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A KEY  
TO  
THE OLD TESTAMENT  
AND  
APOCRYPHA:

OR AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR SEVERAL BOOKS,  
THEIR CONTENTS AND AUTHORS,  
AND OF THE TIMES IN WHICH THEY WERE RESPECTIVELY WRITTEN.

BY  
ROBERT GRAY, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL.

TO WHICH IS ADDED  
A KEY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BY  
THOMAS PERCY, D.D.

LATE LORD BISHOP OF BROMORE.

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR THOMAS TEGG,

No. 73, CHEAPSIDE.

1842.



**(RECAP)**

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VINCENT, PRINTER, OXFORD.

TO THE

REV. JOSEPH HOLDEN POTT, A. M.

PREBENDARY OF LINCOLN, AND ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBAN'S.

DEAR SIR,

THE happiness I enjoy from that friendship with which you have long honoured me, and the reverence I entertain for the various excellencies of your character, excite me to profit by every occasion of expressing towards you my sentiments of sincere acknowledgment and lively regard.

At the first appearance of the following work, I did not think myself authorized to indulge my wishes in dedicating it to you, because it had not been previously submitted to your examination. Aware of that just veneration for the sacred volume which you derive from an intimate acquaintance with its contents, I knew with what concern you would find your name employed to sanction an account of the inspired writings, if that account should prove unworthy of your countenance. Since, however, the work has experienced a favourable reception, and you yourself have stamped a value on it by your approbation, I do not hesitate, though still without your permission, to inscribe to you the first fruits of my application to those studies which you

have assiduously encouraged me to pursue. I could not, I trust, offer you a more welcome tribute, than a proof of my admiration of those Holy Scriptures, of which, by your judicious and elegant remarks, you have often pointed out the perfections, and of which you constantly illustrate the beneficial influence by the distinguished example of your conversation and life.

I beg at the same time to remain, with sincere and affectionate respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful and obedient Servant,

ROBERT GRAY.

## PREFACE.

THE useful Key to the New Testament published by Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, first suggested the idea of the present work. It was apprehended that a similar assistant to the perusal of the Books of the Old Testament would prove equally convenient to those, who have neither leisure nor opportunities to consult larger publications for scattered information. A difference in the character of the books here treated of, has compelled the editor to adopt a more diffusive and discursive method of conducting his subject, than that which is followed by the learned Bishop. The uncertainty of the dates and authors of some books, the objections to opinions generally established, and the mixed character, and miscellaneous contents of the works considered, have necessarily occasioned complicated and extended discussions.

The editor was desirous of exhibiting, in one point of view, the probable period of each book, the character and design of its author, and the proofs of or objections to its inspiration. He wished to present the reader with a general idea of the respective importance of each, of its intrinsic pretensions, and external sanctions; and to furnish, in a compendious description, whatever

might contribute to illustrate its history and contents. This the editor has done in a manner as concise as possible, considering it consistent with his plan to prefix general information and remarks as introductory, and separately to examine such questions as were immediately connected with the scope of the individual book. He judged it improper to deliver opinions, without stating the reasons on which they were founded; or to adopt decisions on disputed or doubtful points, without producing, at least, the most important objections that might be urged against them, lest the reader should be led to decide on partial grounds.

Since the books often contain passages of obscure interpretation and doubtful import, as likewise dates, names, and other particulars, upon the explanation of which their character for antiquity and authority must in some measure rest, it was impossible sometimes to avoid critical and chronological questions. In consequence of these, the notes have been increased in number and extent, beyond what was at first intended. The reader will, however, hereby be saved the trouble of referring to commentators; or, if unwilling to acquiesce in the decision adopted, he may readily find the foundation and authorities on which it was established.

As the inspiration of the canonical books was to be proved, it was often requisite to point out the accomplishment of prophecy; which, therefore, the editor has done, in the most signal instances, though commonly by reference only and cursory observation. He presumes, however, that he has thereby often

unfolded an interesting scene, or opened a fruitful source of instructive inquiry. The importance, likewise, of some discoveries and remarks which learned commentaries have furnished, has sometimes tempted the editor to introduce particulars that may be thought too minute for a general and compendious introduction; but he has usually endeavoured to confine himself to such comments as contribute to general illustration, or are explanatory of passages immediately subjected to the reader's attention. He apprehends, that if the reader should occasionally discover observations which reflect only an oblique or partial light on the sacred volume, he will not be displeased, even though it should appear that a larger space is thereby allotted to some books than their comparative importance might seem to justify.

It was thought expedient, also, occasionally to advert to those popular mistakes and light objections which float in society, and operate on weak minds to the prejudice of the sacred books; as the editor was conscious, that fairly to state was to refute them, and that they produce more than their due effect, because indistinctly viewed. In consequence of this design, he may, perhaps, be thought to have introduced remarks too obvious and trivial. The sincere and dispassionate inquirer after truth, who has deliberately weighed the evidence on which the scriptures rest, cannot readily believe that a passage partially considered, a misconception of a revealed design, or a fancied inconsistency with preconceived opinions, should be allowed to

affect the character, or diminish the influence of the sacred books; but experience fully proves, that these are the foundations on which ignorance and infidelity ground their disrespect for the inspired writings.

The editor has been cautious, in treating of the canonical and apocryphal books, to discriminate their respective pretensions with accuracy: since, however valuable the latter may be considered for their general excellence, it is necessary to keep inviolate, and free from all intermixture, that consecrated canon in which the holy oracles were preserved by the Jews, which was stamped as infallible by the testimony of Christ and his apostles, and which, in the first and purest ages of the church, was revered (together with the inspired books of the New Testament) as the only source of revealed wisdom.

The whole design of the editor has been to assist the reader to form a just idea of the Old Testament, and of those uninspired books which were written under the first dispensation, and to furnish him with such introductory intelligence as may enable him to read them with pleasure and advantage. He lays claim to no praise, but that of having brought into a regular form such information as he could collect from various works. He acknowledges himself, in the most unrestrained terms, to have borrowed from all authors of established reputation such materials as he could find, after having deliberately considered and impartially collated their accounts. He has appropriated such obvious information as was to be collected from those

writers who are universally known to have treated on the sacred books;\* and he has endeavoured further to enrich and substantiate his accounts by diligent and extensive research. He has not wished to conceal the sources from which he has drawn his information; nor has he scrupled, in some minute instances, to employ the words of those writers from whom he has borrowed. He has often produced numerous authorities; not for ostentation, but to confirm interesting particulars, and to assist those who may be inclined to investigate facts, or to pursue the subject under consideration. In important and controverted points, he has industriously consulted the authorities on which his assertions rest; but in matters of little moment, and where there could be no reason to suspect misrepresentation, he has sometimes taken up with cited references. He has adopted that plan which he thought would render his book most generally useful; and presumes, that the uninformed may find it an instructive, and the learned a convenient compilation.

\* As St. Jerom, Grotius, Huet, Calmet, Du Pin, Patrick, Lowth, &c.





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## INTRODUCTION.

THE Bible, which in its original import implies only the book,<sup>a</sup> is a word appropriated, by way of eminence, to that collection of Scriptures which have at different times been composed by persons divinely inspired. It contains the several revelations delivered from God to mankind for their instruction. Those communicated before the birth of Christ, are included under that division of the Bible which is distinguished by the title of the Old Testament,<sup>b</sup> and of that division only it is here meant to treat. The Old Testament comprehends all those sacred books which were written by the descendants of Israel, a people selected by God for important purposes, to "be a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."<sup>c</sup> Among this people, successive prophets and inspired writers were appointed by God to convey such prophecies and instructions as were instrumental to the designs of his providence. As these scriptures were produced, they were admitted into the sacred volume, which by gradual accumulation at length increased to its present size. These being delivered to the Hebrews, in their own language,<sup>d</sup> with every mark that could characterize divine revelations, were received with reverence, and preserved with the most anxious care and attention. Such only were accepted, as proceeded from persons unquestionably invested with the prophetic character,<sup>e</sup> or evidently authorized by a divine commission, who acted under the sanction of public appointment and miraculous support. The books which contained the precepts of the prophets, contained also the proofs of their inspiration, and the testimonies of their character. By recording contemporary

<sup>a</sup> Βιβλίον vel βιβλία, Liber, from βιβλος, an Egyptian reed, of the skin of which paper was made. Chrysost. vol. x. p. 349. and Heum. de Origin. Nom. Bib. The Bible is by the Jews called Mikra, Lecture: thus the Koran means the reading:

<sup>b</sup> Testament signifies covenant, agreeably to the import of the Hebrew word Berith. Hieron. in Malach. cap. ii.

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xix. 6; xxxiii. 16; Levit. xx. 24, 26; Psalm cxlvii. 19; Rom. iii. 2; ix. 4.

<sup>d</sup> The Hebrew language, if not the first language of man, seems at least to have as high pretensions to antiquity as any other. The books of the Old Testament are the only writings now extant in pure Hebrew.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

events, they appealed to well known evidence of their authority, their impartiality, and their adherence to truth; and every succeeding prophet confirmed the character of his predecessor, by relating the accomplishment of prophecy in the history of his own period, or bore testimony to his pretensions by repeating and explaining his predictions.

To the writings of these inspired persons, other productions were afterwards annexed, on account of their valuable contents and instructive tendency, though their claims to inspiration have been justly rejected. Such only as were undeniably dictated by the Spirit of God, were considered by the Jews as canonical,<sup>f</sup> and such only are received by us as a rule of faith and doctrine. The contents of the first division of the Bible are therefore distinguished into two classes. The first containing the books of acknowledged inspiration; the second comprising those which are entitled Apocryphal, as being of dubious or suspected character and authority. The latter will be spoken of in a proper place; as in the present preliminary dissertation it is purposed to treat of such only as are canonical, and to trace a short sketch of their history in a general way, a particular account of each individual book being reserved for a separate chapter.

Though the books of the Old Testament are not always chronologically arranged according to the order in which they were written, yet the Pentateuch was probably the first of those productions which are contained in the inspired volume.

These five books, written by the hand of Moses, and consequently free from error, were secured as a sacred deposit in the tabernacle, where the ark of the covenant was placed;<sup>g</sup> and were kept there, as well during the journey through the wilderness, as for some time after at Jerusalem. To the same sanctuary were consigned, as they were successively produced, all those historical<sup>h</sup> and prophetic books which were written from the time of Joshua to that of David, including their own works; during which period a series of prophets flourished in regular succession. Solomon, having afterwards erected a temple to the honour of

<sup>f</sup> The word Canon is derived from *κανών*, which may be interpreted, a rule or catalogue. Athan. vol. x. p. 228. Hieron. vol. x. p. 41. It here means a rule of doctrine.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. xxxi. 26.

<sup>h</sup> The books do not stand in the order

in which they were written: they were perhaps not arranged at first according to dates, or they might have been accidentally transposed in the manuscript rolls: in different versions they are differently placed. Dupin Dissert. Prel. lib. i. c. 1. sect. 7.

God,<sup>1</sup> appointed that in future the sacred books should be deposited in this holy receptacle, and enriched the collection by the inspired productions of his own pen. After him, a succession of illustrious prophets continued to denounce vengeance against the disobedience of the Hebrew nation, and to predict the calamities which that disobedience must inevitably produce. Jonah, Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah, successively flourished before the destruction of the temple, and contributed, by their unerring predictions, to demonstrate the attributes and designs of Providence, and to enlarge the volume of inspired wisdom by invaluable additions.

About four hundred and twenty years after its foundation,<sup>2</sup> the temple being rifled and burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, the original manuscripts of the law and of the prophetic writings must have been removed, and were possibly carried to Babylon; except indeed we suppose, that the part of the Hebrew nation which remained at Jerusalem obtained permission, or found means to retain them.<sup>1</sup> Those Hebrews who were dispersed in the captivity, probably used such copies as had been previously distributed; though Daniel, who refers to the law,<sup>m</sup> might, by his interest with the Babylonish kings, have procured access to the original, if we suppose it to have been transferred to Babylon. Within the seventy years during which the Jews were detained in captivity, were composed the affecting Lamentations of Jeremiah, the consolatory prophecies of Ezekiel, and the history and prophecies of Daniel. On the accession of Cyrus to the throne of Persia, the Jews, being released from their captivity, returned to Jerusalem about A. M. 3468, having doubtless procured or recovered the original books of the Law and of the Prophets, with a design to place them in the temple; which, after much opposition from the Samaritans, they rebuilt in about twenty years, being encouraged to persevere in this pious work by the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah; they also restored the divine worship according to the law. About fifty years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra, who, since the return from Babylon,

<sup>1</sup> The temple was dedicated about A. M. 3000.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus says, four hundred and seventy; others, four hundred and twenty-eight. Usher, four hundred and twenty-four years. It was destroyed about five

hundred and eighty-six years before Christ.

<sup>1</sup> In the account of the things carried to Babylon, no mention is made of the sacred books. 2 Kings xxv; 2 Chronicles xxxvi; Jerem. liii.

<sup>m</sup> Dan. ix. 11, 13.

had been engaged in restoring the Jewish church, is related by tradition to have made, in conjunction with the great synagogue, a collection of the sacred writings;<sup>8</sup> and being assisted by the Holy Spirit, he was enabled to discriminate what was authentic and divine, and to reject such parts as rested but on false pretensions: this collection was, therefore, free from error, and rescued from all accidental corruptions. It must be observed, however, that as a long residence in Chaldea, during which the Jews were dispersed and separated from each other, had so far precluded the use of the Hebrew letters that they were almost forgotten and superseded by those of Chaldea, Ezra, partly in compliance with custom, and partly to differ from the Samaritans, which obnoxious sect employed the old Hebrew letters, substituted the Chaldean or square letters, which we now call the Hebrew, for those which prevailed previously to the captivity,<sup>9</sup> as we changed our old black letter for the Roman characters. There have, indeed, been some disputes on this subject, but this opinion seems to be best supported.<sup>p</sup>

To this genuine collection of Ezra, were afterwards annexed his own sacred writings, as well as those of Nehemiah and of Malachi. These were probably inserted into the Canon by Simon the Just, who is related to have been the last of the great synagogue,<sup>q</sup> and by this addition was completed the Canon of the Old Testament; for from Malachi, no prophet arose till the time of John the Baptist, who, as it were, connected the two

<sup>8</sup> Nehem. viii. 1, 3, 9. Joseph. lib. i. cont. Apion. Tract. Megil. in Gemar, cap. 3. Hieron. cont. Helv. cap. 1. Hilar. Prolog. in Psalm. August. de Mirab. Sac. Scrip. lib. ii. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. cap. 1. Geneb. Chron. p. clxxxiii. and celi. et ad A. M. 3640. Jans. ad Cap. 48. Eccles. Buxtorf. Tiberius, cap. 11. Com. in Masor. Theodor. Præf. in Psalm. Frid. Connect. part i. book 5. Dupin Diss. Prel.

