with the eastern custom of officers being sent to announce the approach of princes and kings, preceded him, and prepared the way for his reception^f.

I must be allowed to request the Reader's particular attention to this last

^f The testimony of Josephus to the character of John the Baptist agrees with the prophecy of Isaiah and Malachi, and the narratives of the Evangelists. "Herod put to death John the Baptist, who was a just man, and had called upon the Jews to be baptized and to practise virtue, exercising both justice towards men, and piety towards God. And many coming to him, for they were wonderfully taken with his discourses, Herod was seized with apprehensions, lest by his authority they should be led into sedition. The Jews were of opinion that the destruction of Herod's army was a punishment upon him for putting the Baptist to death." Lardner's Jewish Test, vol. vii. p. 116.

link

link of the chain of Prophets, which reached from Moses to Malachi, as one of the many circumstances to prove the gradual preparation made for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the interval of 400 years between this last Prophecy under the Old Dispensation, and its fulfilment, the second Temple was indeed standing, but it could not boast the visible glory of Jehovah, like that which had distinguished the first. There were no appointed means of enquiring the will of God by means of the High Priest. The people observed the Law of Moses, but no Prophet arose among them. They were sufficiently enlightened to look for their predicted Messiah with a degree of anxiety and impatience, that might have weakened their attachment to the Covenant, which it appeared to be the pleasure of God to alter, if not to abrogate. And the series of the Pro-

phets closed with a direct promise of a “messenger in the spirit and power of Elias,” (who had been most distinguished by visible marks of the Divine favour) to precede the Lord, who should come suddenly to his Temple—who should be like a refiner’s fire to purify his people in his great and dreadful day, when all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and shall be burnt up. “But to those who fear the name of God, he should arise as the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings, to make his name great among the Gentiles, that in every place incense should be offered to the name of God, and a pure offering.”

CLASS

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

The Prophetic Description of the Birth, Character, Mission, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, of the Messiah, compared with his History written by the Evangelists after his Ascension into Heaven.

SO clear and so full are the declarations of Isaiah relative to the coming of the Messiah, the nature of his kingdom, and the benefits resulting to mankind from its establishment, that he has with very great propriety been called the Evangelical Prophet. One of his predictions in particular can never be too frequently brought forward, as an instance of a re-

L 6

velation

relation of the Divine will directed to one uniform course of circumstances and events. The regularity of its plan is unbroken, it is complete in its various parts, and it stands detached from other subjects. It is a striking picture, of which the outlines are strongly marked, and the colours are natural and lively. The form of expression is remarkable, for the Prophet speaks of things to come, as if they were either present or past. Fully occupied by the importance of his subject, and carried forward to distant times, he flies over the interval between the prediction and its fulfilment, and writes in the manner of an exact and faithful historian^a.

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

^a Isaiah liii. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Surely

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment : and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see

of

of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This Prophecy is an exact anticipation of some of the most remarkable circumstances relating to the life and death of Christ, and the great benefits of his passion. And to prove that it was literally accomplished in our Saviour, we need only bring together the parallel passages in the prophetic and in the historic writings ^b.

He

^b John xii. 37. Matt. viii. 16. Rom. iv. 25. Galat. i. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Matt. xxvi. 63. xxvii. 38. 1 Pet. ii. 22. 2 Cor. v. 21. Rom.

He was despised and rejected of men, for, as he himself declared, “the son of man had not where to lay his head; and though he had done so many miracles, yet the greater part of the Jews believed not on him.”—He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; for “he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, mourned the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and expressed continual sorrow for the sins and distresses of mankind.”—Surely he hath borne our griefs, for “he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”—He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, for “he gave

Rom. v. 18. Matt. xxvii. 57, 58. Col. ii. 15. Mark xv. 27. Heb. vii. 25.

I refer the Reader for some excellent remarks on this Prophecy, to Paley's Evidences, vol. ii. p. 1. It is much to be wished, that this very able Divine had applied the acuteness of his penetration, and the peculiar vigour of his understanding, to a full elucidation of this important part of his subject.

himself

himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world."—*The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, for "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness."*—*The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, for "he gave himself a ransom for all."*—*He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. When brought before the High priest, "Jesus held his peace."*—*He was cut out of the land of the living, for "he was crucified in the flower of his age." He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, for "when the evening, after his crucifixion, was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, and begged the body of Jesus, and laid it in his own new tomb."*—*He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, for "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."*—*His soul was*
made

made an offering for sin, for “God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”—*By his knowledge did the righteous servant (or son) justify many*, for “by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”—*He divided the spoil with the great*, for “having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them.”—*He was numbered with the transgressors*, for “with him they crucified two thieves.”—*He made intercession for the transgressors*, for “he is able to save sinners, to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Struck by the exact application of this passage to the character and sufferings of Christ, the devout Eunuch of Ethiopia listened to the explanatory narrative of St. Philip^c, and became a zealous convert to the faith. In this instance the power of

^c Acts viii. 26.

Prophecy, as one great evidence of the truth of Christianity, was eminently displayed. And I cannot help reminding the Reader of another instance in the case of a profligate nobleman of this country, who in the last century was infamous for his vices, and exemplary for his repentance. Upon the bed of death, he listened with eager curiosity to the pious Prelate, who illustrated to him this remarkable passage of Isaiah, and died a true believer in an afflicted and persecuted Saviour^d.

The coming of the Messiah and the nature of his kingdom, as we have before observed, form the leading subjects of prophetic inspiration. The testimony of Jesus is clearly, and most eminently the spirit of Prophecy. To him all the Prophets give witness, and around him they throw the beams of their unit-

^d Burnet's Life of Lord Rochester.

ed light. As a proof of the truth of this assertion, we shall now select some scattered predictions, that mark with as great exactness certain nice and discriminating circumstances relative to the promised Messiah; and subjoin to each of them those extracts from the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, which show their completion.

The Prophet Micah points out the place where the Messiah was to be born, and the tribe from which he was to spring^e. *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel.* All the Evangelists mention that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea; and that such was an undoubted fact, St. Paul informs us when he asserts, “that it is evident our Lord sprang out of Judah.”

^e The Prophecies and their correspondent completion. Micah v. 2. Matt. ii. 1. Heb. xi. 14.

Isaiah declares^f that he shall be descended from David, and be born of a pure virgin. *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel—There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding.* The descent of Joseph the reputed father, and of Mary the mother of our Lord, is regularly traced from David the son of Jesse, by the Evangelists. “Mary was found with child by the Holy Ghost.—When Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him.” His life and doctrine fully showed that the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, did indeed rest or remain with him always, “for it was not given unto him by measure.”

^f Isaiah vii. 14. Matt. i. 20. Luke iii. 23. Matt. iii. 16.

Rising to a loftier strain of description, Isaiah represents the dignity of his nature and attributes, and among other appropriate epithets, gives him one that peculiarly marks the mild and heavenly purpose of his Gospel. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.*—Thus our Saviour himself instructs Nicodemus, “that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;” and St. Paul declares what is indeed proved by the whole tenor of the Evangelical History, “that God hath in these last times spoken unto us by his Son.” He declares likewise, “that Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God—that he is our peace, and the Lord of peace himself—the

§ Isaiah ix. 6. John iii. 16. Heb. i. 2. Ephes. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 24. Col. i. 15, 17, 20. 2 Theff. iii. 16. Heb. i. 3.

image of the invifible God—that he is before all things, and by him all things confift—the brightnefs of his Father’s glory, and the exprefs image of his perfon.” The Evangelifts^b affert, that the voice heard from heaven, when our Lord was baptized in the river Jórdan, declared, “This is my beloved Son.” The government was given to him, for he caft out evil fpirits, he over-ruled the Laws of nature by his miraculous power—and “he had all power given unto him both in heaven and earth.” At his birth the angels, in their fong of triumph, declared “peace on earth and good will towards men,” thus celebrating his high and gracious office, as Redeemer of a finful world, and marking the characteristics of the mild and benevolent religion he came to eftablifh.

Itaiah likewise fpecifies the particular

^b Matt. iii. 17. Itaiah ix. 6. Matt. xxviii. 18. Luke ii. 14.

kinds of miracles, by which the divine origin of the Christian Revelation should be proved.

ⁱ *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.* The following words of Christ, when speaking particularly of his miracles to the disciples of John, and which plainly refer to the Prophecies, are confirmed by the Gospels, in the fullest manner. “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up.”

The reward given by the High Priests to Judas the betrayer, is exactly specified by Zechariah^k. *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.* Thus the

ⁱ Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6. Matt. xi. 5.

^k Zech. ix. 9. Matt. xxi. 5. John xii. 14.

Evangelists relate, that “Judas Iscariot went unto the chief Priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.”

- The cruel and most undeserved treatment, which he suffered previous to his death, is thus mentioned by Isaiah¹. *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. It is particularly recorded “that they did spit in his face, and buffet him, and that others smote him with the palms of their hands.”*

His particular kind of death, by being nailed to a cross, is described by David^m. *They pierced my hands and my feet.*

¹ Isaiah l. 6. Matt. xxvi. 67.

^m Psalm xxii. 16. Matt. xxvii. 35.

And

And the Evangelists say expressly that “the Jews crucified him.”

And the particular kind of drink that was offered him is mentioned likewise by Davidⁿ. *They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.* The Evangelists relate, that “they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall.”

And the manner likewise, in which his garments were adjudged to the soldiers who attended his execution, is exactly stated in the Psalms^o. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.* Thus in the Gospels it is particularly mentioned, “that they parted his raiment and cast lots for his coat, as it was without seam, and woven from the top throughout.”

ⁿ Psalm lxix. 21. Matt. xxvii. 34.

^o Psalm xxii. 18. John xix. 23.

The manner of his interment is foretold by Ifaiah^p. *That he ſhould make his grave with the rich.* Thus “a rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, took the body of Jeſus, and laid it in his own new tomb.”

That he ſhould riſe again, without being ſubject to decay, is the glorious declaration of the Pſalmiſt^q. *For thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption.* Thus the angel affures the women, “that Jeſus which was crucified is riſen as he ſaid.” David ſpoke of the reſurrection of Chriſt, “whom God raiſed up, whereof,” ſaid St. Peter when he applied this Prophecy to our Lord, “we are all witneſſes.”

The manner in which the Evangelists ſhewed the fulfilment of the prophecies

^p Ifaiah liii. 9. Matt. xxvii. 57, 58.