<sup>9</sup> Some assert also, that Ezra introduced the points, or characters which serve to mark the Hebrew vowels; others maintain, that these are as ancient as the language; and a third class, that they were invented by the doctors of the school of Tiberias, generally called the Masorites, about five hundred years after Christ, or, as some say, later. The Masorites seem to have been a succession of critics, professing a traditional science of reading the scripture, as the Cabalists did of interpreting it.

<sup>p</sup> This account is founded on a Jewish tradition generally received, and is related on the testimonies of Eusebius and St. Jerom; but those who maintain that the square were the ancient Hebrew letters, have attempted to invalidate these authorities. The Canon, however, was certainly composed about the time of Ezra, if not by himself. Vid. Euseb. Chron. ad A. M. 4740. Hieron. Præf. ad 2 Reg. Com. in Ezekiel, in Prol. Gal. et Sixt. Senens. lib. ii. Biblioth. Sanct. Morin. Cong. Orat. Also Scaliger, Bochart, Casaubon, Vossius, Grotius, Walton, and Capellus.

<sup>q</sup> The great synagogue is a term applied by the Jews to a succession of elders, supposed to have amounted to one hundred and twenty, who had the government of the Jewish church after the captivity. They are said to have superintended and closed the Canon of the Scriptures. Vid. Frid. Con. An. 292.

covenants, and of whom Malachi prophesied, that he should precede the great day of the Lord.<sup>r</sup>

This Canon of the Old Testament was by the Jews computed to contain twenty-two books,<sup>s</sup> a number analogous to that of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and corresponding with the catalogue of those which are received by our church as canonical. With the Jews, however, Judges and Ruth were reckoned but as one book; as likewise the two books of Samuel, those of Kings and of Chronicles, were respectively united into single books; Ezra and Nehemiah were also joined together, as the prophecies and lamentation of Jeremiah were taken under one head; so that if we consider the twelve minor prophets, as they were comprehended in the Jewish Canon, as one book, the number of the books will be exactly twenty-two. If the prophets wrote any other books, they are now lost; but as no more were admitted into the Canon, we have reason to suppose that no more were inspired, though many other books are mentioned and referred to in the scriptures, which having no pretensions to inspiration, were never received into the sacred list.<sup>t</sup> These twenty-two books have an unquestionable title to be considered as the genuine and inspired productions of those authors to whom they are severally assigned. They contain prophecies, and every other intrinsic proof of their divine origin; they were received as authentic by the Hebrews, and pronounced to be inspired oracles by the evangelical writers, who cite them as complete and uncorrupted. They were likewise considered as exclusively canonical in the Christian church, during the four first centuries; after which, some provincial councils attempted to increase the number by some apocryphal books, which, however, they annexed only as of secondary authority, till the

<sup>r</sup> Malach. iv. 5.

<sup>s</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Hieron. Prol. Galeat. Sixt. Senens, lib. i. c. 2. Epiphani. &c.

<sup>t</sup> Orig. Hom. i. in Cant. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 38. quæst. 42. in Numb. It has been said, likewise, that some passages are cited by the evangelists, as from the prophetic writings, which are not extant in them, as in Matt. ii. 23; but St. Matthew might here allude to Judges xiii. 5, or to Isaiah xi. 1, where, according to St. Jerom, "a branch shall go out of his root," might be translated, "a Nazarite

shall grow from his root;" or he might refer to the prophetic accounts in general, which had foretold that Christ should be consecrated to God, as all the Nazarites were. The evangelists usually cite more according to the sense than to the words; and they sometimes perhaps allude to well known traditional prophecies, to "that which was spoken by the prophets." See other instances in Ephea. v. 14; 2 Tim. iii. 8; James iv. 5; Jude 14, 15; which refer to passages not now extant, or to traditional relations. Hieron. de Opt. Gen. Interpr. vol. i. p. 122.



council of Trent pronounced them to be equally infallible in doctrine and truth.<sup>u</sup>

The Jews divided the sacred books into three classes.<sup>x</sup> The first, which they called the Law, contained, as was before observed, the five books of Moses. The second originally included thirteen books, which they considered as the words of the prophets. The third comprised four books, called by the Jews, Chetubim, and by the Greeks, Hagiographa; these are conceived to have been the Psalms, and the three books of Solomon.<sup>y</sup> The scriptures were so divided in the time of Josephus,<sup>z</sup> probably without any respect to superiority of inspiration, but for distinction and commodious arrangement. From the time of St. Jerom, the second class has been deprived of some books,<sup>a</sup> which have been thrown into the third class; and the Hebrew doctors have invented many fanciful refinements, concerning the nature and degrees of inspiration which are to be ascribed to the books of each class respectively. They assign an higher authority to the books of the two first divisions, though they attribute also the writings included in the third class to the suggestion of the sacred Spirit.<sup>b</sup> It would be idle to trouble the reader with the discussion of these, and such-like rabbinical conceits; and it may be sufficient here to remark upon this subject, that though the scripture mentions different modes by which God communicated his instructions to the prophets, and particularly attributes a superior degree of eminence to Moses, yet that these differences, and this distinction, however they may affect the dignity of the minister employed, cannot be supposed to increase or to lessen the certainty of the things revealed. Whatever God condescended to communicate to mankind by his servants, must be equally infallible and true,<sup>c</sup> whether derived from immediate converse with him, from an external voice, or from dreams or visions, or lastly from the internal and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. The mode of communication, where the agency of Providence is established, can in no respect exalt or depreciate the intrinsic character of the thing revealed.

<sup>u</sup> Preface to the apocryphal books.

<sup>x</sup> Prolog. to Ecclus. Philo de Vita Contemp. p. 691.

<sup>y</sup> Sixt. Senen. Bib. Sac. cap. 6. p. 313. and Vitrin. Observat. Sac. lib. vi. cap. 6. p. 313.

<sup>z</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>a</sup> Job, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, two books of Chronicles.

<sup>b</sup> Maimon. Mor. Nevoch. ch. 34; and Smith on Prophecy; also Mian. Jud. c. 3. n. 5. Bava Bathra, cap. 1.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Other divisions, besides that already mentioned, were afterwards adopted, and the order of the books was sometimes changed, as design or accident might produce a transposition; but no addition or diminution whatever was permitted to be made among the Jews:<sup>d</sup> “never any man,” says Josephus, “hath dared to add to, or to diminish from, or to alter aught in them;” though other books were written which deserved not the same credit, because there was no certain succession of prophets from the time of Artaxerxes; and it was a maxim ingrafted into the Jews in their youth, to esteem these writings as the oracles of God, and remaining constant in their veneration, willingly to die for them, if necessary.” Thus were they consigned to the reverent acceptance of posterity, and consecrated by the approbation and testimony of Christ himself, who stamped as authentic the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms;<sup>e</sup> (the Psalms, comprehending under that title the Hagiographa;)<sup>f</sup> the apostles likewise confirmed the same.<sup>h</sup>

Besides the great temple at Jerusalem, many synagogues were founded after the return from the captivity, and furnished by the industry of the rulers of the church with copies of this authentic collection of the scriptures; so that though Antiochus Epiphanes, in the persecution which he carried on against the religion of the Jews, tore in pieces, and afterwards burnt the sacred original of Ezra, and such copies as he could procure,<sup>i</sup> still, as faithful copies existed in all parts, the malevolence of his intention was baffled by God’s providence; and Judas Maccabæus, when he had recovered the city and purified the temple, procured for it a perfect and entire collection of the scriptures, or perhaps deposited therein that which had belonged to his father Mattathias,<sup>h</sup> and doubtless supplied such synagogues with fresh copies, as had been plundered during the persecution. Many of these, however, must have perished with the synagogues that were destroyed by the armies of Titus and Vespasian; though

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. præf. in Lib. Reg. Bava Bathra, cap. 1. Maimon. in Tad. Chan. p. 2. f. 95. and R. Gedalias in Schalsch hakkab. f. 67.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. iv. 2. and Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 9, 10. Præp. Evangel. lib. viii.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. v. 17, 18, 39; xxi. 42; xxii. 29; xxvi. 54; Luke xvi. 16; xxiv. 27, 44; John i. 45; v. 39.

<sup>g</sup> Philo de Vit. Contemp. lib. vi. Joseph. contra Apion. lib. i. Hieron. in Prolog. in

præf. in Dan. Epiphan. Homil. xxxix. cap. 7.

<sup>h</sup> Acts iii. 18; xviii. 28; xxiv. 14; xxvi. 22, 27; xxviii. 23; xxix. 7; Rom. iii. 2; xv. 4; Heb. i. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 6; 2 Peter i. 19; Acts viii. 32; Rom. iv. 3; ix. 17; x. 4.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Macc. i. 57. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. cap. 7. Sulpit. Sev. Hist. Sac. lib. ii.

<sup>k</sup> 1 Macc. ii. 48; iii. 48; xii. 9; 2 Macc. ii. 14; viii. 23; xv. 9.

the religious veneration of the Jews for their scriptures, rescued every copy that could be saved from the general destruction which overwhelmed their country, as the scriptures furnished them considerable consolation in all their afflictions. Josephus himself, we are informed, obtained a copy from Titus;<sup>1</sup> and the authentic volume, which till this final demolition had been deposited in the temple, was carried in triumph to Rome, and placed with the purple veils in the temple of Peace;<sup>m</sup> so that henceforth no copy of the Hebrew scriptures was preserved from injury by the vigilance of public guardians, except those which were kept in the scattered synagogues of foreign and dispersed Jews;<sup>n</sup> and it is from this time, probably, that errors and corruptions crept into the sacred text. As there was no longer any established standard of correctness, by which the fidelity of different copies could be tried, faults and mistakes were insensibly introduced; the carelessness of transcribers occasioned accidental omissions; marginal annotations<sup>o</sup> were adopted into the text; and the resemblances between different Hebrew letters, of which many are remarkably similar in form, contributed, with other circumstances too numerous to be here specified, to produce alterations and imperfections in the different copies; which, from the difficulty of collating manuscripts for correction, were necessarily perpetuated.

Hence originated those various readings and occasional differences which we find in the several manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible; and these differences must have considerably multiplied, since it was enacted by a constitution of the elders, that every man should possess a private copy of the scriptures. Fortunately, however, it has happened, that these differences are seldom important in their nature or consequences; as appears from a

<sup>1</sup> Vide his own Life.

<sup>m</sup> De Bell. Jud. cap. 5.

<sup>n</sup> The Jewish synagogues in all countries were numerous: wherever the apostles preached they found them; they were established by the direction of the rabbins in every place where there were ten persons of full age and free condition. Vid. Megill. cap. 1. sect. 3. Maimon. in Tephill. Lightfoot's Harmony, sect. 17. Exercit. in St. Matt. xviii.

<sup>o</sup> The Hebrew Bibles have marginal readings, called *keri*, which signifies, that which is read, (the text is called *ketib*, that which is written:) these marginal varia-

tions are by some ascribed to Ezra; but as they are found in his books, as well as in those which were inserted in the Canon after his time, they seem to be conjectural emendations of corrupted passages by later writers, probably by the great synagogue, or the Masorites: these words amount to about one thousand; and all, except a very few, have been found in the texts of different manuscripts. Vid. Kennicott *Diss. Gener. Vitring. Observat. Sac.* vol. ii. cap. 19. Capellus, Morinus, Walton, Anan. *Punct. Rev. lib. i. cap. 5.* Buxtorf. *Vind. Verit. Heb. par. ii. c. 4.*

collation of those various copies which pious and munificent men have industriously collected: and it should indeed seem to be an especial effect of some peculiar providence, that those passages which relate to faith and doctrine, those which describe the attributes and perfections of God, and treat concerning our obligations and duty, are in general preserved uniform and uncorrupted. Secure in their integrity from the consistent testimonies of every copy, we may confidently rely on the instructions which they reveal, and stedfastly adhere to the principles which they inculcate.

There could not indeed be any temptation for the Jews designedly to corrupt the doctrine of their scriptures, before the appearance of the Messiah; during the greater part of which time it was watched over by the prophets: and had such a design prevailed since the birth of Christ, the Jews would not have overlooked those passages which so strongly authenticate our Saviour's pretensions;<sup>p</sup> indeed, such a design must then have been fruitless, since it could not be general, and it must have been liable to immediate detection; for as Christianity was built on the foundation of the Old Testament, and appealed to the Hebrew scriptures for its support, wherever the gospel was received, the law and the prophets were called into notice and esteem, and preserved with as much care and vigilance as prevailed among the Jews; and when the Christian converts were commanded, under the Dioclesian persecution, to surrender them, they stigmatized such as complied with the requisition, as betrayers.<sup>q</sup> Copies then must have multiplied by increasing veneration; and however trivial inaccuracies might proportionably prevail, contrived alteration must have become more impracticable. Thus every circumstance seems to have conspired to preserve the integrity of the scriptures free from a suspicion of intended corruption, or of change in any essential point. The jealous care with which they were preserved in the tabernacle and in the

<sup>p</sup> When the Hebrew text differs from the Greek, it is sometimes more unfavourable to the Jewish opinions, as in Psalm ii. 12. The passage in the 16th verse of the xxxiii Psalm, which has been produced as a concerted alteration, is certainly only corrupted by accident; for the copies which, differing from the Septuagint, instead of  $\text{רָצַח}$  caru, "they pierced" my hands and feet, read  $\text{כְּאֵל לָיוֹן}$  caari, "as a lion" my hands

and my feet, can hardly be conceived to have been intentionally altered to nonsense; nor is it probable that two verses should have been designedly omitted from ch. xv. of Joshua, merely because they describe, as in the Septuagint, that Bethlehem was in the territory of Judah, a circumstance otherwise well known.

<sup>q</sup> Traditorea.

temple, being not more calculated to secure their integrity, than that reverence which afterwards displayed itself in the dispersed synagogues, and in the churches consecrated to the Christian faith; and hence we find in the scriptures only such corruptions as might have been accidentally produced.<sup>r</sup> The most ancient Hebrew manuscripts that modern inquiry hath ever been able to procure, do not usually seem to be above six or seven hundred years old, and none exceed the age of nine hundred; these however have been copied from others more ancient. In proportion to their antiquity, they are found to be more free from corruptions,<sup>s</sup> and for the reason before assigned; that these corruptions are but the natural effects of frequent transcription, the consequence of careless haste, or casual inadvertency. In important points, almost all, though collected at different times, and in different places, correspond, or are easily reconcilable with each other. But the purity of the sacred volume is established, not merely by the general coincidence of the Hebrew copies; it is still farther proved, beyond a possibility of suspicion, by the agreement which subsists between the Hebrew and the Samaritan Pentateuch,<sup>t</sup> and by the correspondence preserved in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament (as collected by Ezra) with the original Hebrew.

The Samaritan Pentateuch is a copy of the Hebrew original, and, according to the most general and best supported opinion, written in the old Hebrew or Phœnician characters.<sup>u</sup> Though

<sup>r</sup> See Morinus, Capellus, Grotius, and Kennicott's Bible. The precepts of scripture are generally repeated in the different books, so that errors in these must be immediately detected: the mistakes are chiefly in proper names, and numbers; in the latter often occasioned by the use of letters for numbers. Ireneus, Beza, &c.

<sup>s</sup> The best are those copied by the Jews of Spain: those by the Jews of Germany are less correct.

<sup>t</sup> The Samaritans, whether the descendants of the ten tribes who seceded under the reign of Rehoboam, or of the colony said to have been brought from Cuth, or other parts of Assyria, (2 Kings xvii. 24.) professed the Hebrew religion, and had a temple, a priest, and a pentateuch. When that Pentateuch was copied, is uncertain; some say, at the time of their first revolt; others contend that it was copied from Ezra's collection, as it contains some interpolations ascribed to him. As the Samaritans rejected the regulations established by Joshua, as also the authority of the Hebrew

priesthood, they disregarded not only the books which were written subsequently to the revolt of the ten tribes, and which were addressed more particularly to the kingdom of Judah, but also those that were written previously to the division of the two kingdoms, as the books of Joshua, of Samuel, of David, and of Solomon. There is still a remainder of the Samaritans who have their high priest, said to be of the race of Aaron, and who offer up their sacrifice upon Mount Gerizim to this day. The chief part of this sect reside at Sichem, which was afterwards called Flavia Neapolis, and now Naplousa. They have synagogues in other parts of Palestine, and are numerous in Syria and Egypt, and some of them are dispersed in the north of Europe. Vid. Joseph. Ant. lib. ii. Prid. Con. part i. book 6. Benjamin Tad. Itiner. Gassen. in Vita. Pierescii, and Hotting. Bib. Critic. Scalig. de Emend. Temp.

<sup>u</sup> Scaliger, Vossius, Capellus. Univer. Hist. book 1. ch. 7. Prid. Con. part i. book 6.

this Samaritan copy has some variations, transpositions, and additions, which render it different in some respects from the Hebrew manuscripts, yet these are never of such a nature as to impeach the integrity of the scripture doctrine, or to lessen our confidence in the purity of the Hebrew copies; for if we except some chronological variations, which are perhaps not utterly irreconcilable, and a designed alteration discovered in the Samaritan Pentateuch, that was manifestly inserted to support an opinion that Mount Gerizim<sup>a</sup> was the place which God had chosen for his temple, we shall find that the variations of this copy are not more than might reasonably be expected from frequent transcription during a period of two thousand years:<sup>7</sup> for so long a time had elapsed, from the apostacy of Manasseh<sup>a</sup> to the introduction of this copy into Europe.

This common agreement is therefore a striking proof of the general integrity of the different copies; and we shall be still farther convinced that the sacred volume has preserved its genuine purity in every important point, if we consider how little the Septuagint version of the scriptures differs from the Hebrew copies, notwithstanding the many ages that have elapsed since the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the king of Egypt, who was the second monarch of the Macedonian race, about two hundred and seventy years before Christ, and under whose reign this translation was made into Greek. It has been maintained indeed by some learned men, that only the Pentateuch was translated at first, and that the other books<sup>a</sup> were rendered into Greek successively at different times; however this may have been, they were all translated long before the birth of Christ.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxvii. 4. They have put Gerizim instead of Ebal into this verse.

<sup>7</sup> The fathers are supposed to have had a Greek translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, but from the sixth to the seventeenth century no mention is made of the Samaritan Pentateuch: Scaliger first lamented, that no one had procured a copy of the original. In consequence of this hint, the learned Usher obtained two or three copies of it by means of Sir Thomas Davis, then at Aleppo; and not long after, Sancius Harley, a priest of the oratory of Paris, brought home another, which he deposited in the library of his order at Paris, from which copy Morinus published it in the Paris Polyglot. Vid. Prid. Con. part i. book 6. The Samaritans have likewise a translation of this Pentateuch into the language vulgarly

spoken among them, their language being now so corrupted by foreign innovations, as to be very different from the original Samaritan. This translation is published in the Paris and London Polyglots, and is so literal, that Morinus and Walton thought that one version would serve for both, only noting the variations. Vid. Prid. Con. part ii. book 1.

<sup>a</sup> The son-in-law of Sanballat, who was compelled by Nehemiah to quit Jerusalem, and who carried away a copy of the law to Samaria. He is called Manasseh by Josephus. Vid. Nehem. xiii. 28. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 7.

<sup>a</sup> Euseb. Demonst. Evang. lib. iii. cap. ult. Hody de Bibl. Text. Origin. &c.

<sup>b</sup> The Septuagint was probably the first version into the Greek, though some have

This version has no important variations from the Hebrew, except in some chronological accounts, occasioned probably by the carelessness of the copyists.<sup>c</sup> It was used in all those countries where Alexander had established the Grecian language, and seems to have been admitted into the Jewish synagogues in Judæa, and even at Jerusalem, where that language prevailed; and the Septuagint was certainly most used there in the time of our Saviour, for the citations in the New Testament from the Old seem to have been made according to that version.<sup>d</sup> At that period then it was unquestionably an authentic copy of the inspired books, or it would not have received the sanction of our Saviour and of his apostles; and though since that time it has been rejected by the Jews, on account of the estimation in which it was held by the Christians, yet was it for the two first centuries exclusively used, and has ever since been held in great veneration by the Christian church, as a very faithful, though not a literal version.

contended that there was a previous translation into that language, made before Alexander's expedition. Vid. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 11. Huet. Prop. iv. cap. 12. sect. 3. The account of the Septuagint translation, attributed to Aristæus, is loaded with so many fabulous circumstances, that it deserves but little credit, though repeated by Philo, Josephus, and other writers. Vid. Aristæus Hist. 70. Interp. Philo in Vit. Mos. lib. ii. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. cap. 2. Irenæ. lib. iii. cap. 25. The truth seems to be, that a version was begun in the reign of Ptolemy, and perhaps finished at different times, for the use of the Alexandrian Jews, but before the time that the book of Ecclesiasticus was written, and consequently at least two centuries before Christ. Vid. Prolog. to Eclus. Hody de Bibl. Text. lib. ii. cap. 8. Comp. 2 Sam. xxii. with Psalm xviii. Other translations into Greek were afterwards made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. v. Euseb. Præp. Evan. c. 6. Prid. Con. part. ii. book 1.

<sup>c</sup> In the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis, every patriarch is said to have lived one hundred years longer, according to the Septuagint, than in the Hebrew, except Jared and Methusalem.

<sup>d</sup> St. Jerom was of opinion, that the evangelical writers cited from the Septuagint when it did not differ from the Hebrew, but that they had recourse to the original when there was any difference; but the in-

stances which he has produced, do not prove that they referred to the Hebrew; and the evangelists sometimes cite from the Septuagint when it differs from the Hebrew, as in Rom. x. 18, from Psalm xix. 4; Rom. xv. 12, from Isaiah xi. 10. In the time of Christ, the original and the translation agreed more exactly than they now do, as many corruptions must have been subsequent to that period: it is therefore in some degree uncertain, whether the citations are made from the Hebrew or from the Septuagint, though they appear indeed to be made chiefly from the latter, except perhaps by St. Matthew, who probably writing in Hebrew, might cite from the Hebrew. Vid. Hieron. adv. Ruffin. Medæ's Works, p. 785. Dr. Brett imagines that our Saviour read out of a targum when he read the lesson in the synagogue; vid. Luke iv. 18, comp. with Isaiah lxi. 1; and that he cited a paraphrase on the cross; vid. Matt. xxvii. 46: for Sabacthani is found only in the Chaldaic tongue, and in the Hebrew it is שַׁבְּתָנִי שַׁבְּתָנִי. Christ and the apostles probably cited what was most known to the Jews, the sense being the same, whether from original, version, or paraphrase. The language spoken by the Jews in our Saviour's time was the Hebrew mixed with the Chaldaic and Syriac, which dialects compose likewise the basis of the modern Hebrew; Greek however was generally understood. Vid. Brett's Dissert. on the ancient version of the Bible, Blair's Lectures, &c.

Thus does the general coincidence between the Hebrew copies, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, demonstrate the unaltered integrity of the scriptures in important points, as we now possess them; and this integrity is still farther confirmed by the conformity which subsists between those various translations of the Bible into different languages, which have been performed since the time of our Saviour.\* It appears, therefore, that from the time of their first inspiration to the present day, the sacred writings have been dispersed into so many different hands, that no possible opportunity could be furnished for confederate corruption, and every designed alteration must immediately have been detected. The first Hebrew Bibles were published towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, by the Jews of Italy.<sup>f</sup> Many were afterwards published at Venice, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, as well as in other places, which have their respective merits and defects; but perhaps the most important edition, that which does honour to our country, is the celebrated work of the late Dr. Kennicott, who, a few years since, published his Bible, containing the very accurate text of Vander Hooght, with the variations of near seven hundred different manuscripts, collected at a great expense, and

\* The general integrity of the text is likewise confirmed by the evidence of the Chaldee paraphrases, which are called targums, or versions; these were translations of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Chaldee, for the benefit of those who had forgot the Hebrew after the captivity; vid. Nehem. viii. 8. The two most ancient and authentic, are that of Onkelos on the Law, and that of Jonathan on the Prophets; these were probably made soon after the captivity, or at least before the time of Christ, but they are blended with more modern comments. The other targums are of much later date. The targums are printed in the second edition of the Hebrew Bible, published at Basil, by Buxtorf the father, in 1610.

<sup>f</sup> The Hebrew Bible, according to Houbigant, (Proleg. p. 94. 96,) was first printed by R. Jacob ben Chaim; but Kennicott says, that this was not published till 1528, and that therefore it was subsequent to that revised by Felix Pratensis, published at Venice, 1517. There is still extant in Eton library, a vellum copy of the Chetubin, or Hagiographa, printed, according to Dr. Pellet's account, at Naples, in 1487, and probably designed as a second

or third part to the edition of the Prophets, printed, according to Le Long, at Soncino, in 1486. See Le Long and Wolfius, Biblioth. Heb. 2. 397. This was followed by many others. See Kennicott's Hist. of the Heb. Text, sixth period. That of Vander Hooght, published at Amsterdam in 1705, and that of Houbigant, published in 1753, are the most distinguished and correct. The first Bible, and it should seem the first book that ever was printed, was a Latin Bible, published at Mentz, about A. D. 1452. A copy of a second or third edition of this, printed at Mentz in 1462, with metal types, by John Faust (whom some suppose to have been the first printer) and Peter Schaffer, is in the king of France's library; and a first volume of this edition is in the Bodleian library; and another first volume was brought to England in the Pinelli collection, together with a last volume of one which had the appearance of being still more ancient; it had no date. There certainly were two Bibles published before 1462; vid. Pinelli Catalogue. Michael Maittaire, Ann. Typogr. vol. i. p. 272. Catalog. Historico-Critic. Biblioth. Instruct. vol. Theol. p. 32. and 14 vol. of Acad. des Inscript. p. 238.



collated with great labour and care,<sup>a</sup> together with the variations of numberless Samaritan manuscripts, compared with the Samaritan text, as published in the London Polyglot.<sup>b</sup>

From the earliest ages of the primitive church, translations have been made into various languages;<sup>1</sup> but it would be foreign from the design of this introduction to enter into a particular account of the different versions that have been made, at different times, into other languages: we are concerned only with our English translation, of which it may be necessary to give some account, after we shall have taken a short view of the preceding versions which have been made into the language of this country.

It is possible, that the first inhabitants of Britain who are said to have been converted to Christianity, had at least some of the scriptures in their own tongue;<sup>k</sup> but the earliest translations, of which we have any account in our history, are those of the Saxon writers, who enabled their countrymen to read the scriptures in their own language. It appears from writers contemporary with Adelm, or Aldhelm, that there was then extant a translation of the scriptures, or of a part of them at least, in the vulgar tongue;<sup>1</sup> and it is known that Adelm, who was the first bishop of Sherborne, translated the Psalter into the Saxon tongue, about A. D. 706. Ingulphus<sup>m</sup> speaks of a Psalter of St. Guthlack, who was a contemporary of Adelm, and the first Saxon anchorite, and who influenced Ethelbald, king of Mercia, to found the monastery of Croyland; and this Psalter, in the Latin tongue, Lambert professes to have seen<sup>n</sup> among the records belonging to Croyland.<sup>o</sup> This was soon followed by the

<sup>a</sup> The learned M. de Rossi has since published the variations of many more, which he collated.

<sup>b</sup> The word Polyglot is derived from Πόλυς, much, and γλώττα, a tongue; it means a Bible with the texts of several languages: there are Polyglots published in Spain, at Antwerp, at Paris, and London.

<sup>1</sup> Theodor. ad Græc. Infid. Serm. 5. Euseb. Dem. Evan. lib. iii. c. ult. Usser. Hist. Dogm. de Script. et Sac. Vernac.

<sup>k</sup> M. Parker. de Antiq. Ecc. Brit. Test. Ush. de Primord. Eccles. Britan.

<sup>1</sup> The Saxon homilies exhort the people to read the scriptures. Vid. also Adelm. de Virginit. et Bede, lib. iii. cap. 5. ab Ann. 634.

<sup>m</sup> Ingulf. Cent. i. c. 83.

<sup>n</sup> Lambert in Respon. ad Art. 26. Epia.

<sup>o</sup> There is also in the public library at Cambridge, a translation of the Psalms into Latin and English; and another old Latin translation, with an interlineary Saxon version, was in the Cotton library, in the same character with the charter of king Ethelbald, which is dated at A. D. 736. Vid. Usser. Hist. Dogmat. p. 104. Usher informs us, that Mr. Robert Bowyer was in possession of a Saxon translation of the Evangelists, by Ecbert, (who is called also Ekfrid, Eadfrid, and Eckfrid, bishop of Landiafern,) who died A. D. 721. Vid. Usser. Hist. Dogm. c. 5. Egbert wrote also a copy of the Evangelists in Latin; to which Aldred, a priest, added a Saxon interlineary translation, which was in the Cotton library. Vid. Wharton, Anglia Sac.