^q Pſalm xvi. 8. Matt. xxviii. 6. Acts ii. 31, 32.

by Christ is remarkable, for they applied them not with hesitation as if they were doubtful as to their sense, or undecided as to their object. Their boldness of assertion bore the stamp and character of truth. They had the most clear proofs, more particularly from miracles, that their divine Master was the promised Messiah, and therefore were fully persuaded that all the prophecies centered in him. They appear to have had no conception, that this evidence could in the nature of things be referable to any one else, and therefore they pressed the arguments drawn from the Old Testament upon the minds of the unconverted, with all the sincerity of conviction, and all the authority of truth.

All persons are encouraged, by the gracious example of our Lord himself, to seek the light, and the evidence thus brought to illustrate the character, and the mission of Christ, the Messiah of the

Jews, and the Saviour of the world. For, when he was about to take his final leave of his disciples after his resurrection, and was desirous of pointing out to them the clearest testimonies, that, in addition to his miracles and his precepts, could confirm his divine mission, “^r BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, HE EXPOUNDED UNTO THEM IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES, THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.”

^r Luke xxiv. 27.

CLASS

CLASS I.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

The Destruction of the City and Temple of Jerusalem, and the Subversion of the Jewish Government according to the prediction of Christ.

THE awful catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem, was a subject presented to the minds of the most distinguished Prophets. Moses saw, from a remote distance of time, the peculiar calamities that would result from the disobedience of his people. And, to close the wonderful series of predictions, our Lord denounced in terms of pity and affection the approaching fall of the holy city, and fixed the period of its complete

plete destruction, and the total subversion of the Jewish government. Upon this signal event the authority of Christ as a Prophet very materially depended; and as it took place within the time he prescribed, with all its previous, concomitant, and subsequent circumstances, exactly as he had foretold, the whole train of occurrences conspired to prove his infallible truth.

This Prophecy, which must fill every mind that considers it attentively with the most exalted conceptions of its divine author, forms an essential part of the Gospel history, and is interwoven with the texture of its most important contents. It is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In regard to the precise year in which their respective Gospels were written, there is a difference of opinion among the learned^a; but it is uni-

^a The earliest account I have met with is that
of

universally agreed that they were all written and published some years *before* the destruction of Jerusalem. And it is probable that these Evangelists were dead before that event took place. No unbeliever, either of ancient or modern times, Jew or Gentile, neither Julian, nor Celsus, nor Porphyry, neither Voltaire, nor Gibbon, has ever had the temerity to insinuate, much less to maintain, that it was forged, or interpolated after the event.

It appears from the narrative of St. Mark, that our Lord's declaration concerning the buildings of the Temple,

of Dr. Owen, who states the Gospel of St. Matthew to have been written A. D. 38. The latest account brings it down to A. D. 63. St. Mark wrote his Gospel about the year 61. St. Luke a little after, probably in 63. Percy's Key, p. 47. Calmet, vol. ii. p. 155. Du Pin's History of the Canon, vol. ii. p. 26, 41, &c. Townson on the Gospels, p. 4, 116, 153, 166, &c.

“ There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,” had excited considerable alarm and anxiety among his followers ; and that as soon as he was seated on the Mount of Olives, whither he immediately went, four of his Disciples privately entreated him to give them farther information relative to “ the *time* when all these things should be fulfilled, and the *signs* which should precede their accomplishment.” The parallel passages in Matthew and Luke plainly indicate that this enquiry respected the Destruction of Jerusalem, the Second Coming of our Lord, and the End of the world—events which they possibly expected to happen together—and to which the reply of our Lord evidently refers.

The Mount of Olives commanded a full view of the City and the Temple, the grandeur, the magnificence, and the striking situation of which, as circumstantially

stantially described by Josephus^b, must have rendered this spot peculiarly suited to

^b For the facts which show the fulfilment of this Prophecy, we are not confined to the statement of Christian writers alone, who by unbelievers might be suspected, however 'uncandidly, of a disposition to bend the events to the predictions. We are happily in possession of the most curious and valuable source of information. So far from rejecting the testimony of *Jewish* writers upon this subject, which they might naturally be disposed to represent in a manner honourable to their own nation, and disadvantageous to the character of Christ, we appeal to the evidence of the Historian Josephus, who was remarkably distinguished by his attachment to his country, and his veneration for the Laws of Moses. He was descended from the family who bore the sacred office of High Priest, he was a distinguished General in the early part of the last Jewish war; and after he was taken prisoner, was admitted to share the confidence of the Emperor Vespasian and his son Titus, with whose approbation, as well as that of Kings Agrippa and Herod, and other eminent and intelligent persons, he published the History of the Wars of the Jews. His evidence is most full, particular,

to the subject of this Prophecy. And in this sublime and interesting scene did our
 Lord

ticular, and exact, and goes to the confirmation of every point in this Prophecy. With singular care he has omitted to mention the name of Christ, and yet with singular precision he has illustrated his predictions. From his situation as a General in the former part of the war, and a prisoner in the latter, when he was constantly with the Roman commander, nothing escaped his observation. No person who possesses the least degree of candour, whatever may be his religious opinions, can have any fair objection to his testimony. None can plead, that he has given a false colouring to his narrative, for the purpose of favouring Jesus Christ and his Disciples. The important service he has rendered to Christianity is wholly unintentional. Considering his various escapes from the most imminent danger, and the particular crisis at which he lived, he seems to have been raised up and preserved by Providence, to show the exact accomplishment of the Prophecy of Christ. If he was ignorant of Christianity, he could not possibly write with a view to promote its interests. If he was not ignorant of it, we may be certain from his strong attachment to the Laws of Moses, and from
 his

Lord fully reveal to his select Disciples those decrees of Divine justice, which he had

his silence, that he was not favourable to it—so that what he relates, is drawn from him by the power of irresistible truth; and is a testimony far more strong, and more unexceptionable, than the most explicit mention of the name of Christ, and the most laboured encomium on his words and actions. For a full account of Josephus and his Works, see Lardner, vol. vii. p. 30, 259, &c.

The curious details of Josephus are confirmed in many important circumstances, by Tacitus the eminent historian, who flourished about thirty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. He speaks of the strength of the fortifications of that city, the immense riches and strength of the Temple, the factions that raged during the siege, the prodigies that preceded it, and the report prevalent at that time, that a ruler of the world should come from the East. He particularly mentions the large army brought by Vespasian to subdue Judea, and take Jerusalem, a fact which shows the magnitude and the importance of the expedition.

Other Heathen authors may be mentioned, whose account of these transactions is very much to the purpose. The most remarkable are Philostratus

had frequently before, in general terms, pronounced in the presence of surround-

and Dion Cassius, who lived in the third century. By the former it is expressly related, that Titus declared after the capture of Jerusalem, that he was not worthy of the crown of victory, as he had only lent his hand to the execution of a work, in which God was pleased to manifest his anger. It does not appear that Philostratus copied Josephus, as he relates some things in a different manner. The account of Dion Cassius, when compared with that of the great Jewish historian, is concise and defective. Nevertheless, he relates all the principal transactions of the war—the conquest of Judea by Titus and Vespasian, the obstinate and bloody resistance of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem, and what is of most importance, the destruction of the Temple by fire.

In these particulars he agrees with Josephus, in others he differs from him so much, that it is very probable he never consulted his works—In Dion Cassius and Philostratus we have two witnesses unacquainted with Josephus, who strongly confirm his testimony, and unite to illustrate the Prophecy now under our consideration. See Lardner's Test. vol. vii. p. 112. vol. viii. p. 131.

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ing multitudes^c. The divine character of the person who uttered this prediction, the clear language in which it was expressed, the solemn manner in which it was confirmed, the people who were the immediate subjects of it, the unparalleled calamities denounced against them, and its ultimate reference to the consummation of the stupendous Christian scheme, which was laid “before the foundations of the world”—has been “witnessed by all the Prophets from the beginning”—and shall extend beyond this world’s duration—render the whole transaction inexpressibly interesting and awful.

^c Lardner has well remarked, that this Prophecy, although delivered in private to the Disciples, plainly referred to many of our Lord’s publick speeches, Matt. xxiii. 29—39. Luke xix. 41—44. There are likewise frequent references to the calamities that were coming upon the Jews in several parables, Matt. viii. 11, 12. xxi. 18, 19, &c. xxii. 1—7. Luke xiii. 6—9. xiv. 17—24.

I shall

I shall quote the whole Prophecy as stated by the three Evangelists, and only first observe, that whoever carefully reads this Prophecy, not only reads an exact recital of subsequent events, but finds them arranged nearly in the same order of time in which they happened ^d.

His Disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the Disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall

^d Matt. xxiv.

deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand,) then let them
which

*which be in Judea flee into the mountains :
 let him which is on the house-top not come
 down to take any thing out of his house.
 Neither let him which is in the field return
 back to take his clothes. And woe unto them
 that are with child, and to them that give
 suck in those days ! But pray ye that your
 flight be not in the winter, neither on the sab-
 bath day : for then shall be great tribula-
 tion, such as was not since the beginning of
 the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
 And except those days should be shortened,
 there should no flesh be saved : but for the
 elect's sake those days shall be shortened.
 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here
 is Christ, or there ; believe it not. For there
 shall rise false Christs, and false Prophets,
 and shall shew great signs and wonders ; in-
 somuch that (if it were possible) they shall
 deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you
 before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you,
 Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth :
 behold, he is in the secret chambers ; believe
 it not. For as the lightning cometh out of
 the*

the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

And^e as he went out of the temple, one of his Disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down....When shall these things be....And Jesus answering them, began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers

^e Mark xiii.

places,

places, and there shall be famines, and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the Gospel must first be published among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them
that

that be in Judea flee to the mountains: and let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation, which God created, unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: for false Christs and false Prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold I have foretold you all things.

And

And^f as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven. But be-

^f Luke xxi.

fore all these they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may

may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

We now proceed to show the fulfilment of the most striking parts of this Prophecy.

Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and the time draweth near.

Many indeed were the impostors, who either impiously assumed the name of Christ, or the character of inspired Prophets. Josephus^s relates, that in the reign of Claudius “ the land was over-

^s Antiq. Jud. lib. xx. c. 8.

run with magicians, impostors, and seducers, who drew the peopie after them in multitudes into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles they promised to show by the power of God." Felix, and afterwards Festus, governors of Judea, judging these proceedings to be the commencement of a rebellion against the Romans, continually sent out detachments of soldiers, and destroyed great numbers of the deluded populace. Among these impostors were Dositheus the Samaritan, who affirmed that he was the Christ foretold by Moses; Simon Magus, who said that he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God; and Theudas^h, who pretending to be a Prophet, persuaded many of the people to take their goods and follow him to the river Jordan, declaring that he was divinely commissioned, and that at his command the waters would be di-

^h Antiq. Jud. lib. xx. c. 4.

vided,

vided, and give them a safe passage to the opposite side. Many other examples might be adduced; but these are sufficient to establish the truth of this prediction.