Latin and Saxon translations of the Psalter and Gospel, which indeed frequently appeared, especially upon any change in the language.

The Psalter and the Gospel,<sup>p</sup> or, as some say, all the books of the Bible,<sup>q</sup> were translated into the Anglo-Saxon, towards the beginning of the eighth century, by Venerable Bede, who is related to have finished the last chapter of the Gospel as he expired.<sup>r</sup>

The whole Bible was translated into the Anglo-Saxon, by order of king Alfred. He undertook the version of the Psalms himself, but did not live to complete it. Another Anglo-Saxon version appears to have been made soon after.<sup>s</sup>

Several books of the Old Testament were translated into the Anglo-Saxon by Elfred, or Elfric, abbot of Malmesbury, and afterwards, A. D. 995, archbishop of Canterbury. The Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges of this translation were preserved in the Cotton library, and published at Oxford in 1699, by Edmund Thwaites.<sup>t</sup>

One of the first attempts at a translation into the English language, as spoken after the conquest, appears to have been made by Richard Rolle, an hermit of Hampole in Yorkshire, who translated and wrote a gloss upon the Psalter, and a metrical paraphrase of the book of Job. He died A. D. 1349.

A complete translation of the whole Bible, including the apocryphal books, was soon afterwards performed by John Wickliffe.<sup>u</sup> It was a literal version, made from Latin, with the prologues of St. Jerom to the books of the New Testament, and appeared between A. D. 1360 and 1380. The New Testament of this translation, which is still extant in many manuscripts, was published by Lewis in 1731. Some writers have conceived

pari i. p. 695. Fox, by the encouragement of Matthew Parker, published, in 1571, a Saxon version of the Evangelists, made from the Vulgate, before it was revised by St. Jerom, of which the author is unknown.

<sup>p</sup> Vid. Bale.

<sup>q</sup> Fox, and Caius de Ant. Cantab. lib. i.

<sup>r</sup> Fox says, that he translated the Gospel of St. John a second time; but Cuthbert, his scholar, tells us, that he finished at John vi. 9.

<sup>s</sup> This was published, with a Latin interlineary text, by John Spelman, in 1640. Dr. Brett supposes this to have been Alfred's Psalter. There is another interlineary

Psalter in the library at Lambeth, apparently of a later period. Spelman published with his Psalter the various readings of four manuscripts.

<sup>t</sup> Le Long, Calmet, and Lewis Hist. of Translat.

<sup>u</sup> Huss. Replicat. con. T. Stoeke, Arund. Constit. Lynwood's Glossary, &c. The New Testament of Wickliffe's version sold for four marks and forty pence, as appears from the Register of W. Alnewich, bishop of Norwich, 1429, as quoted by Fox. Vid. James, Corrupt. of Fathers, p. 277. Fox's preface to Saxon Gospels, A. D. 1571.

that an English translation was made before the time of Wickliffe;<sup>2</sup> and there are some copies of an English translation at Oxford,<sup>3</sup> which Usher assigns to an earlier period; but it is probable that these may be genuine or corrected copies of Wickliffe's translation. Lewis is of opinion, that John Trevisa, who is by some related to have made an entire English version of the scriptures about 1387, did in fact only paint a few sentences on the chapel walls of Berkeley castle, and intersperse a few verses in his writings,<sup>4</sup> with some variations from the received translation. It is however highly probable that others beside Wickliffe undertook this important work, and translated at least some parts of the scriptures. Hitherto translations were made only from the Italic version, or from that of St. Jerom.

Great objections were, however, made to these and all translations, as promoting a too general and promiscuous use of the scriptures, which was conceived to be productive of evil consequences; and Wickliffe's Bible particularly, as it was judged to be an unfaithful translation, was condemned to be burnt. In the time of Richard the Second, a bill was brought into the house of lords, A. D. 1390, to prohibit the use of English Bibles. The bill, however, being strongly reprobated, and opposed by John duke of Lancaster,<sup>5</sup> was rejected: but about A. D. 1408, Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, decreed in a convocation of the clergy at Oxford, that no unauthorized person should translate any text of scripture into English, or any other language, by way of book; and that no translation made either in or since Wickliffe's time should be read, till approved by the bishop of the diocese, or in a provincial council. This decree was enforced by great persecutions; and as about the same time Pope Alexander the Fifth condemned all translations into the vulgar

<sup>2</sup> Dr. James was of this opinion; see *Corrupt. Fathers*, p. 225. Bishop Bonner professes to have seen one translated above eighty years before that of Wickliffe: so little, however, were the scriptures used in the time of Wickliffe, that some secular priests of Armagh, who were sent by archbishop Fitzralph (the translator of the Bible into Irish) to study divinity at Oxford, about A. D. 1357, were obliged to return, because they could nowhere find a Latin Bible. The clergy were then seldom able to read Latin. See Fox's *Extracts from Longland's Register*.

<sup>3</sup> There is a copy of the Old Testament

of this translation in the Bodleian library, one at Queen's college, and one at Lambeth; and of the New Testament, one in the Bodleian, and two at Cambridge, in Sydney and Magdalen colleges.

<sup>4</sup> Lewis *Hist. of Translations*.

<sup>5</sup> Usher, Parker, Linwood, and Collier. The Duke is related to have said, "We will not be the dregs of all, seeing other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their own language." Vid. Fox's *pref. to Saxon Gospel*, A. D. 1571. Usher *de Script. et Sacr. Vern.*

tongue, they were, as much as it was possible, suppressed till the Reformation.

It appears, indeed, from our bishops' registers, that in consequence of Arundel's commission, several persons were burnt, on refusing to abjure their principles, for having read the New Testament and the Ten Commandments in Wickliffe's translation.<sup>b</sup> In the reign of Henry the Eighth, whose violent passions were providentially rendered conducive to the reformation in this country, William Tyndale, or, as he was otherwise called, Hickins,<sup>c</sup> having left the kingdom on account of his religious principles, translated at Antwerp, by the assistance of John Fry, or Fryth, and William Roze, the New Testament from the Greek, and printed it in octavo, in 1526.<sup>d</sup> The written copies of Wickliffe's translation had been long known, but this was the first time that any part of the scriptures was printed in English. It appeared at Hamburgh, or Antwerp, and was dispersed at London and Oxford. Wolsey and the bishops published prohibitions and injunctions against it, as false and heretical. Tonstal, bishop of London, and Sir Thomas More, bought up almost the whole impression, and burnt it at St. Paul's Cross; which, whether or not designed to serve Tyndale,<sup>e</sup> did most certainly assist him in the continuance of his designs.<sup>f</sup> The venders of Tyndale's work were condemned by the star-chamber to ride with their faces to the horses' tails, with papers on their heads, and with the books which they had dispersed tied about them, to the standard in Cheapside, and they themselves were compelled to throw them into the fire, and were

<sup>b</sup> At that time, the people were so little acquainted with the scriptures, and so ignorant even of the language in which they were originally written, that upon the appearance of printed editions of the scriptures in Hebrew and Greek originals, some of the more illiterate monks declaimed from the pulpits, that "there was now a new language discovered, called Greek, of which people should beware, since it was that which produced all heresies: that in this language was come forth a book called the New Testament, which was now in every body's hands, and was full of thorns and briars. And there had also another language now started up, which they called Hebrew, and that they who learnt it were turned Hebrews." Vid. Hody de Bibl. Text. p. 465. Erasmus. Epist. lib. xxxi. no.

42. edit. 1642.

<sup>c</sup> Hist. et Antiq. Oxon. lib. ii. p. 375. vol. ii.

<sup>d</sup> Fox's Acta. Usher de Script. p. 187. Joye's Apology.

<sup>e</sup> Jortin's Life of Eras. Collier's Eccles. Hist. vol. ii. p. 22. Sir Thomas More's Engl. Works, vol. ii. p. 369. The Dutch editions were soon published, and dispersed at a cheap rate, at about thirteen pence each. The English books were sold for about 3s. 6d. Three editions were sold before 1530. Thus were eyes opened to the abuses of popery.

<sup>f</sup> Sir Thomas More objected to translations in general, and particularly considered Tyndale's as erroneous, especially in matters of church government. Vid. Spelman's Papers.

afterwards amerced by a considerable fine.<sup>c</sup> The clergy now professed an intention of publishing the New Testament themselves, and a proclamation was issued against Tyndale's work; but before the appearance of this proclamation, Tyndale, by the help of Miles Coverdale, had translated the Pentateuch, which was printed at Hamburg in 1530.<sup>h</sup> In the same year he published a corrected translation of the New Testament; and in the following year a translation of Jonah. As he had but little knowledge of the Hebrew, he probably translated from the Latin; and his work had great merit, considering the disadvantages under which he laboured.<sup>i</sup> His prefaces, which reflected on the bishops and clergy, were chiefly complained of, though eagerly read by the people; and provoked Henry, at the instigation of his ministers, to procure that he should be seized in Flanders, where he was afterwards strangled, and his body was burnt.

In 1535, Miles Coverdale published a translation of the whole Bible, which, as some have supposed, was printed at Zurich. It was dedicated to the king, probably by permission, though Tyndale was now in prison for his work. Coverdale styled it a special translation, and it passed under his name; but it is supposed to have contained much of Tyndale's labours, though none of his prologues, or notes.<sup>k</sup>

When the papal restrictions were no longer respected in this country, it was strenuously urged, that if Tyndale's translation were erroneous, a new one should be made; and Cranmer had sufficient interest in convocation, in 1535, to obtain, that a petition should be made to the king for that purpose. Henry, influenced partly by argument, and partly by the interest which queen Anne<sup>l</sup> had in his affections, commanded that it should be immediately set about. Cranmer began with the New Testament, assigning a portion of the translation to be revised by each bishop. But the refusal of Stokesly, bishop of London, to correct

<sup>c</sup> Hall, Henry VIII., Fuller, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Mr Thoresby speaks of a copy printed at Marburg, in Hesse, by Hans Luft, in 1530. Vid. Ducat. Leod. Lewis says, that Tyndale translated this Pentateuch from the Hebrew. Vid. Hist. Transl. p. 70.

<sup>i</sup> The translation of the Pentateuch was finished in 1528; but Tyndale being shipwrecked in his voyage to Hamburg, lost all his papers, and was obliged to begin

his work again. He was strangled and burnt near Felford castle, about eighteen miles from Antwerp, praying that God would open the king of England's eyes. Vid. Fox's Martyra. He received only 14s. Flemish for his work.

<sup>k</sup> This was reprinted in large quarto in 1550, and again with a new title in 1553.

<sup>l</sup> Ann Boleyn.

his portion, appears to have put a stop to the work at present. In 1536, Cromwell directed, in his injunctions to the clergy, "that every parson or proprietary of a church, should provide a Bible in Latin and English, to be laid in the choir, for every one to read at his pleasure."

In 1537 was published a folio edition of the Bible, which was called Matthews's Bible, of Tyndale's and Rogers's translation: it was printed by Grafton and Whitchurch, at Hamburgh.<sup>m</sup> Tyndale is said to have translated to the end of Chronicles, or, as some state, of Nehemiah, if not all the canonical books both of the Old and New Testament,<sup>n</sup> and Rogers completed the rest, partly from Coverdale's translation. He had compared it with the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Bibles, and inserted prefaces and notes from Luther. As the name of Tyndale, who had been burnt for an heretic, was now become in some degree obnoxious, Rogers published it under the feigned name of Matthews. It was dedicated and presented, at Cranmer's request, by Cromwell, to the king, who gave his assent that it should be printed in England, and generally read; and notwithstanding the opposition of the clergy, the book was received by the public with great joy.

Another edition was afterwards prepared, collected and collated with the original, by Miles Coverdale; and Grafton and Whitchurch obtained leave to publish it at Paris, on account of the cheapness and superiority of the paper. But notwithstanding the French king's licence, the inquisition in 1538 obliged the printers to fly as heretics, and very few of the impressions could be rescued from the flames.<sup>o</sup> But the presses, and other printing appurtenances, being afterwards procured and brought to London, the Bible was published there in 1539<sup>p</sup> by the king's authority. This was called the Bible in the great or large volume. It was published in folio, and had a frontispiece before it, designed by Holbein; but neither Coverdale's nor Cranmer's preface, nor Tyndale's notes; only an account of the succession of the kings of Judah, and directions in what manner the Old Testament should be read.<sup>q</sup> In this edition,

<sup>m</sup> The fifteen hundred copies cost 500*l.* then a large sum.

<sup>n</sup> He certainly translated Jonah. See More's Confut. of Tyndale's Answer, 1532; and others translated different parts.

<sup>o</sup> A few that an officer of the inquisition

had sold as waste paper were recovered. The impression consisted of 2500.

<sup>p</sup> Strype's Life of Cranmer, p. 444.

<sup>q</sup> This edition, as well as Matthews's Bible, is divided into five tomes. The apocryphal books, which are contained in

these passages in Latin, which were not to be found in the original, were printed in a small letter, as was also the controverted text in St. John's epistle. It was objected to by the bishops as faulty; but as they admitted that it contained no heresies, the king said, "then in God's name let it go abroad among my people." The epistles, gospels, and psalms, of this translation, which were inserted into our liturgy when compiled, and afterwards revised in the reign of Edward the Sixth, were retained in it till the restoration of Charles the Second, when the gospels and epistles were changed for those of king James's translation. The old psalter, however, was retained, and is still read as excellent, and familiar by long use. An order was soon afterwards issued out, that every church should be furnished with one of these Bibles.

In 1539, a second or third edition of this was revised and published by Richard Taverner, which had many marginal notes of Matthews's Bible; and this was followed by other editions. In 1540 appeared a very improved edition, corrected by archbishop Cranmer. It contained a judicious preface, written by him, and was called Cranmer's Bible, or the Bible of the greater volume. It was republished in 1541, and countenanced by authority; and a proclamation was issued, that every parish church which was yet unprovided should procure it, under a penalty, if neglected, of forty shillings per month.<sup>7</sup> The Romish bishops still continued their endeavours, in opposition to Cranmer, and attempted to corrupt the subsequent editions by a multiplication of Latin words;<sup>8</sup> and though Cranmer obtained an order that the Bible should be examined by both universities, it appears not to have been put in execution.

In 1542, an act of Parliament was obtained by the adversaries of translations, condemning Tyndale's Bible, and the prefaces and notes of all other editions,<sup>1</sup> and prohibiting their perusal in public, under pain of imprisonment. Cranmer procured an indulgence for the higher ranks to read them in private. The use of the scriptures being very much abused, the interdiction was continued, and confirmed during Henry's reign.

the fourth of these divisions, are improperly entitled the books of Hagiographa, as some of them are called in a secondary sense, or perhaps by corruption, by St. Jerom. Vid. Hieron. præf. in Job. Reinhold's Prælect. and James's Corrupt. of Fathers, part ii. p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> It was published in folio; the price was fixed at 10s. unbound, and 12s. bound; six were placed in St. Paul's church by bishop Bonner.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. Parker. Antiq. Lewis, p. 146.

<sup>1</sup> See an act for the advancement of true Religion, An. 34. Henry VIII.

In the short reign of Edward the Sixth, all persons were allowed the use of translations; and new editions of Taverner's and of Matthews's Bibles<sup>u</sup> were published, and the Bible of the larger volume was ordered to be procured for churches.<sup>v</sup> Every ecclesiastical person under the degree of bachelor of divinity was enjoined to provide a New Testament in Latin and English, with the paraphrase of Erasmus: and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, was committed to the fleet for refusing compliance with these measures; and persisting in his opinions, he was at length deprived. It was ordered also, that the epistle and gospel should be read at high mass on Sundays and holidays, and a chapter of the New Testament in the morning, and of the Old at evening song.

In Mary's reign, different principles prevailed: all books which were considered as heretical, as those containing the Common Prayer, and suspected copies of the Bible, were condemned. The Gospellers, as they were then called, fled abroad, and a new translation of the scriptures into English appeared at Geneva, of which the New Testament was published in 1557; but the remainder of the work did not come forth till 1560. It was distinguished by calvinistical annotations, and held in high estimation by the puritans.<sup>y</sup>

<sup>u</sup> One of Taverner's in 1549, and one of Matthews's in 1551. Eleven impressions of the whole English Bible, and six of the New Testament, were published: some were also reprinted from Tyndale's, Coverdale's, and Cranmer's editions. Vid. Fuller and Lewis.

<sup>v</sup> These were to be procured at the expense of the parish. Before, the proprietor defrayed half the charge of the books used in the church, or sometimes the parson. In times of popery, missals, breviaries, and manuals, being written, were very expensive, and bought by the rectors, as also when rectories were established. But there were many disputes upon this subject, and the rectors often compelled the vicars to pay for binding the books. Vid. Lewis, Hist. Trans. p. 176.

<sup>y</sup> Above thirty editions of this were published by the queen's and king's printers between 1560 and 1616, and others were printed at Edinburgh, Geneva, Amsterdam, &c. The New Testament of this is said to have been the first English edition of the scriptures which was divided into verses. The Greek and Latin Bibles were not anciently divided into chapters or verses;

at least, not like those now used. Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, in the reigns of king John and of king Henry III., is said to have first contrived the division into chapters; others ascribe the invention to cardinal Hugo, a Dominican monk of the thirteenth century, who adopted also subdivisions, distinguished by the seven first letters of the alphabet placed in the margin, as convenient for the use of the Concordance, which he first planned for the Vulgate. About 1445, Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, alias Rabbi Isaac Nathan, a western Jew, to facilitate the conduct of a controversy with the Christians, introduced this division of chapters into the Hebrew Bible, and resumed also the ancient division into verses numerically distinguished by marginal letters at every fifth verse; and from him the Christians received and improved the plan; and Robert Stephens adopted the division into the New Testament, of which he published a Greek edition in 1551. Vid. Prefat. Buxtorf. ad Concord. Bibl. Hebraic. Morin. Exercit. Bibl. par. ii. exert. vii. cap. 3. Prefat. ad Concord. Græc. Nov. Test. Fabrici Biblioth. Græc. lib. iv. c. 5. Prid. vol. i. book 5.



Elizabeth was indirectly requested, at her coronation, to countenance a translation, the Bible being presented to her in her procession, which she accepted with great appearance of gratitude and veneration; and the bishops were soon afterwards appointed to prepare a translation. New editions of the Geneva and of the great Bible were published. An act of parliament was likewise passed for a translation of the Bible into Welsh, which was printed in 1556.

In 1568, archbishop Parker's very correct and improved translation, undertaken by the royal command, and revised by the bishops, under the direction of the archbishop, and called the Bishops' Bible, appeared in folio,<sup>a</sup> with a preface by Parker, and the initial letter of every translator subjoined to his portion: and towards the conclusion of Elizabeth's reign, Ambrose Usher, brother of the primate of Armagh, rendered much of the Old Testament into English, from the Hebrew; which was never published.<sup>a</sup>

Objections, however, being raised against all these translations, as well as against others made in opposition to them, it was determined in the reign of king James the First, when the principles of the Reformation were thoroughly established, to have a new version, which should be as much as possible free from all the errors and defects of former translations. Accordingly, fifty-four learned and eminent men were appointed. Seven of these, however, either died, or from diffidence declined the task. Every possible precaution was taken to prevent objection to the execution of the work. The remaining forty-seven were ranged into six divisions.<sup>b</sup> Every individual translated the portion assigned to the division, all of which translations were collated together; and when each company had determined on the construction of their part, it was proposed to the other divisions for general approbation. They had the benefit of consulting all preceding translations, but were directed to follow, as nearly as it might be consistent with fidelity, the ordinary Bible, which was distinguished by the appellation of the Bishops' Bible.

<sup>a</sup> It was printed in a thick quarto, and afterwards frequently in folio and quarto, in 1569. This Bible was used in the public service for near forty years; but the Geneva Bible being more adapted to the prevailing opinions, was most read in private. See Le Long, p. 430, Lewis, &c.

<sup>a</sup> Daniel, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Job, were translated by Hugh Broughton. The manuscript of this version is still in three tomes quarto, in the library of Trinity college in Dublin.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Johnson's account. Fuller, Selden, and Collier.

The contributions and assistance of the learned were solicited from all parts, and different opinions were deliberately examined by the translators, without any regard to the complaints against their tardiness in the execution of the work. The translators met at Oxford, and Cambridge, and Westminster.<sup>c</sup> They began the work in 1607, and finished it in about three years. The death of Mr. Edward Lively, who was well skilled in the original languages, somewhat retarded the publication. It came out, however, in 1611, with all the improvements that could be derived from united industry and conjoined abilities. It was first published in folio, in black letter; but a quarto edition was published in 1612, in the Roman type. It has since been repeatedly published in both. The Romanists<sup>d</sup> started many unreasonable objections against this translation; and the Presbyterians professed themselves dissatisfied. It was however allowed, even by Cromwell's committee, to be the best extant; and certainly it is a most wonderful and incomparable work, equally remarkable for the general fidelity of its construction, and the magnificent simplicity of its language.

That it is not a perfect work is readily admitted: the great advancement made since the period of its translation, in the original languages, the improvement that has succeeded in critical learning, and the many discoveries that have been struck out in the general pursuits of knowledge, have much tended to illustrate the sacred writings, and enabled us to detect many errors and defects of translation that might now be corrected and removed. Preceding versions were, perhaps, in some instances, more successful; and subsequent translations of individual books may, in some parts, have been more faithful; and,

<sup>c</sup> Three copies were sent to London, and two persons from each company were selected to revise the whole work. It was afterwards reviewed by Bilson, bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Myles Smith. These two persons prefixed the arguments to the several books; and Dr. Smith, afterwards bishop of Gloucester, wrote the preface now prefixed to the folio editions. Bishop Bancroft is supposed to have been the overseer under his majesty, to whom it is said, in the preface, that the church was much bound. The marginal references, and the chronological index annexed, which are published chiefly in the quarto editions,

were afterwards furnished by bishop Lloyd.

<sup>d</sup> The English Romanists, finding it impossible to prevent the introduction of translations, published the New Testament at Rheims in 1582 from the Latin, in a manner as favourable to their opinions as possible, and afterwards, in 1609, they published at Doway a translation of the Old Testament from the Vulgate, with annotations. They have therefore a translation of the whole Bible, which, however, they are forbidden to read without a licence from their superiors. The French Romanists have no authorized translation into their language.

which is a still more important advantage, we are now in possession of many hundred manuscripts that the translators under king James had no opportunities of consulting.\* We are likewise emancipated from superstitious prejudices concerning the universal purity of the Hebrew text, and from a slavish credulity with regard to the Masoretic points. Whenever, therefore, it shall be judged expedient by well-advised and considerate measures to authorize a revival of this translation, it will certainly be found capable of many and great improvements.† As such a work, deliberately planned, and judiciously executed, would unquestionably contribute much to the advancement of true religion, many pious men have expressed their earnest wishes for its accomplishment; and doubtless, in due time, by the blessing of God, the prudent governors of our church will provide for its execution. It is a work not lightly to be taken in hand, and perhaps no single person is adequate to the task. It is to be presumed, at least, that when a new translation shall be countenanced by public authority, it will be undertaken with the same cautious and deliberate measures that were observed under king James. It should be the production of collective industry and general contribution; and the prejudices and mistakes which must characterize the works of individuals, should be corrected by united inquiry, dispassionate examination, and fair criticism. They who already consecrate their labours to the task of translating the whole, or any part of the scriptures, are entitled to the public gratitude and encouragement;‡ their endeavours must at least contribute to illustrate the sacred pages, and tend to facilitate the great work of a national translation. Till, however, the execution of this work shall be judged expedient, every sincere and well-disposed admirer of the holy oracles may be satisfied with the present translation, which is, indeed, highly excellent; being in its doctrines uncorrupt, and in its general construction faithful to the original. The captious chiefly, and such as seek for blemishes, are disposed to cavil at its minute imperfections; which, however in a work

\* Our translation was made from manuscripts of three and four hundred years old, since it agrees with those only. But more ancient manuscripts are more correct, and more consistent with the Samaritan Pentateuch and ancient versions.

† Bishop Lloyd's edition of our translation is improved in some respects. Dr. Paris likewise revised it in 1745.

‡ Dr. Geddes has published a prospectus of a new translation.

of such serious and interesting value they may require correction, should not be invidiously detailed. The few passages which, by being erroneously translated, have furnished occasion for unjust and licentious aspersions against the sacred volume, are so clearly and satisfactorily explained, and vindicated by judicious comments, that no one can be misled in his conceptions, who is desirous of obtaining instruction. To amend the rendering of these passages will be the object of all future translators, who will undoubtedly be desirous of adhering as much as possible to the present version, and of adopting, where they can, a construction familiarized by long use, and endeared by habitual reverence; of which the style has long served as a standard of our language, and of which the peculiar harmony and excellence could never be improved by any change that refinement might substitute.

## OF THE PENTATEUCH.

THE Pentateuch, under which title the five books of Moses are usually distinguished, is a word of Greek original.<sup>a</sup> It was probably first prefixed to the Septuagint version, and was designed to include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; all of which were written by Moses, in his own hand, probably in the order in which they now stand in our translation, though not distributed by their author into books, but composed in one continued work, as they remain to this day among the Jews, with no other division but that of little and great parasches.<sup>b</sup> It is uncertain when they were divided into

<sup>a</sup> From *Pierre*, five, and *τευχος*, volume. It is called by the Jews, *Chomez*, a word synonymous with Pentateuch: also *Thorah*, with which word the book begins; it being customary among the Jews to denominate a book from its first word.

<sup>b</sup> Parasches, from *פירש*, to divide. The division of the law into parasches, or sections, is, by some, attributed to Moses; by others, with more probability, to *Esra*: they amounted to fifty-four, that by reading one of these portions every sabbath in the

synagogue, the people might fulfil a fancied obligation to read the law once publicly every year; the intercalated years contained fifty-four sabbaths, and in other years a reduction correspondent to the number of sabbaths was easily made, by an occasional junction of two chapters. These greater portions were subdivided into seven smaller parts, called *pesukim*, or *verses*, which were probably inserted by *Esra*, for the use of the *Targumists*, or *Chaldee interpreters*, who after the captivity read a

books, but probably the division was first adopted in the Septuagint version, as the titles prefixed are of Greek derivation; they were, however, distinguished as five books in the time of Josephus.

That the Pentateuch was written by Moses, we are authorized to affirm by the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and by the uniform report of uninterrupted tradition. He speaks of himself in many parts, as the appointed author of its contents.<sup>c</sup> It is mentioned as the work of Moses, under the title of the Law, by almost all the sacred writers, and cited as indisputably his work;<sup>d</sup> and it was received as such by the Jews and Samaritans, by every sect of the Hebrew and of the Christian church.

These books, indeed, could not have been written subsequently to the time of Moses, for they are addressed to the Israelites as contemporaries, and they never afterwards could have been imposed as a genuine work upon his countrymen, whose religion and government were built upon them. But what is sufficient to establish, not only the authenticity of these five books, as the work of Moses, but also their claim to a divine original as dictated by the Spirit of God, is, that the words and laws of Moses are cited by the sacred writers as the words and laws of God;<sup>e</sup> and that they were appealed to by our Saviour and his apostles, on various occasions, as the genuine work of Moses; as the production of an inspired person, or prophet;<sup>f</sup> and on a solemn occasion, Christ confirmed every jot and tittle of the law, and bare testimony to the infallible accomplishment of its designs and promises.<sup>g</sup>

These books, as has been before observed, were immediately after their composition deposited in the tabernacle,<sup>h</sup> and thence transferred to the temple, where they were preserved with the

Chaldaic version of the scriptures, with the original, for the benefit of those who had forgotten the Hebrew tongue, reading verse for verse alternately. The same division was adopted in the prophetic books, when the reading of the law was forbidden by Antiochus Epiphanes, but in them three verses were read together. These divisions are by no means the same as those in our Bible. The Jews read half of the section on the Monday, the remainder on the Thursday, and on the Sabbath the whole of the section, both morning and evening. Vid. Prid. sub. An. 444.

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xvii. 14; xxiv. 4—7; xxxiv. 27;

Numb. xxxiii. 4; Deut. xxxi. 9, 19, 22, 24. Abbadie, Verité de la Relig. Chretien. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>d</sup> Joshua i. 7, 8; Judg. iii. 4; 2 Kings xxiii. 25; xiv. 6; 2 Chron. xxx. 16; xxxiii. 18; Ezra viii. 3; Nehem. i. 7, 8; ix; and the Psalms and Prophets passim.

<sup>e</sup> Nehem. viii. 14; Jerem. vii. 23; Matt. xv. 4; Galat. iv. 30; Heb. viii. 5; x. 30; James ii. 8.