But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions (or rumours of wars), be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not yet.

These wars and commotions were as the distant thunder, that forebodes approaching storms. Previous to the destruction of Jerusalem the greatest agitation prevailed in the Roman Empire, and the struggle for succession to the imperial throne was attended by severe and bloody conflicts. Four Emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, suffered violent deaths within the short space of eighteen months. The Emperor Caligula commanded the Jews to place his statue in their Temple; and,

in

sarea, Scythopolis, Ascalon, Alexandria, and Damascus, there were the greatest popular disorders, and multitudes of the Jews were slain by the Tyrians and Syrians. Josephus, when speaking of this time, says, "Every city was divided into two armies."

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and signs from heaven.

The history of this period is replete with instances of terrible presages of Divine vengeance. In the fourth year of the reign of Claudius, a dreadful famine began, that extended throughout the Roman empire, and was most severely felt in Judea for several years. The Christian Gentile converts, moved by the exhortations of St. Paul, sent liberal contributions for the relief of their Jewish brethren. And Helena, Queen of Egypt, sent a large supply of corn from that country,

country, to alleviate the general distress. A particular account of this calamity is given by Josephusⁱ, who affirms, that many of his countrymen perished for want of food; and also by Eusebius, Orosius, and Suetonius. Several historians mention the ravages of *pestilence*; but the terror occasioned by the uncommon *earthquakes in divers places*, leads them to a more detailed account of the fulfilment of this prediction. Philostratus, in his Life of Apollonius^k, mentions the violent earthquakes which happened in the reign of Claudius at Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, and other places, in all of which Jews were settled. Tacitus^l mentions one at Rome in the same reign, and says, that in the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, were overthrown. Another

ⁱ Ant. Jud. lib. xx. c. 2.

^k Lib. iv. c. 34.

^l Ann. lib. xiv. c. 27. lib. xv. c. 22.

earthquake is mentioned by Suetonius, which happened at Rome in the reign of Galba. Josephus^m relates, that in Judea at the beginning of the war, but before Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, there was such an uncommonly tremendous storm of wind, and thunder, and lightning, with “a fearful noise of the agitated earth, as portended, in the opinion of many, the greatest evils.” Many prodigies are recorded by the historians of those times, of a much more strange and extraordinary natureⁿ, which, whether they actually happened or not, fully

^m Bell. Jud. lib. iv. c. 4.

ⁿ So wonderful were these prodigies, that Josephus not only mentions them particularly in the beginning of his account of the wars of the Jews, but in the course of his narrative assigns a whole chapter to them, lib. vii. c. 12. Lardner examines them, and weighs their probability with his usual caution and accuracy, vol. vii. p. 89, &c.—I have selected those only, in which Josephus and Tacitus agree.

prove that the imagination of the people was singularly impressed with a belief that they really happened; and it might be said, that our Lord's prediction was thus fulfilled. Considering, however, the frequent miraculous appearances of particular interposition in the course of nature, by which it pleased the Almighty to manifest to his chosen people his protection and displeasure, it cannot be deemed improbable, that *some of these signs were indeed from heaven.*

But before all these things they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake... And some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

The precision with which the time is specified is very remarkable. Previous to the other prognostics of the destruc-

tion of Jerufalem, the difciples of Chrift were taught to expect the hardships of perfecution. The Acts of the Apoftles fhew how exactly this prediction was fulfilled°. St. Paul acknowledges that it had been his frequent custom previous to his converfion, “to punifh, and to beat in the fynagogues thofe that believed.” St. Peter and St. John boldly confefled the faith before Annas and Caiphas. St. Paul related the particulars of his miraculous converfion in the prefence of the High Prieft, and with the greateft intrepidity pleaded his caufe at

° Acts iv, vi, vii, viii, xii, xxi, xxviii. 2 Cor. xi. 23. Heb. x. 32. 2 Theff. i. 3. James ii. 5. 2 Pet. iv. 12—The Apoftles and many converts were beaten by the Jews, Acts v. 40. xxii. 19. Paul was five times fcourged by the Jews, and thrice beaten with rods, 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. James was flain with the fword, Acts xii. 2. The Epiftle to the Hebrews feems evidently to have been written in a great degree to comfort Chriftians under perfecution, x. 32, 33. xii. 3, &c.

the tribunal of the trembling Felix, and the half-converted Agrippa. St. Stephen confounded the opposition of the Sanhedrim, by the eloquence of his defence, and his forcible appeal to the Prophecies; and laid down his life in attestation of the truth, before multitudes of adversaries. And under Nero a more dreadful and general persecution took place, in which St. Peter and St. Paul suffered as martyrs for the faith. This prospect of persecution, treachery, and death, must indeed have overpowered the minds of the disciples, if their divine Master had not at the same time given them an absolute promise of support, direction, and final success, in the great cause they had undertaken to defend. *Settle it therefore in your hearts* (that is, have perfect faith, or confidence, in my assurances of assistance), *not to meditate before what ye shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or re-*

fst. How literally this promise has been fulfilled it is surely unnecessary to observe.

The Gospel must first be published to all nations.

It should be remembered, that our Lord delivered this Prophecy only two days before he was given up to the Jewish council, forsaken by all his followers, and crucified like a common malefactor. The promise of success is here repeated to his disciples, to guard them against the suggestions of doubt from the increasing appearances of improbability—the importance and extent of the Gospel is pointed out—and the time of its establishment in the Gentile world exactly defined. Our Lord declared in the most plain and express words, that the Gospel must be published among all nations at a particular period. This preaching of the new Revelation to the various nations

tions was *not*, therefore, “ a sudden project of the Apostles, undertaken because the Jews rejected the Gospel;” but it was a part of the original plan, long before declared by the Prophets, and thus communicated by Christ to his disciples, who were not at that time sufficiently enlightened as to the great scheme of universal salvation.

The first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles was attended with many miraculous circumstances; and we find St. Peter asserting with a mixture of surprise and conviction, that “ upon the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, as upon themselves at the beginning;” alluding probably to the day of Pentecost. The Epistles, written to Christians in various countries, are a standing evidence of the swift propagation of the Gospel, as they were addressed to converts made at different times before, and at that time residing in Rome,

Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Theſſalonica, Pontus, Aſia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and other places. St. Paul informs his Roman converts, “ that the Gentiles were made obedient through mighty ſigns and wonders by the power of the ſpirit of God; ſo that from Jeruſalem and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the Goſpel of Chriſt.” And to the Coloſſians he obſerves, “ if ye continue in the faith grounded and ſettled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Goſpel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” Wide as the “ tidings of peace and good will towards men” had even then been ſpread, the Apoſtle could not here mean that every creature under heaven had heard the Goſpel. The ſenſe of the paſſage evidently is, the Goſpel is not, like the Moſaic Law, given to any one peculiar people, but is *addreſſed to every creature under heaven* — the whole world may enjoy the bleſſings

sings of the Christian dispensation, and of this most joyful truth the numerous Gentile converts already made by the *visible* power of the Spirit of God, are an incontestible proof. It is well known from various records, that the Gospel was preached to Jews and Gentiles, in Greece, Arabia, Ethiopia, Syria, Asia Minor, Judea, Italy, Macedonia, and many other places, with great success, within the time predicted by our Lord. Bishop Newton says, “It appears, from the writers of the history of the church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel was not only preached in the lesser Asia, and Greece, and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world; but was likewise propagated as far northward as Scythia, as far southward as Ethiopia, as far eastward as Parthia and India, as far westward as Spain and Britain.” Tacitus confirms this statement^o, by relating a very strong and apposite

^o Annal. lib. xv.

fact. He mentions that “the Christian religion, which arose in Judea, spread over many parts of the world, and extended to Rome itself, where the professors of it, as early as the time of Nero, amounted to a vast multitude.” These were the events predicted to happen *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, and we see they actually did take place within the time prescribed. The burning of Rome, which gave occasion to Tacitus to mention the Christians, happened in the tenth year of the reign of Nero, in the sixty-fourth year of the Christian era, and Jerusalem was not destroyed before the year of our Lord seventy.

If the swift propagation of the Gospel without the assistance of the established powers of the world, without the countenance of the monarch, the approbation of the philosopher, or the prejudices of the vulgar, but in direct opposition

sition to them all, be evidence in favour of the Divine origin of Christianity, the argument which it furnishes is certainly more complete and more striking, as such a propagation was the subject of Prophecy; and as that Prophecy was pronounced under the most unfavourable circumstances that can well be imagined.

But to return to the awful and instructive narration—We come now to consider Jerusalem as in a state of actual siege.

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy place; or, when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

The devoted place which was the immediate object of these formidable denunciations

nunciations is thus clearly pointed out, and the armies mentioned could be no other than those of the Romans. The images of the emperor and the eagles that were carried in the front of the legions, were regarded with religious abhorrence by the Jews, as they were ranked among the Pagan deities, and revered with divine honours. During the time that Pilate was governor of Judea, the Jews were much offended at him for setting up the standards of the legions, and made earnest supplications to have them removed. A similar request was made to Vitellius, Proconsul of Syria, who had determined to march his army through Judea. Both these petitions were complied with, when the Roman generals understood that it was contrary to the Jewish laws to suffer images, which were the objects of idolatrous worship, to be brought into their country. They were, therefore, called with the greatest and most striking propriety

priety of language, the *abomination of desolation*; since the erection of them within the limits of the holy place, as Jerusalem is emphatically called, marked the fatal design of the enemy to lay waste the country, and expose it to all the ravages of war. The English translation “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies,” does not preserve the exact sense of the original Greek, which may more literally be rendered, “And when ye shall see Jerusalem encircled with *camps*.” The words thus translated correspond exactly with the fact. Josephus says^p, that “the seditious parties in the city saw with astonishment the Romans measuring out the ground for their camps in three places.”

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round about, and keep thee in on every side.

^p De Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 2.

The Roman army completely encompassed the city^p and enclosed the Jews on every side ; and although it was considered as an impracticable project to surround the whole city with a wall, yet Titus animated his army to make the attempt. In three days they built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs in length, with thirteen towers erected at proper distances, in which, as in garrisons, the Roman soldiers were placed.