<sup>f</sup> John i. 45; v. 46, 47.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. v. 17, 18; Luke xvi. 17, 31.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. xxxi. 26. Somewhere on the outside of the ark. Vid. 1 Kings viii. 9; 2 Chron. v. 10.

most vigilant care: every expression was deemed inspired by the articles of the Jewish creed. The Jews maintained, that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the law than of the stars in heaven; and that upon each tittle of it, whole mountains of doctrine hung: hence every individual letter was numbered, and notice was taken how often it occurred.<sup>1</sup> It was read every Sabbath day in the synagogues,<sup>2</sup> and again solemnly every seventh year. The prince was obliged to copy it,<sup>1</sup> and the people were commanded to teach it their children, and to wear it as "signs on their hands, and frontlets between their eyes."<sup>m</sup> In the corrupt, and idolatrous reigns, indeed, of some of the kings of Judah, the sacred books appear to have been much neglected. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, it was judged necessary to carry about a book of the Law, for the instruction of the people,<sup>n</sup> and many copies might have perished under Manasseh; yet still a sufficient number was always preserved by God's providence. It is mentioned, indeed, in the book of Kings,<sup>o</sup> as a particular circumstance, that in the time of Josiah, the book of the Law was found by the high-priest Hilkiah; but this by no means implies, that all other copies had been destroyed: for whether by the book of the Law there mentioned, be understood the original autograph of Moses, (which was probably intended;)<sup>p</sup> or only an authentic public copy, which might have been taken by the priests from the side of the ark of the covenant, to preserve it from the sacrilegious violence of Manasseh; it can by no means be supposed to have been the only book of the Law then extant, as every king was obliged to copy it on his accession to the throne, and as it was the very basis of every civil, as well as of every religious regulation; and not to mention private copies, Josiah must certainly have seen the book of the Law, or

<sup>1</sup> The Jews reduced the whole law to six hundred and thirteen precepts, according to the number of the letters of the decalogue, intimating that the whole law was reductively contained therein.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iv. 16; Acts xiii. 15, 27; xv. 21; xxvii. 23. Hieron. cap. 6. Bava Bathra. Maimon. præf. in Chaz. Aben. Ezra, in ch. xxv. 16. R. David. Kimchi. Deut. xxxi. 10, 24, 26.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xvii. 18, 19; xxvii. 3; xxxi. 10, 11.

<sup>m</sup> Exod. xiii. 9; Levit. x. 11; Deut. vi. 6—9, 21; xi. 18, 19. This was probably a figurative precept which the Jews

superstitiously fulfilled in a literal sense, with phylacteries, inscribed bracelets, &c. Vid. Isaiah xlix. 16. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 9.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. xvii. 8, 9. This, indeed, might have been an ancient practice only revived by Jehoshaphat, for the Hebrews had probably few, if any, established synagogues before the captivity; and this account only proves, that public copies were not generally dispersed through the cities of Judæa. Vid. 2 Chron. xv. 3.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings xxii. 8, 11.

<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

he would not have projected the reformation of his kingdom in the manner recorded in the book of Kings.<sup>q</sup> The surprise, therefore, that Hilkiah, and the grief that Josiah are related to have felt, were owing either to the extraordinary circumstance of finding the book in the time of cleansing the temple, and of their endeavours to effect a reformation, or to the multiplicity and importance of those precepts, which, as they must have been conscious, had been violated and neglected.

Whether or not Moses wrote out twelve copies, as is related by tradition,<sup>r</sup> it is probable that each tribe was furnished with a book of the Law. The schools of the prophets likewise, the ten tribes of Israel, and the Levites, who were appointed to read the Law in all parts, must have been provided with books; and it is certain that authentic copies were preserved during the captivity,<sup>s</sup> and publicly read after the return;<sup>t</sup> it may be added, also, that as scribes of the law were at this time established,<sup>u</sup> there is no improbability in the accounts, which state, that Ezra and Nehemiah furnished three hundred copies for the congregation and synagogues, founded on the re-establishment of the Jewish church. The same reverence which henceforward occasioned a multiplication of the copies of the law, produced also more numerous guardians to watch over its purity; and the increasing accuracy of the Masora contributed still farther to secure its integrity.

The Jews believed that Moses was enlightened by a much higher and more excellent inspiration than any subsequent prophet;<sup>x</sup> and his superiority is expressly asserted in an eulogium on his character in the book of Deuteronomy, which may have been inserted by Ezra. In the New Testament he is always mentioned distinctly, and with peculiar respect.<sup>y</sup> He conversed with God "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,"<sup>z</sup> in that privileged and familiar intercourse that St. Paul promises to the heirs of future salvation.<sup>a</sup> Some, indeed, have supposed that Moses did not literally contemplate God himself: for our Saviour says, that "no man hath seen God at any time;"<sup>b</sup>

<sup>q</sup> Hottinger. Hist. Eccles. N. T. sect. 16. par. iv. p. 137.

<sup>r</sup> Huet. Prop. iv.

<sup>s</sup> Dan. ix. 11, 13; Tobit vi. 12; vii. 13.

<sup>t</sup> Ezra iii. 2; vi. 18; Nehem. i. 8, 9.

<sup>u</sup> Jerem. viii. 8; Ezra iv. 8.

<sup>x</sup> Vid. Maimon. de Fund. Legis.

<sup>y</sup> Mark ix. 4; Luke xvi. 29; Acts vii. 35; Rev. xv. 8.

<sup>z</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 11.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Smith's Discour. on Prophecy, c. 2. and 11.

<sup>b</sup> John i. 18; v. 37.

and we are told that "the law was given by angels."<sup>c</sup> He beheld, however, as much as it was possible for man to behold, some apparent and distinct representation of the divine presence, miraculously displayed, though veiled perhaps in a glorious cloud; it being impossible, as Moses was informed, for man to contemplate the actual face, or untempered majesty of God.<sup>d</sup> It must therefore be understood that God spake to him not in visions and dark speeches, but in clear and manifest revelations.<sup>e</sup> Moses was likewise privileged to address God at all times,<sup>f</sup> without the assistance of the high-priest, who consulted by means of the Urim and Thummim. From this power of obtaining revelations immediately from God, proceeded those striking prophecies which he delivered. And these prophecies, as well as many others which he records, as uttered by the patriarchs, to whom God disclosed his will, were gradually fulfilled in successive events, or finally accomplished in the Messiah. Moses was likewise eminently invested with the power of miracles, and performed many illustrious wonders in Egypt and in the wilderness; for the truth of which he appeals to his countrymen, and grounds the authority of his government and laws upon them.<sup>g</sup> The Egyptian magicians, who were interested to defeat his measures, acknowledged that "the finger of God"<sup>h</sup> was shewn in his miracles; and the Israelites, who witnessed his power, were so satisfied of the truth of his pretensions, (themselves having witnessed the support which he received from God,) that they adopted his laws, and incorporated them into the very frame of their government, so that their civil and religious policy was founded on the platform that he had drawn. They beheld his extraordinary qualities; his open and generous temper; his fortitude and meekness so admirably blended;<sup>i</sup> his piety and wisdom; his zeal for God's service and for the welfare of his people,<sup>k</sup> which led him to prefer "affliction to the treasures of Egypt."<sup>l</sup> They saw, that in obedience to God's

<sup>c</sup> Acts vii. 38, 53; Heb. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 19.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Numb. xii. 7, 8.

<sup>f</sup> Numb. vii. 8, 9; ix. 8; Exod. xxv. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Numb. xvi. 28—35; Exod. xiv. 31; xix. 9.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. viii. 19. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. cap. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Ecclus. xlv. 1—5.

<sup>k</sup> Exod. xxxii. 32. By entreating to be "blotted out of God's book," Moses meant, that he would submit to death, and the loss of God's promised blessings, if he could obtain a remission of the sins of the Israelites. Com. with Numb. xi. 15.

<sup>l</sup> Heb. xi. 24—28; Exod. xiv. 1—5. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. cap. 8.



sentence, he continued to wander with them in a desert, where even sustenance could be obtained only by a miracle; and that he exerted the same strenuous endeavours for the attainment of the promised land, after it had been revealed to him that he should not live to conduct the people to its possession.<sup>m</sup> They beheld, likewise, that disinterested liberality with which he distributed wealth and honours on other families, while he left his own to attend on the tabernacle in a subordinate character,<sup>n</sup> appointing a stranger to succeed him in the government of the people, and directing them to look to the tribe of Judah for their future sovereigns.

If our knowledge of the truth of the existence of these qualities be drawn from the account of Moses himself, it must be recollected that he addressed his contemporaries, who could, from their own experience, judge of his veracity. His wisdom and integrity are displayed likewise in the description of his actions, and not by artful encomiums on his own character, of which he seldom speaks but to illustrate his conduct. If, indeed, he be sometimes provoked to assert that claim, to which he was justly entitled,<sup>o</sup> he confesses with equal candour his own faults and misconduct.<sup>p</sup> With the same ingenuous regard to truth, he also records the errors and sins of his own ancestors and relations,<sup>q</sup> and boldly censures the disobedience of the people whom he addresses. He uniformly represents them as a "stiff-necked and rebellious people," reminds them of their base ingratitude to God, and fearlessly threatens them with further marks of the divine vengeance.<sup>r</sup> He delivered his laws without respect to persons; spoke in the peremptory tone of one commissioned by God; not as desirous to conciliate favour, but as confiding in the assistance of him, whose minister he was. If the contemporaries of Moses, who were the spectators of

<sup>m</sup> Numb. xxvii. 12, 13.

<sup>n</sup> Numb. xi. 29; xxvii. 15—17; xxxiv. 17; Deut. i. 38.

<sup>o</sup> Numb. xii. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. iv. 10—14; Numb. xx. 1—12.

It is not in this last instance precisely stated, how Moses and Aaron had excited the divine wrath, and many strange conjectures have been formed on that subject: the text informs us, that God accused Moses and Aaron of incredulity; and it appears, that Moses, though commanded only to speak to the rock, smote it twice

with the rod. They had, perhaps, uttered some timid or impatient expressions; and any want of faith in them was more offensive and dangerous, as they had received such signal assurances of favour, and were conspicuous objects of example to the people. Vid. Psalm cvi. 32, 33; Numb. xxvii. 14; Deut. xxxii. 51. Vid. also Numb. xi. 11—15.

<sup>q</sup> Gen. xxiv. 13—30; xlix. 5—7; Exod. vi. 20; Numb. xii. 1, 2, 10; xxxii. 4. Capell. ad A. M. 2481.

<sup>r</sup> Deut. ix. 6—24; xxxii. 20—25—28.

the works and qualities which he displayed, had incontestible evidence of the divine appointment of their legislator, succeeding generations had also sufficient proofs of the truth and authority of those writings which he bequeathed for their instruction. They must have been convinced that the deliverance from Egypt, and the sustenance procured for so large a multitude during the continuance in the wilderness, could have been obtained only by divine interposition. They must have been persuaded, that their forefathers could not have accepted the dispensation of Moses, but in the assurance of its being revealed from God; and they beheld permanent testimonies of his veracity and divine commission, in the perpetual observance of those many festivals,<sup>a</sup> laws, and rites,<sup>†</sup> of which he recorded the institution, as well as in those standing vouchers of the truth of his history and pretensions, the ark and tabernacle,<sup>‡</sup> the Urim and Thummim, and the attestation of the prophets; and, lastly, in the accomplishment of his threats and promises which they experienced in various vicissitudes; in the covenanted protection afforded during their attendance on God's service at their solemn feasts;<sup>‡</sup> in the superfluous abundance that preceded the sabbatical and the jubilee years;<sup>‡</sup> in the miraculous effects of the waters of jealousy;<sup>‡</sup> in the descent of the celestial fire, which consumed the sacrifices;<sup>‡</sup> and in many other particulars, which need not be enumerated, but which fully account for those firm convictions, and for that rooted attachment for the memory and writings of their great lawgiver, which they have entailed on their posterity.

Moses was of the tribe of Levi, the son of Amram, and an immediate descendant of Abraham. He was born about A. M. 2432; and distinguished for the attractive beauty of his form. He was miraculously preserved from destruction, and educated "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."<sup>b</sup> He displayed early marks of superior qualities, and being selected by God for the deliverance and instruction of the Israelites, he maturely examined the truth of the divine appearance, and diffidently declined the commis-

<sup>a</sup> As those of the feasts of the passover, of pentecost, of tabernacles, of sabbath, &c.

<sup>†</sup> As that of circumcision.

<sup>‡</sup> As also the rod of Aaron, which blossomed in the night; the preserved manna, and the brazen serpent, kept till the time of Hezekiah. Vid. 2 Kings xviii. 4; Exod. xvi. 33, 34; Numb. xvii. 5—8; Heb. ix. 4.

<sup>x</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24.

<sup>y</sup> Levit. xxv. 3—22.

<sup>z</sup> Numb. v. 11—31.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 38; 2 Chron. vii. 1; 2 Macc. ii. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Acts vii. 20—22. Philo. de Vit. Mos. lib. i. p. 606. Macrobian. Saturn. lib. ii. cap. 15.

sion,<sup>c</sup> being, as he said, "slow of speech,"<sup>d</sup> and apprehensive that he was of too little estimation to be appointed as the deliverer of the Israelites. But when encouraged by God, he accepted of the appointment; and with a perseverance and fortitude that have never been equalled, contended for, and by divine assistance effected, the deliverance of the Israelites from their severe bondage; and conducted them through difficulties miraculously subdued, to the borders of the promised land: he communicated to them a code of revealed laws, and modelled their government to a form adapted to the conquest and possession of the country, and calculated in every respect to answer those high purposes which it was intended to fulfil. Having accomplished his ministry, and completed the Pentateuch, that work which unfolds the wisdom of the first dispensation, and which opened a source of sacred instruction to mankind; he "in the faith" relinquished the prospect of Canaan; and in the expectation "of the recompense of a higher reward," resigned that life which had been devoted to God's service, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age, to be succeeded by no equal prophet till the arrival of the Messiah, of whom he was a signal type;<sup>e</sup> having in many various circumstances of his character and eventful life obviously prefigured the spiritual Redeemer of mankind.<sup>f</sup>

The sepulchre of Moses, though said to have been "in the valley of Moab,"<sup>g</sup> seems to have been miraculously concealed, in order to prevent any idolatrous veneration of it; his character, however, was remembered by his people, with a reverence that approached to superstition. By the Greeks and Romans, also, and other heathen nations, he was acknowledged, not only as

<sup>c</sup> Exod. iii.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. iv. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Ezra, or the prophet who annexed to the Pentateuch the account of Moses's death, observes, that no prophet had since arisen like unto Moses; meaning, perhaps, that the great prophet, the Messiah, whom Moses promised, was not yet arrived. Deut. xviii. 18, 19; xxxiv. 10.