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out ; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

We have seen that our Lord prepared his disciples to expect persecution as the trial of their faith, *before* the “ abomina-

^p Bell. Jud. l. v. c. 12.

tion of desolation" was set up in Jerusalem. But to mark the more strongly the wrath of God against the *Jews*, and that "*these* were the days of vengeance" predicted by Moses and the Prophets, in case of their rejection of the Messiah, the *Christians, who endured to the end*, were to be saved from the calamities denounced against Jerusalem. On this occasion the discriminating hand of Providence was to be unusually apparent. *Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, the other left.* And the especial care of Christ over his infant church is most forcibly exemplified by the assurance, that *for the elect's sake* these days of unprecedented affliction *should be shortened.* Our Lord therefore gives his disciples particular directions relative to the means by which they were to save themselves from the approaching danger, and their implicit obedience and consequent

safety

safety are recorded by many writers of that age; by whom it is asserted, that “none of the Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.” Cestius Gallus, who first assaulted Jerusalem, might with ease have taken it, the Jews not being prepared for a siege, and have put an end to the war; but, without any apparent reason, he suddenly raised the siege. Josephus⁹ observes, “this afforded a happy opportunity to many of the eminent Jews to escape from the city, as from a ship that was sinking.” Under the name of Jews thus mentioned by the historian, were included those converts to Christianity who were afterwards known to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem. Warned by the prediction of their Lord, and encouraged by his promise of safety, *that not a hair of their head should perish*, they fled to the mountains of Perea^r, and other

⁹ Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 20.

^r Eusebii Hist. Evang. lib. iii. c. 5.

places

places governed by Agrippa, who was not only an ally of the Romans, but disposed to be a friend to the cause of Christianity. There they found a secure retreat from the storm that was bursting upon their devoted country ; and when Titus was leading on his army to Jerusalem, a great number of the inhabitants of Jericho retired from that city also to the mountains. But the difficulty of subsisting in the mountains, and the dangers to which the Christian Jews were continually exposed from the hatred of their countrymen, and the fury of the Romans, required that *the days should be shortened* for their preservation. Accordingly, we find Titus, contrary to the advice of his officers, resolved to take the city by storm rather than by blockade—the infatuated Jews weakening their force by divisions and mutual slaughters—burning their provisions, which might have lasted many years—and quitting their strongest holds,

which

which Titus himself considered as impregnable^s.

But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

Again does our Lord refer to former Prophecies, and fix the time of their accomplishment. “The land was *now* to be made desolate, and the cities were *now* to be laid waste.” But amidst the horrors of this scene, which impiety and obstinacy had prepared for this guilty people, the helpless condition and peculiar distresses of the feebler sex called forth this pathetic lamentation from our Lord. Direful indeed was the lot of those

• “We have fought,” said Titus to his friends, while viewing the fortifications of the city after it was taken, “with God on our side, and it is God who hath pulled the Jews out of their strong holds; for what could the hands of men or machines effect against these towers?” De Bell. Jud. l. ix. c. 9.
whose

whose circumstances rendered flight impracticable, and aggravated the miseries of a siege. Josephus relates^s, that the houses were filled with women and children, who perished with hunger; and that such was the merciless rage of famine, that mothers were seen to snatch the food from their dying infants. The memorable instance of the lady, who sacrificed the feelings of a mother to the love of existence, was mentioned when we examined the Prophecy of Moses^t. Our Lord probably had this in view, among other examples of the height of wickedness and the extremity of suffering afterwards displayed during the siege, both in this predictive strain of pity, and when, bending beneath the weight of his cross, he checked the lamentations of the “daughters of Jerusalem” for *his* share in the sorrows which this sentence of their countrymen must produce, and

^s De Bell. Jud. lib. 5. c. 10.

^t Page 146.

compassionately directed them rather to bewail the impending miseries which more immediately related to themselves, their families, and their descendants.

Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Though the history of mankind will furnish numerous instances of the hardships and sufferings to which the inhabitants of great and populous cities have been exposed during a protracted siege, yet we may venture to assert, that the detail of the horrible distresses related by an eye witness of the siege of Jerusalem, exceeds any description that can be found in any other author, both in the *nature* and *extent* of the miseries to which it was subjected. Josephus himself remarks, “that all the calamities that ever befel any other nation since the beginning of the world were inferior to those
which

which happened to his countrymen at this awful period of their history." And this fact is corroborated by the opinion of their enemies, who ascribe these extraordinary sufferings to the character of this extraordinary people, as some extenuation of their own oppression and cruelty. Our Lord's emphatic words therefore need not be considered as hyperbolic, but as intended to mark that peculiar accumulation of woe, which the peculiar aggravation of the sins of this people would draw down upon Jerusalem.

There shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect^u.

^u Josephus makes use of the exact words, signs and wonders, *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα*, when speaking of the false Prophets foretold by our Saviour. "If they shall say he is in the desert, go not forth." Josephus says, they drew many people after them into the desert. Tillotson, vol. xiii. p. 118.

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These words clearly relate not only to the prognostics, but to circumstances which happened during the siege. “The tyrannical zealots who ruled the city,” says Josephus^a, “suborned many false Prophets to declare, that aid would be given to the people from heaven. This was done to prevent them from attempting to desert, and to inspire them with confidence. In this manner impostors, abusing the sacred name of God, deluded the unhappy multitude; who, like infatuated men who have neither eyes to see, nor reason to judge, regarded neither the infallible denunciations pronounced by the antient Prophets, nor the clear prodigies that indicated the approaching desolation.” But to guard the Christians against the expectation of his *personal* appearance at that time, our Lord expressly declares, that “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even

^a Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 5.

unto the west, *so* shall the coming of the Son of man be." So sudden and so universal was to be the display of his *power* at this momentous period, when "the sceptre was to be removed from Judah," and the whole world called to "worship at the throne of God and of his Christ."

As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

We must recollect that our Lord thus decisively pronounced the destruction of the Temple, in a time of profound tranquillity, when this spacious, strong, and magnificent edifice was held in universal honour, and supported not more by the enthusiastic attachment of the Jews, than the general veneration of the Gentiles^v. Titus, the Roman General, declared,

^v The Temple was four furlongs in circuit, or a
o
square

clared, at a council of war, his resolution to preserve the Temple, and in his speech to the Jews he expressed the same determination. But the Almighty had decreed its fall^z.—And now, says Josephus^a, the fatal day approached in the revolution of ages, the tenth day of August, emphatically called the “day of vengeance,” in which the first Temple

square of one furlong on each side. In its front were large and lofty galleries, supported by rows of maffy pillars. It was a hundred cubits in height. The pillars were one hundred and fixty-two in number, each twenty-seven feet high, and in thickness as much as three men could embrace. The stones made use of for this building, were twenty five cubits long, eight in height, and twelve in width. Their great dimensions and solidity make the Prophecy the more extraordinary. Calmet, vol. iii. p. 16.

^z Two summers were employed by the Romans in reducing the remoter cities of Judea. Hostilities were suspended during the third year, by commotions at Rome. Jerusalem was taken after a close siege of five months.

^a Bell. Jud. lib. vi. c. 4.

had

had been destroyed by the King of Babylon. A Roman soldier, without receiving any orders—nay, as it appears, contrary to orders^b—threw a flaming brand into one of the windows of the Temple, which set the buildings on fire. With violent outcries the Jews rushed in to extinguish the flames; and spared no effort, not even the risk of life itself, to save that sacred edifice on which they vainly rested their security. Titus, informed of what had happened, hastened to the spot, with his officers and his attendant legions. But in vain he waved his hand, in vain he raised his voice, commanding his soldiers to extinguish the fire; so great was the clamour and tumult, that no attention was paid even to him. Rage and rancour against the Jews hurried on the exasperated Romans with irresistible fury—many were thrown down in the avenues of the

^b Josephus says, he declared himself actuated by a Divine impulse.

Temple—many fell among the burning and smoking ruins of the gates and galleries, and were trodden upon by those who followed them, eager for plunder and for slaughter—numbers of the dead and dying Jews were heaped about the altar, which now afforded no protection, and streams of human blood poured through the outer court. A mixed multitude of nearly 6000 persons, who had fled at the command of an impostor to a gallery yet standing without the Temple, perished at once by the relentless barbarity of the soldiery, who set it on fire, and suffered none to escape.

When Titus saw it impossible to enforce the obedience of his troops, he proceeded to the inner Temple. Struck with the grandeur of the architecture, and the magnificence of the decorations, which surpassed even its fame; and observing that the fire had not yet caught the sanctuary, he renewed with redoubled energy

energy his attempts to stop the flames.— But neither menaces nor intreaties could avail. While he was intent upon the means of its preservation, fire was actually applied to the door-posts of the holy place by one of his soldiers, and the conflagration soon became general.—Titus was obliged to retire, and no one remained to check the horrid carnage which ensued.—Neither the old or the young—neither the priests or common people—neither women or children were spared from the avenging sword; and those who surrendered shared the same fate with those who resisted. The crackling noise of the devouring flame, which now completely enveloped the Temple, vast as was its size, mingled with the shrieks of despair, the groans of the dying, and the clash of arms; and from the extent of the buildings, the lofty hill on which it stood appeared to a distant spectator, as itself burning from its foundations in one terrific blaze.

Thus, according to the “sure word of Prophecy,” was this Temple completely destroyed, though it was equally the wish and the endeavour of the conqueror, and the conquered, to preserve it. The extreme rigour of the Roman discipline, and the prompt obedience of the legions to the voice of their commander, was in this instance violated; and an enthusiastic rage, and an un governable fury hurried them to the work of destruction: and thus, human agents became the instruments of Divine vengeance in opposition to their own determinations.

Titus, still anxious to save the city, not yet involved in the conflagration, again offered the wretched inhabitants their lives, upon condition they laid down their arms.—The flames were rapidly advancing—the houses were crowded with dead, and dying victims of pestilence, famine, and *murder*—upwards

wards of 2000 persons having laid violent hands on themselves, or killed one another by consent, besides the number killed under pretence of sedition, or intended desertion, by the party which governed the city—yet did the desperate madness of their leaders oblige them to reject these terms of mercy.—Incensed by the insolence of a people whom he considered as already conquered, the Roman General gave permission to his soldiers to fall on them with fire and sword, and to make the best of the spoil. Now was the tremendous cup of wrath poured forth in all its bitterness.—Imagination shrinks from the detail of such unprecedented horrors, as Josephus asserts to have continued many days—he alone who saw the dreadful realities could paint them with the force of truth ; and to his description I refer those readers who require more evidence of the unexampled miseries attending this memorable catastrophe ;

strophe ; adding only his concluding remarks^c. “ There never was a city that suffered such miseries, or a race of men from the beginning of the world, who so abounded in wickedness. I am of opinion, that if the Romans had delayed to destroy these impious wretches, the city would have been swallowed up by an earthquake, overwhelmed by the waters, or consumed by fire from heaven, like another Sodom ; for it produced a race of men far worse than those who suffered such punishment.”

Thy enemies will lay thee even with the ground, and they will not leave in thee one stone upon another.

When the soldiers had rested from their horrid work of blood and plunder, Titus gave orders to demolish the foun-

^c Bell. Jud. lib. v. c. 10.

dations

dations of the City and the Temple.— But, that posterity might judge of the glory and value of his conquest, he left three towers standing as monuments of the prodigious strength and greatness of the city; and also a part of the western wall, which he designed as a rampart for a garrison, to keep the surrounding country in subjection. All the other buildings were completely levelled with the ground^d. When Titus came again to Jerusalem in his way from Syria to Egypt, and beheld the sad devastation, he bitterly lamented the cruel necessity which had compelled him to destroy so

^d It is recorded by Maimonides, and likewise in the Jewish Talmud, that Terentius Rufus, an officer in the army of Titus, with a ploughshare tore up the foundations of the Temple, and thus remarkably fulfilled the words of the Prophet Micah; “Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.” Mic. iii. 12.

magnificent a city. And Eleazar, in his address to his countrymen the Jews, pathetically asks, “What is become of our city, which was believed to be inhabited by God? It is rooted up from the very foundations; and the only monument of it that is left, is the camp of those who destroyed it still pitched upon its remains.”

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all nations.

The number that perished during the siege amounted to eleven hundred thousand; and the number of captives to ninety-seven thousand.—These were not all inhabitants of the city; for the Jews, according to their Law, had assembled from all parts to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread; and, in consequence of the rapid advance of the Roman army, were suddenly prevented from re-
turning

turning home; *as a snare shall it come upon them.* This circumstance will account for the great multitudes that were shut up in the city during the siege; and to the vast crouds of people thus unufually pent up, does Josephus impute the plague, and, in part, the famine^c. Of the prifoners Titus reserved the moft handsome youths, and principal persons, to adorn his triumphal proceffion on his return to Rome; and prefented many to the governors of the provinces, to be expofed during the public games to wild beafts, or to the fword.

^c Cestius, in order to convince Nero that he ought not to despife the Jewish nation, defired the priests to number the people who were affembled to celebrate the paffover when he was at Jerufalem: and there were found to be three millions of Jews, including women and children. The aftonifhing numbers of the Jewish people was the fubject of Prophecy. See Chap. II. But to confirm this account as merely an historical fact, we need only look at the *prefent* ftate of population in Cairo, and Pekin.

He^f sent those who were more than 17 years of age to labour in the publick works in Egypt; and those who were under that age were sold for slaves, and sent into different parts of the empire. But eleven thousand of these miserable captives were absolutely starved to death, by the carelessness or cruelty of their guard. During this war with the Romans, one million three hundred and fifty-seven thousand, six hundred and sixty, are particularly enumerated as slain in different places, which are mentioned; and numbers of every age, sex, and condition, are mentioned as having perished at different times, and in different ways, besides these which are particularly enumerated.

“ In the reign of Adrian^g 985 of the best towns in Judea were sacked and demolished, 580,000 men fell by the

^f De Bell. Jud. lib. 6. c. 9.

^g Newton, vol. ii. Diss. 18.

sword in battle, besides an infinite multitude who perished by famine, and sickness, and fire; so that Judea was almost depopulated, and an almost incredible number of every age, and sex, were sold like horses, and dispersed over the face of the earth.”

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

When Adrian visited the eastern parts of the Roman empire, and found Jerusalem a heap of ruins, forty-seven years after its destruction, he determined to rebuild it; but not exactly on the same spot. He called the new city, *Ælia*, after his own name, placed a Roman colony in it, and dedicated a Temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, in the room of the Temple of Jehovah. This profanation of the Holy Place was the great cause of the rebellions and sufferings of the Jews during

during the reign of Adrian. The city was once more taken by them and burnt.—Adrian rebuilt it—re-established the colony—ordered the statue of a hog (which the Jews held in religious abhorrence) to be set up over the gate that opened towards Bethlehem; and published an edict, strictly forbidding any Jew, on pain of death, to enter the city, or even to look at it from a distance. Thus the city remained till the time of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, who greatly improved it, and restored the name of Jerusalem; but the Jews were not permitted to reside there. Attempting in vain to get possession of their capital, Constantine caused their ears to be cut off, their bodies to be marked as rebels, and dispersed them over all the provinces of the empire, as fugitives and slaves. The Emperor Julian, from enmity to the Christians, favoured the Jews; and, in the vain hope of contradicting the Prophecy concern-

ing

ing it, attempted to rebuild the Temple, but was miraculously prevented, and obliged to desist from the undertaking^h. Jovian revived the severe edict of Adrian; and the Greek Emperors continued the prohibition; so that the wretched Jews used to give money to the soldiers for permission to behold and weep over the ruins of their Temple and City, particularly on the return of that memorable day, in which it had been taken by the Romans. In the reign of Heraclius, Chosroes, King of Persia, took and plundered it; but Heraclius soon

^h This attempt of Julian was made A. D. 363, and is recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary Pagan Historian, lib. xxiii. c. 1. It is likewise mentioned by several Christian writers of the same century. For full proofs of the miracle by which this attempt was defeated, see Warburton's Julian.—A similar project was formed by the conspirators against Christianity in France, and the project *failed*. See Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism, p. 185.

recovered possession—In 637, the Christians surrendered Jerusalem to Omar, the Saracen Caliph, who built a mosque upon the site of Solomon's Temple. It remained in the possession of the Saracens above 400 years, and then was taken by the Turks. They retained it till the year 1099, when the Franks took it under Godfrey of Bouloigne, General of the Crusaders. The Franks kept possession 88 years, that is, till 1187, when the Turks, under Saladin, retook it by capitulation, and with them it has remained ever sinceⁱ.

Thus literally has this Prophecy been hitherto fulfilled!—Jerusalem has been thus constantly trodden down of the Gentiles—the Romans, the Saracens, the Franks, and the Turks—Its antient inhabitants have been expelled, and persecuted, and its holy places have

ⁱ Newton, vol. ii. Diff. 20.

been polluted. The eagles of idolatrous Rome, the crescent of the impostor Mahomet, and the banner of Popery carried by the Crusaders, have been successively displayed amidst the ruins of the sanctuary of Jehovah, for nearly 1800 years. But the conclusion of this prediction, “*till* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,” indicates that it shall *not* be trodden down for ever.—

Hitherto the language of this Prophecy has been found clear and explicit; and History has abundantly proved the *literal* accomplishment of all its parts in their first sense and reference to the destruction of Jerusalem. We now come to the bold figures and striking images of oriental diction, suited to the designed obscurity of a Prophecy, which, while it foretold the signal events which
were

were at once to prove the divinity and display the power of the Messiah to Jews and Gentiles, on the *first establishment* of his kingdom, revealed in awful terms the *signs* which shall precede the *second* coming of our Lord, at a *then* distant period, and the manner, the purpose, and the final consequences of His appearance.

The consideration of this Prophecy, as it relates to events yet future, must be referred to another part of this work: my present business is to prove the accurate fulfilment of the Prophecy, as it relates to events which are past.

It has been proved by many learned men, that the language of Prophecy is not of that vague and uncertain signification, which infidelity so eagerly asserts it to be; but that certain symbols were the established signs of certain ideas; and that thus the Prophetic language
may

may be clearly understood by those who are conversant in this species of writing. For instance, great and extraordinary political revolutions, such as the fall of kings and the overthrow of governments, are represented by the antient Prophets, by changes in the course of nature, and disorder among the heavenly bodies—extraordinary commotions among the lowest classes of people, by the raging turbulence, and roaring of the sea. And our Lord in the following Prophecy uses the same metaphors with the same meaning.

Immediately after (or, as it may be translated, amidst) the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven:

¹ Matt. xxiv. 29, &c.

and

and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. These are the words of St. Matthew : St. Mark^k uses nearly the same expressions ; but as St. Luke varies a little from both, I shall insert his relation also^l.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great

^k Mark xiii. 24, &c.

^l Luke xxi. 25, &c.

glory.

glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

^m Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilledⁿ. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. But of
that

^m Matt. xxiv. 32, &c.

ⁿ It has been objected, that the words "till all be fulfilled," must refer, in their primary sense at least, to *all* the events predicted; and Christianity was not *visibly* established in peace, security, and power, till Paganism fell from the throne of the Roman world, in A. D. 312. The context will, I think, remove this difficulty. By the parable of the fig-tree our Lord assures his Disciples, that the signs *immediately* preceding the destruction of Jerusalem should be *so plain*, that the most common attention to passing events would enable them to
see

that day and hour [when the heavens and earth shall pass away] knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the

see and to avoid the impending evils, which he had *as plainly* foretold; and immediately adds, “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till *all these things* be fulfilled.” These words therefore seem obviously restricted, in their primary sense, to the *numerous circumstances* which he had most accurately described as *signs* of that event in which his Disciples felt themselves peculiarly, nay, personally, interested. Especially, as after the solemn affirmation of the truth of a prediction, which at that time must appear so very improbable, and the declaration, that the time appointed for that *distant* “day and hour, when the heavens and the earth shall pass away, was known to the Father only,” our Lord *returns* to the *signs* of his coming to manifest the power of his kingdom, and gives the command to *watch*.

flood

flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

° And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with

° Luke xxi. 29, &c.

surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Without entering into a discussion of the several metaphors in this Prophecy, explained by various commentators as referring, in their first and most immediate application, to the several parts of the Jewish government, and to distinct occurrences which happened soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, it is sufficient to remark, that the complete subversion of the Jewish polity, ecclesiastical and civil—the complete overthrow of Pagan tyranny and superstition—the establishment of the Christian church in the seat of the empire of the world, and its consequent accession of numbers, power, and splen-

splendor, appear to be decisively predicted—It appears also evident, that the great events which were to increase the prevalence of the Christian religion, and fix its open sovereignty in the world, were to happen *suddenly*, and *unexpectedly* to all who were not prepared by the solemn warning which our Lord gave to his Disciples, with a command to *watch*. Let us now turn to the page of history for the accomplishment of these predictions; which, as this Prophecy only points to the great events circumstantially revealed by our Lord to his beloved Disciple St. John *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, shall be stated very concisely.