<sup>f</sup> Euseb. Demon. Evang. lib. iii. cap. 2. Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 196—226. Heb. iii. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. xxxiv. 6. Some Maronite shepherds were said to have found his tomb in Mount Nebo, A. D. 1565; but this is an idle fiction. Vid. Baanage's Hist. of Jews, lib. iv. cap. 7, and Patrick in Deut.

iv. 6. St. Jude, in his epistle, speaks of a dispute between Michael and the Devil, concerning the body of Moses, alluding, probably, to a tradition received among the Jews, as possibly does St. Paul, when he mentions the names of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, and relates, that Moses said, he "exceedingly feared and quaked" on Mount Sinai, since these particulars are not recorded in the Old Testament. Jude 9; 2 Tim. iii. 8; Heb. xii. 21. An account of the dispute concerning the body of Moses was formerly in an apocryphal book, entitled *Περὶ ἀναλήψεως Μωϋσέως*, vide Origen. *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*, lib. iii. cap. 2.

the most ancient lawgiver,<sup>b</sup> and as an historian of unimpeached veracity,<sup>i</sup> but by an apotheosis, under which the venerable characters of antiquity were usually revered, he was translated among the gods, and worshipped under different names;<sup>k</sup> for it is easy to trace the features of the Hebrew legislator, veiled under the personage of many a pagan deity, and to discern his qualities and actions under the borrowed attributes and conduct which idolatry ascribed to the objects of its veneration. So also were the customs, laws, and ceremonies of many nations evidently derived from the Mosaic institutions.<sup>l</sup> Every one, however slightly conversant with the policy and religion of pagan antiquity, will discover in the Pentateuch the sources from whence they were often drawn. In the heroes and benefactors consecrated by heathen admiration, are described the patriarchs and illustrious persons of scripture. In the fictions of pagan mythology, we behold the disfigured relations of sacred history; and the proud discoveries of philosophy are often but the imperfect transcript of revealed wisdom.<sup>m</sup> In short, the historians, the poets, and the philosophers of antiquity, have enriched their several works with distorted accounts from the sacred volume. The pages of successive writers are pregnant with its relations, and the names of numberless authors might be produced, whose works either confirm the truth of the Pentateuch, or bear testimony to the character and pretensions of its author.<sup>n</sup> But this has been so often done, that it must be unnecessary to dwell on the subject here.

<sup>b</sup> Justin Martyr, Oper. p. 9. Diodor. Sic. lib. i. p. 84. edit. Rhodom. Strabo's Geogr. lib. xvi. p. 1103. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. Just. lib. xxxvi. cap. 2. Joseph. Antiq. lib. i. cap. 3.

<sup>i</sup> To this even Porphyry bore testimony.

<sup>k</sup> Artapan. in Euseb. Vossius, Bochart, Just. Martyr, Apol. c. 37. Huet. prop. iv. cap. 8, 9.

<sup>l</sup> Justin. Paræn. cap. 35. Waterland's Charge to the Clergy of Middlesex, May 19, 1731.

<sup>m</sup> Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. cap. 6, 12, 14, 15; lib. xiii. cap. 12. Cyril cont. Jul. lib. i. p. 8. Tatian. ad Græc. cap. 61. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. cap. 22. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

<sup>n</sup> If there were no translation of the scriptures into Greek before that of the Septuagint, yet the heathen writers might have derived much sacred intelligence from

colloquial intercourse; and Plato indeed professes to have so collected Phœnician and Syrian, that is, Hebrew accounts. Vide Plato in Cratyl. Nations appear to have been at first distinguished for civil and religious knowledge, in proportion to their proximity to, and communication with those countries where the light of revelation shone. The dispersion of the Jews into foreign countries afterwards furnished channels of information to the heathen nations; and some of this people were certainly scattered into Greece about the time that the Greek mythology was composed. Vid. Joel iii. 6. Bochart's Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 24. Grotius de Verit. lib. iii. cap. 16. Huet. prop. iv. cap. 2. Bryant's Mythol. Pref. to Shuckford's Connect. Edwards's Discour. vol. i. Hartley's Discourse on the Truth of the Christian Religion, in Watson's Tracts, vol. ii.

In a general consideration of the character of that dispensation which is unfolded in the following books, there are some remarks which should be stated for its illustration. In the first place it should be observed, that we are authorized by the sacred writers to esteem it as in some respects imperfect, as a particular and a temporary covenant to endure only for a season:° imperfect, in condescension to the undisciplined stubbornness of the Israelites;<sup>p</sup> and imperfect, as elementary and figurative only of a spiritual covenant.<sup>q</sup> As a code of laws designed for the civil government of the Israelites, it was contrived with a view to the regulation of the external conduct. It was framed rather with intention to control the lawless and disobedient, than to effect an inward and perfect purity of heart. So farther, as the law could not justify mankind from the guilt of original sin, and as an obedience to carnal ordinances could not be perfect or satisfactory, the Mosaic dispensation did not stipulate for those rewards which are offered by Christ,<sup>r</sup> though it held out intimations of immortality, and prepared mankind for the gracious promises which were made by the gospel. As a covenant of works, it required undeviating obedience under the severest denunciations of wrath,<sup>s</sup> and made no allowance for unintentional offences; not calculated, like the gospel, to proffer gracious terms of reconciliation and favour, but to point out the condition of man obnoxious to God's wrath,<sup>t</sup> and the insufficiency of his endeavours to propitiate forgiveness, and to atone for sin.<sup>u</sup>

It is likewise obvious to remark, that Moses, though appointed to communicate a divine law, must, with respect to the Israelites, be contemplated as an human legislator. He addresses them, indeed, as a state subjected to a theocracy; but God had deigned to be considered in the light of a temporal king to his

° Jerem. iii. 16; xxxi. 31—34; Heb. vii. 18, 19; viii. 7—13; ix. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 23; Deut. xxxii. 28; Ezek. xx. 25; Matt. xix. 8; Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1; 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that any ritual precepts were ordained by the Mosaic law, in accommodation to customs which prevailed in Egypt, since its design was to segregate the Israelites from all other nations, and to wean them from all tendencies to idolatry, and since it inculcated a particular abhorrence of Egyptian

practices. Levit. xviii. 3. Circumcision was certainly a divine appointment first observed as a religious rite by Abraham. Gen. xvii. 11.

<sup>q</sup> Heb. vii. 18, 19; Gal. iv. 3—9.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. iii. 20; viii. 3; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 21; Heb. viii. 6; ix. 14, 15.

<sup>s</sup> Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10.

<sup>t</sup> 1 John i. 7; Rom. iv. 15; viii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 6—9; Col. ii. 14.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. iii. 19, 20; vii. 5—11; Gal. iii. 22.

chosen people:<sup>2</sup> Moses, therefore, speaking as the legislator of a civil government, and delivering his laws to the people, considered in their collective national character, enforces them chiefly on temporal sanctions;<sup>7</sup> on motives of present reward and present punishment; thus annexing civil benefits to the observance, and civil penalties to the breach of political laws, as respectively their proper and proportioned consequences. To the dull apprehensions, likewise, and sensual minds of the Israelites, promises and threats of speedy accomplishment were necessary, and well calculated to control them, in subserviency to those laws, of which the violation was immediately hostile to the declared intention of God, in the constitution of the Hebrew polity. Moses, resting also on the miraculous proofs of its divine original which accompanied the promulgation of the law, and confident of the divine support in its establishment, was under no necessity of recommending its acceptance by a direct appeal to those high and important inducements which might have been derived from the consideration of a future life and judgment. As the minister, however, of a divine revelation, as a teacher of religion, in which light also Moses must be contemplated, he undoubtedly intimated higher encouragements than those of temporal reward, and endeavoured to animate his people by the display of a more glorious prospect. He did not absolutely propose an eternal recompense to the righteous, but held out the expectation of immortality to those who relied on God's promises.

Hence it is that he so particularly describes the attributes and designs of God,<sup>8</sup> so strongly insists on the advantage of obedience, and occasionally adverts to that final retribution which should take place after death.<sup>9</sup> It was, however, not so much by the positive declarations, as by the figurative promises of the law, that Moses held out the consideration of eternal

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xix. 6; 1 Sam. xii. 12, 17, 19; Isaiah xxxiii. 22; Hagg. ii. 4, 5. Warburt. Div. Legal lib. v. sect. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Porter's Diss. p. 260. Moses had no occasion to reveal in precise terms the immortality of the soul, which the Israelites as well as all other people believed, and which had been implied in God's promises to the patriarchs. La Bletterie, in a note to the *Cæsars* of Julian, well observes, that no nation has received from its lawgivers

the belief of another life; the lawgivers have everywhere found it. The persuasion of the immortality of the soul, as well as that of the existence of God, is the tenet of all nations; the faith of mankind.

<sup>8</sup> Exod. iii. 6, comp. with Luke xx. 37; Gen. i. 27; ii. 7; iii. 15; Numb. xxiv. 17; Deut. xxxii. 39.

<sup>9</sup> Deut. xxxii. 29, (where Acherith-am should have been translated, their future state); Numb. xxiii. 10; Deut. xxxii. 39.

recompense to his people; for it was consistent with the typical character of the first dispensation, which was figurative in all its parts, to shadow out, rather than directly to reveal those spiritual rewards, which were to be annexed, as more exalted sanctions to an higher covenant;<sup>b</sup> and that the promises of the Mosaic law were the figures and representations of "better things to come,"<sup>c</sup> as also, that its threats were significant of stronger denunciations, is evident, not only from their correspondent and allusive character,<sup>d</sup> but also from the interpretations of the prophets; and it is certain that if the sensual and duller ranks were unable to discover the full extent of the promises, yet the more instructed and more enlightened persons understood and confided in its spiritual import.<sup>e</sup> Still, however, it must be repeated, Moses does not ground his laws on spiritual sanctions, but rather has recourse to the strongest and most affecting motives of present consideration, urging God's threat "of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children."<sup>f</sup>

It remains to be remarked, with respect to the laws delivered to the people of Israel, that some were of a general and permanent, others of a confined and temporary nature. They are usually distinguished into moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

The ceremonial and the judicial laws are in the following books joined together, as the Hebrew religion and polity were built up together in one fabric; these laws, as adapted to the particular state and government of the Israelites,<sup>g</sup> and as often incapable of general application,<sup>h</sup> are collectively represented as

<sup>b</sup> Heb. viii. 6. Though the law was designed rather to convince mankind of sin, by the severity of its requisitions, than to furnish them with any distinct assurance of immortality; yet, nevertheless, salvation was unquestionably to be obtained in virtue of Christ's atonement, by those who fulfilled the terms of the old covenant. Luke x. 25, 28; xxv. 42, 43; Rom. iii. 19, 20; Gal. iii. 22.

<sup>c</sup> Psalm cxxxiii. 3; Deut. xxx. 15—19; comp. with Luke x. 25—28.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. Epist. Dardan.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. xi. 8—16. The Mosaic covenant included that made to Abraham, which was a counterpart of the gospel covenant, and of which the promises were certainly spiritual; and in the renewal of this covenant, together with that made at Sinai, Moses blends temporal and spiritual promises. Vid. Gen. xvii. 7; Deut. xxix.

13; xxx; Gal. iii. 8. 17; Jude 14, 15; Acts xxiv. 14, 15, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Exod. xx. 5; Deut. v. 9. This denunciation against idolatry applied to punishments only in the present life; for God afterwards declared, that, as to future retribution, the son should not bear the iniquity of the father. Ezek. xviii. 20.

<sup>g</sup> Circumcision, as a rite of distinction, was useless when the barriers between the Jew and Gentile were thrown down; its figurative intention to promote purity of heart was preserved in the gospel precepts; and its actual practice in hot countries, as conducive to cleanness, was not forbidden or discouraged, but as it implied a subserviency to the ritual law.

<sup>h</sup> The number of the priests and Levites was limited. All nations could not be served by the Aaronical priesthood, neither could they resort three times a year to one place.

not obligatory on other nations. Many of these laws are indeed pronounced by Moses to be "laws and ordinances for ever," "through all generations,"<sup>1</sup> and hence the Jews believe, that they never shall be abolished; <sup>k</sup> but it is certain that these expressions must be understood to mean only, that such laws should not be liable to abrogation by any human authority, and that they should long continue; but by no means, that they should never be reversed by the same authority on which they were first established.<sup>1</sup>

The ceremonial laws were unquestionably transient institutions, designed to intimate and foreshew evangelical appointments. As therefore, in their nature, figurative of future particulars, they have passed away on the accomplishment of those things of which they were the shadows;<sup>m</sup> ritual observances are now unprofitable as spiritual righteousness is introduced,<sup>n</sup> and the Levitical priesthood being changed, its appendant laws are changed also.<sup>o</sup> The end of the ceremonial laws is fulfilled, and they remain only as the picture of a well-concerted scheme, the prophetic testimonies that support a more spiritual covenant.

The judicial laws, also, as far as they respected the Israelites as a civil society, and were contrived with regard to the peculiar and appropriate condition of that people; as far as they were suited to the exigencies of a time, and devised with a view to the accomplishment of certain purposes now effected, are no longer binding, as positive laws on us.

Christ did not indeed formally, and in express terms, repeal any part of the Mosaic law; but whatever was accomplished, did necessarily expire. The apostles, it is true, though they regarded the ceremonial law as a bondage from which they were freed,<sup>p</sup> still continued to observe some of its precepts. This, however, was by no means as a necessary service, but in compliance with the prejudices of the proselyte Jews.<sup>q</sup> As the force

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xii. 14—17; xxxi. 21; xl. 15; Levit. iii. 17; vi. 18; vii. 36; x. 9; xxiii. 14—21—31—41; xxiv. 3; Numb. xv. 15; xix. 10.

<sup>k</sup> Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 38.

<sup>1</sup> The ceremonial laws were sometimes dispensed with, as was circumcision in the wilderness, where it was of but little use. So David eat of the shew-bread, and our Saviour justified his conduct. Vid. 1 Sam. xxi. 6; Matt. xii. 3—4.

<sup>m</sup> Coloss. ii. 17.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. vii. 6; Heb. vii. 18, 19; 1 Peter ii. 5. Barnab. Epist.

<sup>o</sup> Heb. vii. 12.