Our Lord expressly declares, that *all these things*, that is, the solemn train of predictions concerning Jerusalem, *should be fulfilled before the then present generation should pass away*. This Prophecy was delivered in the year of our Lord

33, and Jerusalem was destroyed 37 years afterwards; so that many of the contemporaries of Christ who heard the Prophecy might witness its accomplishment.

The total subversion of the Jewish government, religious and civil, can scarcely be more strikingly represented than by the Decree issued by Vespasian, *immediately* after Jerusalem was destroyed, ordering “all the lands of the Jews to be sold for his own use;” and “all the Jews, wheresoever they dwelt, to pay each man every year the same sum to the Capitol of Rome, that they had before paid to the Temple at Jerusalem.” Thus the land of the whole nation became the *private property* of the Roman Emperor, and the whole people became aliens, and fugitives, and slaves. “The sacrifice and the oblation ceased,” and the Jews have ever since remained without a City, without a Temple, without

without a King, and without a Priest^m; their tribes confounded, their pedigrees lostⁿ, and yet, a people separated and distinguished from all the nations among whom they are scattered, in person, manners, and religion.

We have already seen the Gospel preached to the Gentiles—the church of Christ established—increasing—and at the same time suffering continual persecution from Jews and Heathens, according to the express declarations of our Saviour to his Disciples—we have seen the total abolition of the Jewish Theocracy—“the men of the vineyard *have been* punished by their Lord, for

^m Those who are now called Priests among the Jews, are only *chief Rabbis*, and have little or no authority, or resemblance to the office of *Higb-Priest* established by the Law of Moses.

ⁿ Their pedigrees had been carefully preserved till the appearance of Christ, which may be considered as another proof that he was indeed their expected Messiah.

having slain his son." It only remains for us to direct our attention to the triumph of the persecuted church over Pagan tyranny and superstition.

But here I must beg leave to observe, that complete as this victory was over the *reigning enemy* of the church, and greatly as it extended the apparent dominion of Christ over the nations—Paganism falling before Christianity throughout the Roman empire—yet, does not this great event appear fully adequate to the sublime description which our Lord gives of the triumph, the glory, and the happiness of the church in this most solemn Prophecy.—We might therefore have looked to a future period for its ultimate completion, even if there had not been a Revelation concerning the succeeding corruptions, trials, and persecutions, to which the church was to be subjected previous to the final victory over all its enemies, of which this was but a type.

The

The period of history from the destruction of Jerusalem to the accession of Constantine, excepting only the short reigns of the Septimian family, abounds in a most remarkable degree with the *general* ravages of war, famine, and pestilence. The amazing slaughter of the Jews in the time of Trajan and Adrian, has been already mentioned. The Romans also suffered so severely, that the Emperor Adrian forbore the usual salutation in his Letters to the Senate, in token of general grief and distressⁿ. The reign of Maximin is full of wars and murders, invasions, and rebellions; and in the following fifty years there were more than twenty Emperors, almost all of whom died in war, or were murdered by their own soldiers and subjects. In the reign of Gallienus, the thirty tyrants, or usurpers, who arose in different parts of the empire, occasioned most violent commotions—The dreadful incursions of the Goths and Scythians—the most

ⁿ Newton, vol. iii. p. 61, &c.

destructive pestilence that ever had visited mankind, pervading all the Roman provinces and continuing fifteen years, in the reign of Gallus—the horrible persecution of the Christians for ten years under Diocletian, and the civil wars between Maximian, Galerius, Maximin, Maxentius, Licinius, and other competitors for empire, exhibit together a most awful picture of the convulsive efforts of “the powers of darkness against the kingdom of the Prince of Peace.” Many indeed were in that age impressed by the extraordinary manifestations of the wrath of God. *They mourned, and their hearts failed them for fear, when they saw the Son of man coming in the power of his kingdom.* Galerius°, Maximin, and Licinius, recalled their Decrees and Edicts against the Christians, publicly confessed the guilt of their cruel persecutions, and acknowledged the just judgments of God and of Christ in their destruction.

• Newton, vol. iii. p. 73.

“ A change

“ A change of all the powers in being° was the most characteristic mark of the age from 260 to 312. For, from the time of the setting up of the thirty tyrants, to the time of Constantine [excepting only the short reign of Aurelian, and he carried war into the East] the empire was continually *shaken* and torn; and gradually dismembered by civil wars; and there was no bright sun, or moon in it, no one great ruling potentate, as in the ages preceding; but it became a prey, and was plundered in every part by the Goths and Scythians, and other barbarous nations. The whole period was remarkable only for the expiring pangs and struggles of Pagan tyranny. And at the same time, as if it were on purpose to turn the attention of mankind, to apply this precise part of this Prophecy to these very days; in the beginning of them, in the year 262, most parts of the Empire were visited with a most

• Mr. King.

P 4

grievous

grivous pestilence and famine, attended with dreadful earthquakes, surprizing darkness, and strange lightnings, by all of which many perished; there was an accumulation also of other dire calamities and *shakings*, amongst which, the sea overflowed and drowned whole countries. In the conclusion, the Pagan empire ceased, and those who had supported its dominion lost all power and authority, and were *cast down*, and the whole form of government was changed." "The great lights of the Heathen world, the *sun, moon, and stars*, were all eclipsed and obscured; the Heathen Emperors and Cæsars were slain, the Heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the Heathen officers and magistrates were removed, the Heathen temples were demolished, and their revenues appropriated to better uses^p." The writers of that age celebrate the peace of the church under the protection of the civil

^p Newton, vol. iii. p. 72.

powers,

powers, and the great accession of converts, both Jews and Gentiles, in very triumphant terms. “Tranquillity⁹ being restored throughout the world,” says Lactantius, “the church, which was lately ruined, riseth again. Now after the violent agitations of so great a tempest, a calm air and the desired light became resplendent. Now God hath relieved the afflicted; now he hath wiped away the tears of the sorrowful.” Some medals of Constantine are still preserved, with the head of the Emperor on one side, and this inscription, *Constantinus Aug.* and on the reverse, *Beata Tranquillitas, Blessed Tranquillity*, which continuing uninterrupted till the death of Constantine in 337, the Church enjoyed the promised peace and security and happiness. — “*The angels, or messengers,*” gathered the elect into it from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west; and the power and the

⁹ Newton, vol. iii. p. 78.

glory of the Son of man were visibly established among the nations of the earth⁹.

And now the believer may boldly ask, whether it be possible for an unprejudiced mind to consider this Prophecy with attention, and doubt concerning the reality of Divine inspiration, or the immediate agency of Divine providence? The whole of this Prophetical narrative, when all its parts are viewed together, displays a regular series of events, rising

⁹ It is worthy of remark, that from the time of Constantine to the present age, the church has never been molested by the *avowed enemies of Jesus Christ*. The various Heretics, Mahometans, and Papists, by whom it has been alternately scandalized, and tormented, have all confessed the name of Jesus Christ to be worthy of more or less respect and honour; and his Gospel to be more or less divine, according to their different systems. The inspiration of the Scriptures, and the perfection of the Christian morality, were allowed to be incontrovertible by them all—Let modern infidels consider this!

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gradually to the final catastrophe. First are announced wars, and rumours of wars : next, a period of turbulence, insurrection, and of hostility of one nation against another, attended with plagues, pestilence, and earthquakes. Then follow circumstances immediately relating to the Disciples, and the Religion of Christ—the prospect of persecution—the promise of deliverance from the impending evils, and the assurance of the general publication of the Gospel.—The approach of the Roman armies to Jerusalem—the erection of their idolatrous standards in the Holy Land—the hardships and calamities of the siege—the destruction of the city and the dispersion of the people, are minutely described.—And lastly are foretold, in all the sublimity of metaphoric language, the total abolition of the Jewish government—the complete subversion of Pagan tyranny and superstition, and the triumph of the Christian church.

History, the truth of which has never yet been questioned, records the accurate fulfilment of all these various circumstances and events, in the order in which they were predicted; and the constant testimony of the Jews for more than 1700 years, affords irrefragable evidence to the certainty of the facts related.

And if the Divine authority of this wonderful Prophecy be thus incontrovertibly established, how can it be even plausibly denied, that JESUS was indeed that "PROPHET and LAWGIVER" of whom Moses had predicted, that "Who-so hearkened not unto him, the Lord would require it of him"—the "MESSIAH," "IN WHOM ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH WERE TO BE BLESSED."

The

The historical account which has been given of the accomplishment of the foregoing Prophecies, leads us directly to observe, that as the length of time between the Prophecies and their accomplishment, together with the particularity and minuteness of the circumstances, and the diversity of the agents employed in the execution, render it equally impossible that they should have been foretold by chance, or accomplished by human contrivance; the conclusion, viz. that they were inspired by God, is undeniable.

Having thus established the *truth* of Prophecy upon indisputable ground, I consider the original question, “**WHETHER GOD HAS EVER REVEALED FUTURE EVENTS TO MANKIND,**” as answered to the Reader’s satisfaction; **AND THE SUPERINTENDING PROVIDENCE OF GOD OVER THE WORLD, AS COMPLETELY PROVED.** I beseech him then
to

to examine farther, whether *all* the Prophecies, from the time of our first parent Adam, to the time of St. John, do not evidently point to ONE GREAT SCHEME, to which every other plan of Providence appears subordinate, and ultimately refers—Let him consider the *frequent* intimations of God's will, and *frequent conditional* predictions of punishments or blessings, as *a series of proof* of his superintending care of a people who were to prepare the way for the Messiah—to preserve the knowledge of the promises of God in the world, and to remain as monuments of the truth of Prophecy, when Prophecy itself should cease.—Let him consider the frequent allusions, and direct predictions, relative to the Saviour of the world, beginning with our first parents, and reaching with increasing clearness to the time of the *harbinger* of “the day-spring from on high,” which arose to illumine the whole earth—Let him consider that Jesus, by exactly fulfilling the predictions concerning the Messiah, not only

reconciled man to his Creator, but the volume of the Law and the Prophets to the Gospel, and fully explained that great mystery of redemption and righteousness, to the completion of which, the Typical, the Ceremonial, and the Prophetical dispensations throughout the whole course of the Jewish history, and for no less a period than 4000 years, was made subservient. And if it shall appear, as it surely must appear, that the *great* design of Prophecy, was the establishment of the Christian religion upon the basis of Divine revelation, let him consider that the question, whether he shall receive or reject Christianity, becomes in the highest degree important; because, if it be proved that these Prophecies contain the revealed will of God, it necessarily follows that man is bound to believe and obey the religion of Christ.

In order to display this great design of Prophecy in the most clear and
 strik-

striking point of view that I can imagine possible, I shall subjoin, "The Life of Jesus Christ, as drawn from the Antient Prophets," by Mr. Gilpin^r, and then proceed to point out in the second Part of this Work, additional evidence in support of what has been asserted respecting the extent as well as unity of design in the great scheme of revelation, from the Prophecies which refer to the ages of the world *subsequent* to the establishment of the Christian religion.

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST AS
DRAWN FROM THE ANTIENT
PROPHETS.

"I have divided the whole collection into four sections.—The first exhibits a series of those Prophecies, which contain

^r Gilpin's Exposition of the New Testament, vol. i. p. 45—60,

the

the *earliest*, and most *remote* intimations of the Messiah. They are dark, it is true : but as they plainly appear to *center in one point*, they illustrate each other. Each Prophecy, *considered apart*, might be called obscure ; but the whole series *in combination* emits certainly a very strong light. They begin with predicting a *victory* ; and an *everlasting covenant*, which was to take place *between God, and all the nations of the earth*. Under the ideas of a *tree*, and a *mountain*, they hold out the *grandeur*, and *dignity* of the Messiah's kingdom ; and in a variety of beautiful images, in which all nature is represented in harmony, and the wild beasts of the forest tamed, they exhibit that peace, and happiness, and universal change in the manners of men, which this glorious predicted reign was meant to introduce ; disclosing, at the same time, throughout, its *spiritual nature*, and the *transcendent joy*, with which it ought to be received.

In

In the second section are exhibited those Prophecies, which relate to the *birth* of the Messiah. Here the prophetic language becomes more distinct, and full. Those *general* intimations, which were given before, begin now to *break*, and *particularize*. The same lineaments appear; but the features are more distinctly marked. The section opens with predicting the *fore-runner* of the *Messiah*, in the person of John the Baptist. The Prophecies of the Messiah's *birth* succeed; and the wonderful peculiarity of his being *born of a virgin*. The *place* of his nativity is specified; and the *characteristics* of his office, and the *nature* of his government, are strongly marked.

In the third section I have collected such Prophecies, as appertain to the Messiah's *life*. The whole plan of it indeed is specified with as much precision as the figurative language, in which these predictions are clothed, is able to

con-

convey. He is represented as arrayed in the dignity of a *Prophet*, like Moses; and of a *Priest*, like Melchizedec. At the same time, his *mean*, and *suffering state* on earth is strongly characterized. His *gentleness*, and *holiness*; the great efficacy of his *preaching*; the *offence* he gave to worldly men; his repressing the *spirit of worldly wisdom*; his *triumphant entry* into Jerusalem; and his *divine presence* in the Temple; are all distinctly held out. The *variety*, and even the *kind*, of his *miracles* are specified; and his *pastoral care* is strongly represented by images highly expressive of tenderness, and affection.

In the last section, I have collected such Prophecies, as appertain to the *death* of Christ. Here the Prophetic spirit, as if imagery failed in describing the last scenes of this awful life, ascends from it's lofty flights, and marks the se-

ver

veral circumstances of that solemn period in the plainest terms; but marks them also with almost historical precision. From his being *betrayed* by one of his Disciples, to his *resurrection*, there is scarce a single circumstance, which one, or other of the Prophetic writers hath not mentioned. The bargain made for *thirty pieces* of silver—the *dispersion of the disciples* on the seizing of Jesus—the particulars of his *trial*—the *false witnesses*, that appeared against him—the *usage* of the *soldiers*—the *mode* of his *death*—the *behaviour of his enemies* during that awful period—the *time* of that great event—the *end*, and *intention* of it—the *manner* of his *burial*—and his *triumphant resurrection*—all appear to be so exactly conformable to the history of the New Testament, that we might almost think them plain transcripts from it, if we had not the very best historical evidence, that they were all written,

pub-

published, and well known, many hundred years—the latest of them above four hundred—before the birth of Christ.

SECTION I.

Containing the earliest intimations of the Messiah.

‘I will put enmity between thee (said God to the serpent) and the woman—between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.—‘I will establish my covenant (said God to Abraham) between thee and me; and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*.—Sarah^u thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an *everlasting covenant*, and

^s Gen. iii. 15.

^t Gen. xvii. 7.

^u Gen. xvii. 19.

with ‘

with his seed after him. And^x in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed.—^yI will perform the oath (said God to Isaac) which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed.—In ^zthee, and in thy seed, (said God to Jacob) shall *all the families* of the earth be blessed.—And^a it shall come to pass (said God to David) when thy days shall be expired, and thou shalt go to thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will settle him in mine house *for ever*, and his *throne shall be established for evermore*.—I the Lord have called thee in righteousness: I will keep thee; and

^x Gen. xxii. 18.

^y Gen. xxvi. 3.

^z Gen. xxviii. 14.

^a 1 Chron. xvii. 11. This seems to have been *immediately* spoken of Solomon; who was considered as a type of Christ: but the Prophetic characters are evidently carried beyond a prince, from whose *immediate successor* the kingdom was rent.

give thee for a *covenant* to the people ; for a *light of the Gentiles*.—Thus^b saith the Lord, I will give thee for a *covenant of the people*—to establish the earth—to cause to *inherit* the *desolate* heritages.—Thus^c saith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be days, and nights in their seasons—then may also my *covenant* be broken with my servant David, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne.—There^d shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall go out of his roots. And the *Spirit of the*

^b Isa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 8. If the context be examined, the whole is evidently Prophetic of the Messiah : but I wished here only to retain such passages, as referred to the covenant.

^c Jer. xxxiii. 20. From this Prophecy also that part only is taken, which belongs to the covenant. It could have no respect *personally* to David, or his *immediate* posterity ; for it was spoken five hundred years after David's death.

^d Isaiah xi. 1, 2.

Lord

Lord shall rest upon him; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.—Behold^e the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign, and prosper, and shall execute judgment, and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.—In^f those days will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment, and righte-

^e Jer. xxiii. 5. Here again the same successor is promised to David five hundred years after the death of that prince; which promise had been made before to the Patriarchs, and to that prince himself.

^f Jer. xxxiii. 15.

ousness

ousness in the land.—Thus^g saith the Lord God, I will take the highest branch of the highest cedar; and I will plant it on a high mountain; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit; and be a goodly cedar; and under it *shall dwell all the fowls of every wing*, in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.—Hear^h now, O Joshua the high-priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: Behold I will bring forth *my servant the Branch*.—Thusⁱ saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold the man whose *name is the Branch*; he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall *build the temple of the Lord*, and *he shall bear the glory*, and he shall sit, and *rule upon his throne*^k.—In^l the last days it shall come

^g Ezek. xvii. 22.

^h Zech. iii. 8.

ⁱ Zech. vi. 12.

^k *The Reader is referred to the second Volume of this Work for the consideration of the predictions relative to the kingdom of the Messiah, which are not to be looked upon as yet fulfilled, in their complete and ultimate sense.*

^l Mic. iv. 1.

to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be *established in the top of the mountains*, and it shall be *exalted above the hills*; and the *people shall flow into it*.—The ^m Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion, from *henceforth even for ever*.—And ⁿ it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be *established*; and shall be *exalted above the hills*; and *all nations shall flow unto it*.—And ^o the stone, which was cut out of the mountain *without hands*, shall become a great mountain, and *fill the earth*.—And ^p he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil, that is spread over all nations.

^m Mic. iv. 7.

ⁿ Is. ii. 2.

^o Dan. ii. 35.

^p Is. xxv. 7. There is something extremely grand in thus representing the Gospel as removing the darkness spread over all nations by the drawing up of a vast curtain, to let in the light.

—And

—And⁹ many shall say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and *he will teach* us his ways; and we will walk in *his paths*; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he *shall judge among the nations*, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not rise against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.—The^r wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice-den. And

⁹ If. ii. 3.

^r If. xi. 6.

they shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an *ensign of the people*. To it shall the *Gentiles seek*, and *his rest shall be glorious*.—The ^s scepter shall

^s Gen. xlix. 10. Some have objected that this Prophecy was fulfilled in Moses. But what scepter had Judah before Moses? The word *Sbilob* signifies *sent*; and was always interpreted by the ancient Jews of the Messiah. It is supposed indeed by many interpreters, that Moses himself alluded to this Prophecy, when he expresses his backwardness to God in going to Pharaoh. *Send I pray thee by the hand of him, whom thou wilt send*—that is, by the *Sbilob*, whom thou hast promised. How very exactly this Prophecy was fulfilled, is very apparent. The dispersion of the Jews, independent of Prophecy, is one of the most singular events in the history of mankind: but when we consider it as the completion of Prophecy—when we consider this people dispersed, and wandering among all the nations upon earth—without temples—without

shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, *until Shiloh come*, and unto him shall the *gathering of the people* be.—There[†] shall come *a Star* out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel.—I^u will also give thee for *a light to the Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the *ends of the earth*.—I^x saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days. And there was given unto him *dominion*, and *glory*, and *a kingdom*, that *all people, nations, and languages*, should serve him: *His dominion is an everlasting dominion*, which shall not pass away, and *his king-*

out laws, without government—connected with none; but distinct from all—as if preserved to complete future Prophecies—the whole together, I think, forms an argument of sufficient force to weigh against all the cavils of infidelity.

[†] Numb. xxiv. 17.

^u Isaiah xlix. 6.

^x Dan. vii. 13.

dom, that which *shall not be destroyed*.—The^γ God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall *never be destroyed*: but shall stand for ever.—Behold^z I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings—O^a Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength. Lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, *Behold your God*.—Sing,^b O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath *comforted his people*, and will have mercy on his afflicted.—Unto^c you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

^γ Dan. ii. 44.

^a Isaiah xl. 9.

^c Mal. iv. 2.

^z Isaiah xli. 27.

^b Isaiah xlix. 13.

SECTION II.

Containing those Prophecies, which relate to the birth of the Messiah.

The^d voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight* in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Behold^e I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.—I^f will send my messenger, and he shall prepare

^d Isaiah xl. 3. By mountains, and rough ways, the Prophet indicates the moral difficulties, which the Gospel tended to remove.

^e Mal. iv. 5.

^f Mal. iii. 1.

the way before me: and the *Lord*, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple—even the *messenger of the covenant*, whom ye delight in: behold *he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts*.—I^g have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. I will give thee *the heathen* for thine inheritance, and the *utmost parts of the earth* for thy possession.—The^h Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold, a *Virgin shall conceive*, and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel*.—Andⁱ thou, *Bethlehem Ephrath*, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet *out of thee* shall he come forth, who is to be the ruler *in Israel*: whose goings forth have been from of old, from ever-

^g Psal. ii. 6. This Prophecy of *the heathen*, and *the utmost parts of the earth as a possession*, is, in other language, the old patriarchal promise, *In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*.

^h Isaiah vii. 14.

ⁱ Mic. v. 2.

lasting.

lasting.—The * people that walked in *darkness*, have seen a *great light*: they that dwell in the land of the *shadow of death*, upon them hath the *light shined*. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon *his* shoulder: and his name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be *no end*.

SECTION III.

Containing those Prophecies, which relate to the Life of the Messiah—his Preaching, and his Miracles.

I¹ will raise them a *Prophet from among their brethren* (said God to Moses) *like unto*

Isaiah ix. 2. 6.

¹ Deut. xviii. 18. That no Prophet ever did arise in Israel, *like unto Moses*, is taken notice of by

unto thee; and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them *all that I shall command him*.—He^m hath no *form, nor comeliness*: and when we shall see him, there is no *beauty* that we should desire him. He is *despised and rejected* of men—a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*: and we hid as it were our faces from him. He was *despised*, and we esteemed him not.—Heⁿ shall not *cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street*. A bruised reed shall he not break: and smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth

Samuel, or whoever added the concluding part to the Pentateuch. See Deut. xx. 10. The great leading characters in Moses, is his *delivering Israel, and introducing a new law*. These characters agree only in the Messiah. The great difference was, that his *deliverance* and his *law* were *universal, and perpetual*; those of Moses, *local, and transitory*.

^m Isaiah liii. 2.

ⁿ Isaiah xlii. 2. This Prophecy sets the mildness and quietness of the Messiah, in opposition to the severe and spirited character of the Prophets.

judgment

judgment unto truth.—How^o beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth *good tidings*—that *publisheth peace*—that *publisheth salvation*—that saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth*. Sing^p and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo! I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee. And *many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people*: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know, that the Lord hath sent me unto thee. —Behold^q my Servant, whom I have chosen—mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth *judgment to the Gentiles*. He shall not be discouraged, till he have set *judgment in the earth*: and the *isles shall wait for his law*. —He^r shall not judge after the *sight of his eyes*, neither reprove after the *bearing*

^o Isaiah lii. 7.

^p Zech. ii. 10.

^q Isaiah xlii. 4.

^r Isaiah xi. 3.

of his ears ; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity^s: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked^t: Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. —The^u Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted—to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.—And^x many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he

^s That is, he shall not take cognizance of actions from his senses ; nor according to outward appearance.

^t That is, the doctrine which he preaches shall make the eternal separation of good and bad.

^u Isaiah lxi. 1.

^x Mic. iv. 2.

will

will teach us *his ways*, and we will walk in *his paths* : for *the Law shall go forth out of Zion*, and the *word of the Lord from Jerusalem*.—He^y shall be a *stone of stumbling*, and a *rock of offence* to both the *houses of Israel*.—This^z is the *Lord's doing*, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the *day*, which *the Lord hath made* ; we will rejoice, and be glad.—Behold^a I lay in *Zion, for a foundation, a stone* ; a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ; he that *believeth*, shall not *be confounded*.—I^b will do a marvellous work among this people. The *wisdom of their wise men shall perish*, and the *understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*.—Rejoice^c greatly, O daughter of Zion ; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : Behold thy king cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation,

^y Isaiah viii. 14.

^z Psal. cxviii. 22.

^a Isaiah xxviii. 16.

^b Isaiah xxix. 14.

^c Zech. ix. 9.

lowly,

lowly, and *riding upon an afs*, and a colt the foal of an afs. I^c will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The *glory of this latter house* shall be greater than of the *former*; and in *this* place will I give *peace*, saith the Lord of hosts.—Then^d shall the *eyes of the blind* be opened, and the *ears of the deaf* shall be unstopped. Then shall the *lame* man leap as an hart, and the *tongue of the dumb* man shall sing.—He^e shall bring out the *prisoners*, and them that sit in *darkness*, out of the prison-house. He^f shall say to the *prisoners*, Go forth; to them that sit in *darkness*, Shew yourselves.—He^g shall *feed his flock* like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs

^c Hag. ii. 7, 9.

^d Isaiah xxxv. 5. It is observed, that no Prophet wrought such miracles as these, but Christ.

^e Isaiah xlii. 7. The idea of a prison, and prisoners, is very often applied to a state of heathenism.

^f Isaiah xlix. 9.

^g Isaiah xl. 11.

with

with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.—They^h shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. They shall feed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in all high places.

S E C T I O N I V.

Containing such Prophecies as relate to the Death, Atonement, Resurrection, and Exaltation of the Messiah.

Yeaⁱ, even mine own *familiar friend*, in whom I trusted, who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great *wait* for me.—And^k I said, If ye think good, give

^h Isaiah xlix. 10.

ⁱ Psal. xli. 9.

^k Zech. xi. 12.

me my price ; and if not, forbear : so they weighed for my price *thirty pieces of silver*, and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.—*Smite*¹ the *shepherd*, and the *sheep* shall be *scattered*.—He^m was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he *opened not his mouth* : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is *dumb*, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment : and who shall declare his generation ?—Falseⁿ witnesses did rise up against me ; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. As^o for me, I was like a deaf man, and heard not ; and as one that is dumb, and doth not open his mouth.—Many^p *dogs* are come about me,

¹ Zech. xiii. 7.

^m Isaiah liii. 7.

ⁿ Psal. xxxv. 11.

^o Psal. xxxviii. 13.

^p Psal. xxii. 16. This Prophecy is descriptive of the Messiah's being put into the hands of the *beaten*. The word *dog* was universally applied by the

me, and the counsel of the wicked hath inclosed me.—I⁹ gave my *back to the smiters*, and my *cheeks* to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and *spitting*.—They^r shall *smite* the judge of Israel with a *rod upon the cheek*.—They^s gave me *gall* to eat; and when I was thirsty, they gave me *vinegar* to drink. They^t *pierced* my *hands* and my *feet*. They *parted* my *garments* among them, and *cast lots on my vesture*.—And^u one shall say, what are these *wounds in thy hands*? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.—My^x God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me?—All they that go by *laugh me to scorn*: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads,

the Jews to the heathen. Thus our Saviour too applies it. See Matt. xv. 26.

⁹ Isaiah l. 6.

^r Mic. v. 1.

^s Psal. lxi. 21.

^t Psal. xxii. 17.

Zech. xiii. 6.

^x Psal. xxii. 1.

saying.

saying, *He trusted in God to deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him.*—It will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The *sun* shall be turned into *darkness*, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.—Seventy² weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to *finish the transgression*, and to *make an end of sins*, and to make *reconciliation for iniquity*, and to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to *anoint the most Holy*. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and three-score

¹ Joel ii. 30.

² Dan. ix. 24.

and

and two weeks the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three-score and two weeks shall *Messiah be cut off*, but *not for himself*.—Surely^a he hath *borne our griefs*, and *carried our sorrows* : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was *wounded for our transgressions*, he was *bruised for our iniquities* : the chastisement of *our* peace was upon *him*, and with *his stripes we* are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on *him* the *iniquity of us all*. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief. Thou shalt make his *soul an offering for sin*. He hath poured out his soul unto death ; and he was *numbered with transgressors*, and he shall bear the *sins of many*, and make *intercession for*

^a Isaiah liii. 4.

transf-

transgressors^b.—And^c I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications: and *they shall look upon him, whom they have pierced*, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son.—A^d *bone of him shall not be broken*.—In^e that day there shall be a *fountain opened* to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for *sin*, and for *uncleanness*.—He^f made his *grave with the wicked*, and with the *rich in his death*.—Why^g do the heathen so furiously rage

^b There are similar expressions in the 40th Psalm: *My sins have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up*; is a passage explained by 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*. Indeed the whole 40th Psalm is applied by many learned expositors to Christ.

^c Zech. xii. 10.

^d Ex. xii. 46.

^e Zech. xiii. 1.

^f Isaiah liii. 9.

^g Psal. ii. 1.

together? The kings of the earth stand up; the *rulers take counsel against the Lord*, and against his *anointed*—He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn. The Lord shall have them in derision.—Thou^h shalt not leave my *soul* in *hell*; neither shalt thou suffer thine *holy One* to see *corruption*.—Afterⁱ two days he will revive us, on the *third day* he will *raise us up*, and we shall live in his sight.—I^k know that my *Redeemer liveth*, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.—I^l will ransom *them from the power of the grave*: I will *redeem* them from *death*: O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruc-

^h Psal. xvi. 10.

ⁱ Hof. vi. 2. In this passage, and in others, the Prophets speak in the plural: but it was a common idea to consider Christ as rising, accompanied with all the faithful. Thus St. Paul: *If we believe that Jesus died and rose again; even so them which sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him.*

^k Job xix. 25.

^l Hof. xiii. 14.

tion,

tion.—The^m Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Zion: be thou ruler even in the midst of thine enemies. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with a holy worship. The Lord sware, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

“ I shall conclude this whole collection of Prophecies, with an excellent passage

^m Psal. cx. 1. The whole Psalm from whence this passage is taken, is commonly contrasted with the twenty-second, which contains a full Prophecy of the *humiliation* of Christ; as this does of his *exaltation*. They are both quoted in this light frequently by our Saviour, and his Apostles.—The seventy-second and eighty-ninth Psalms seem to relate to the *establishment of the Messiah's kingdom*. They are full of expressions, which cannot possibly relate to David; or to any other subject.

from

from Bishop Hurd's Sermons on Prophecy."

"The argument from Prophecy lies merely in the evidence produced, that certain passages were delivered in the Old Testament; and have been fulfilled by certain correspondent events related in the New. The argument doth in no degree depend on faith; but is calculated to produce it. It is equally strong, or equally weak, to a Christian, or a Jew, or an unbeliever—the sole point in question being this, whether such things, as were prophetically delivered, appear to have been fulfilled—a point, on which common sense, and common honesty will equally decide, on every supposition."

Sermon V. p. 154.

END OF VOL. I.