<sup>p</sup> Acts xxi. 21—27; 1 Cor. ix. 20; Gal. iv; v. 1—5.

<sup>q</sup> Acts xvi. 3. St. Paul circumcised Timotheus, "because of the Jews which were in those quarters." In a council previously held, the apostles deliberated, indeed, concerning the necessity of circumcision; but they certainly understood, that, with respect



of education and long habit could not be immediately counteracted, the Jews were suffered to continue in the observance of those ritual precepts, which, if now obsolete, were at least harmless, while they were not set up in opposition to the pretensions of the gospel covenant.

The apostles, likewise, living under a government which was founded on the Mosaic establishment, and which had the judicial laws incorporated into the very frame of its constitution, could not, without violating the duties of good citizens, and without offending against the authority of the civil magistrate, refuse to be subservient to the regulations of that polity; they must have perceived, however, that as far as the civil were interwoven with the religious institutions, they should give way to evangelical appointments. They must have understood, that as the distinctions between Jew and Gentile were now to cease, the whole of that economy which was contrived to keep the Israelites a separate people, was useless and inconsistent with the design of Christianity. Yet as they knew that it was only by the gradual operation of the Christian spirit, that the Jews could be weaned from a long established obedience to the law, and that in fact till the constitution of their country should be changed or dissolved, such obedience was in some degree necessary; the apostles only then reprobated the advocates for the observance of the Mosaic law, when they sought to enforce it as generally necessary, and as a means of justification: they taught that salvation was to be obtained without the law,<sup>a</sup> and expressly exempted the Gentile converts from the necessity of respecting any precepts but those which were entirely moral, or partook of a moral character.<sup>b</sup>

As to the moral laws, whether those contained in the decalogue, or those occasionally interspersed through the judicial and

to the Gentiles at least, there could be no obligation to observe the law, as far as it was of a temporary and local nature. They appear to have assembled only to ratify, by an unanimous decision, the sentiments of Paul and Barnabas. Vid. Acts xv. 1—29.

<sup>c</sup> August. cont. Faust. lib. xix. cap. 17. Just. Martyr, Dialog. p. 230. edit. Thirl. Constit. Apostol. lib. vi. cap. 11, 12—20, 21, 22; Rom. x. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Acts xiii. 39; Rom. iii. 28; ix. 32; Gal. ii. 16.

<sup>e</sup> Acts xv. 10, 11. This declaration was first made in favour of the Gentile nations,

(vid. Acts xv. 19.) who had neither prejudices nor civil regulations to control them; but the gospel liberty was to extend equally to the Jews, when they should be released from the influence of habit, and the injunctions of civil authority. Rom. vii. 4; viii. 15. Indeed, after the destruction of Jerusalem, most of the Hebrew converts to Christianity renounced the Mosaic law without hesitation: a part only adhered to it, as the Nazarenes, Ebionites, &c. Vide Mosheim. de Rebus Christ. Ant. Constant. Sæc. ii. sect. 38, note\*.

ceremonial code, it is evident that these, as having in themselves an intrinsic excellence and universal propriety, and as founded on those relations which eternally subsist, as well with reference to our dependance on God, as between man and man reciprocally, must remain in perpetual force; for the Mosaic law was annihilated only so far as it was of a figurative and temporary character.

The ten commandments which were first given, as containing the primary principles of all law, were doubtless introduced with such majesty and solemnity, that they might retain an everlasting and irreversible authority, which no time should alter, no change of circumstance annul or invalidate: they were uttered by the voice of God, before the whole multitude of Israel; were written twice by God's own finger;<sup>6</sup> and are obviously distinguished from the other laws, which were given to Moses only, which were written by him, and which were moulded in conformity to the peculiar condition and circumstances of the Israelites. Moses, likewise, (as has been observed by Hooker,)<sup>7</sup> evidently discriminates the moral from the ceremonial laws; for in his recapitulation of the law, in the book of Deuteronomy, he says, "the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude, only a voice, and he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, the ten commandments; and wrote them on two tables of stone," (durable monuments, to intimate their unperishable authority;) "and the Lord commanded me at the same time to teach you the statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it."<sup>8</sup> These laws, then, given for the advantage of all mankind, founded on principles of invariable and universal propriety,<sup>9</sup> and stamped with the two great characters of Christian excellence—gratitude to God, and love to man—are properly inscribed on everlasting tablets in the Christian church, and must be observed as long as any reverence for the Deity shall exist.

The other moral laws which are intermixed with the ceremonial and judicial precepts, and which have entirely a general

<sup>6</sup> Exod. xxxi. 18. That is, by God's immediate power, and not by the act of man. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. i. cap. 66.

<sup>7</sup> Hooker's Eccles. Polit. book iii. p. 146.

<sup>8</sup> Deut. iv. 10—14; v.

<sup>9</sup> The morality of the fourth commandment, and its perpetual force, (though with a change as to the day,) has been considered as unquestionable as that of any other part of the decalogue.

character,<sup>a</sup> may be considered as corollaries from, or commentaries on the decalogue. These, though blended with others of a local and temporary nature, and scattered through a collection superseded, and virtually repealed, have, as a revelation of the divine will, which is ever uniform in the same circumstances, as well as from their intrinsic character, a claim to perpetual observance, as much as those of the decalogue. They were delivered, it is true, with less awful circumstances than were the ten commandments, which summed up in a compendious form the whole excellence of the moral law: but the other laws had not the less authority, because delivered by the mediation of Moses, at the particular request of the people, who trembled at the voice of God;<sup>b</sup> and no argument against the perpetuity of these secondary laws can be drawn from the direction added, (chiefly for the sake of those that were of a local and temporary nature,) to observe them in the land of Judæa; since those of the two tables, though indisputably of universal obligation, were delivered with a similar application, as appears from the sanction annexed to the fifth commandment.<sup>c</sup> No part of the law, as far as it is strictly moral, is abrogated by the gospel, any more than are the commandments of the decalogue. The old dispensation is declared invalid only as a covenant of salvation, and it is superseded in Christ only as far as it is accomplished. Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law,<sup>d</sup> and its moral design is still unaccomplished, and must so continue till the end of time; for "till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."<sup>e</sup> Our Saviour adds,

<sup>a</sup> Of these there are many: vid. Exod. xxi. 19, 20, 22; xxii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11—16, 19—22, 26—28; xxiii. 1—9, 12; Levit. xvii. 7; xix. 9, 10, 14, 17, 18, 29, 35, 36; xx. 9, 10, 17; xxiii. 22; xxiv. 18; Num. xxx. 2; Deut. i. 16, 17; xiv. 29; xv. 7, 8, 11; xvii. 6; xxii. 1—3, 14—21; xxv. 14, 15. It may be deemed superfluous to contend for these, as the same principles are inculcated in the decalogue, but every injunction which illustrates the moral duties, and dilates moral precepts, is important. The law and the prophets are not useless, though we possess the "two commandments on which they hang;" nor is the decalogue superfluous, since the gospel hath furnished a more perfect rule, and declared, that all the law is fulfilled in one word. Matt. xxii. 40; Gal. v. 14. Be-

sides, the dignity of the Mosaic law is affected by this consideration.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xx. 19.

<sup>c</sup> This annexed motive of temporal reward, as well as the exordium prefixed to the first commandment, and the commemoration added to the fourth, in Deut. v. 15, have an appropriate application when addressed to the Jews, which, however, by no means affects the universality and perpetuity of the decalogue; and if the direction which accompanied the other laws be conceived to restrict their observance to the land of Canaan, it can apply only to those of a local and temporary nature, since the others might, with equal reason, be observed elsewhere.

<sup>d</sup> Matt. v. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. v. 18; Luke xvi. 17.

still speaking of the law under one general consideration, "whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven;" and he elsewhere annexes the promise of life to the observance of the moral law.<sup>f</sup> The apostles were so far from considering as abolished any part of the Mosaic law which had a moral character, that they expressly ratified, and enjoined as necessary, injunctions not contained in the decalogue, but which had only a moral tendency.<sup>g</sup> It follows, then, from these considerations, that though the law be abrogated, as a covenant insufficient and preparatory,<sup>h</sup> though its ceremonies have vanished as the veil and covering of spiritual things, and its judicial institutions are dissolved with the economy of the Hebrew government, its moral pillars remain unshaken. The law, then, is abolished only so far as fulfilled and superseded by a more excellent dispensation. As its precepts prefigured this, they have terminated; as its appointments prepared for this, they were exclusively confined to the Hebrew nation; as its commandments correspond with the moral designs of the gospel, they are incorporated with, and should be observed under, the Christian covenant.

The Mosaic dispensation, inasmuch as it was restricted to one nation, and contrived to effect its purpose, by partial regulations,

<sup>f</sup> Matt. v. 19; x. 27, 28.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xv. The apostles, in the first council held at Jerusalem, after having pronounced the ceremonial law to be burthen-some and unnecessary, enjoined to the Gentiles, in the name of "the Holy Ghost," an observance of the Mosaic law, where it had a general character and moral tendency, and in the very terms, as well as in the spirit of the Mosaic law, (considered distinctly from the decalogue,) they prescribed unto the Gentiles, "as necessary things," that they should abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; inasmuch as these were descriptive of a disposition to idolatry, and adopted in opposition to the service of God. St. James concludes his advice by intimating, that these instructions were permanent precepts of the law of Moses, which was "read in every city." Vid. Acts xv. 1, 7, 10, 11, 19, 20, 21, 24, 28, 29. St. Paul, in his epistles, asserts the abrogation of the law,

only as set up in opposition to the gospel, to which it was "a school-master," (or pedagogue). In comparison of which it was "elementary and beggarly;" but in reference to which, and in its moral and spiritual character, it was "holy, just, and good." Vid. Rom. iii. 20, 24, 28, 31; viii. 4; Gal. iii. 24; iv. 9; 1 Tim. i. 8—10; v. 18; 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10; where a Mosaic precept not in the decalogue is said to be spoken "altogether for our sakes." Vid. Deut. xxv. 4. In this, as in other instances, where a moral import is couched under a figurative precept, we may say, with St. Ambrose, "Evacuatur in Christo, non Vetus Testamentum, sed velamen ejus." Epist. 76. Deut. xxii. 10; Rom. vii. 14. See, lastly, xxiii. 56; where St. Paul admits the authority of a general precept, delivered in Exod. xxii. 28.

<sup>h</sup> We are freed also from the curses of the law, "the ministration of death." Vid. Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. iii. 7; but not from its directive power.

cannot be supposed to have been productive of that liberal and diffusive benevolence which characterizes the gospel; which is a covenant designed to embrace all nations, and to promote universal love. But though the peculiar privileges, which the first covenant conferred on the Israelites, led them to entertain an arrogant and unreasonable conceit, it is certain that the Mosaic law recommended throughout as much benevolence as was consistent with that distinction which it was intended to promote. The principles on which it is framed, may be always adopted with advantage, since it breathes throughout a fine spirit of moral equity; of merciful regard to strangers,<sup>1</sup> and even to the brute creation;<sup>2</sup> and tends, by its literal and figurative precepts,<sup>1</sup> to awaken benevolence and charitable dispositions.

The five books of Moses furnish us with a compendious history of the world, from the creation to the arrival of the Israelites at the verge of Canaan, a period of above two thousand two hundred and fifty years. It is a wide description, gradually contracted; an account of one nation, preceded by a general sketch of the first state of mankind. The books are written in pure Hebrew, with an admirable diversity of style, always well adapted to the subject, yet characterized with the stamp of the same author; they are all evidently parts of the same work, and mutually strengthen and illustrate each other. They blend revelation and history in one point of view, furnish laws, and describe their execution, exhibit prophecies, and relate their accomplishment.

Besides the Pentateuch, Moses is said to have composed many of the Psalms, and some have, though improperly, attributed to him all those between the ninetieth and the hundredth inclusive. He appears, however, to have been the first writer who was inspired in the productions of sacred hymns; and those contained in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, and the thirty-second of Deuteronomy, furnish very beautiful models of his enraptured poetry. The book of Job has been with some probability supposed to have been written or translated by Moses, and many apocryphal works have been ascribed to him, by writers desirous of recommending their works under the sanction of his name. Cedrenus transferred into his history, a book, which passed under the name of Moses, styled *Little Genesis*,<sup>m</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Passim.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiii. 12; Deut. v. 14; xxii. 6, 7.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxii. 10; xxv. 4.

<sup>m</sup> *Λεπτήγενεσις*.

which contained many spurious particulars. It was extant in Hebrew in the time of St. Jerom, and cited by him, but condemned as apocryphal by the council of Trent. Others attribute to him an apocalypse, from which they pretend that St. Paul copied in verse 15 of chapter vi. to the Galatians; but these, as well as those entitled the Ascension, and the Assumption of Moses, and some mysterious books, were probably fabricated by the Sethians, or Sethedians, an ancient sect of Gnostic heretics, who pretended to be derived from Seth, and to possess several books of the patriarchs.<sup>a</sup>

### OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

THIS, which is the first book in order of the Pentateuch, is called Bereschith in those Hebrew copies which adopt the division of the Pentateuch into five books.<sup>a</sup> This word signifies the beginning, and was chosen for the title in conformity to the Hebrew custom of denominating the sacred books from their initial words respectively. The book, however, is usually entitled Genesis, from a Greek word,<sup>b</sup> which imports generation. It was written by Moses, as the concurrent testimonies of all ages declare,<sup>c</sup> as some suppose, in the land of Midian, where Moses fed the flocks of his father-in-law in the wilderness, with design, it is said, to comfort the Hebrews in their servitude, by the example of constancy in their fathers, and by a display of the oracles and promises of God; as particularly in that remarkable revelation to Abraham, that "his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, and should serve them, and be afflicted four hundred years, and that God should judge that nation whom they should serve, and afterwards they should come out with great substance."<sup>d</sup> Eusebius<sup>e</sup> intimates his respect for this opinion;

<sup>a</sup> Athan. Synop.

<sup>b</sup> Some private copies only are divided; those used in the Jewish synagogues are not.

<sup>c</sup> *Γενεσις*, generation, production. It is remarkable that the New Testament begins with the same word, *Επιβολος γενεσεως Ιησου*.

<sup>d</sup> Du Pin. Diss. Prel. sect. 1. Huet. The mention which is made in chap. xii. 6, and xiii. 7, of the Canaanites and Periazites

being then in the land, does not prove that the passages were written after the expulsion of these nations; nor does the expression of "before there reigned any king in Israel," necessarily imply, that there were kings when the book was written. The account of the kings of Edom, which corresponds with that in the book of Chronicles, was probably afterwards inserted by some prophet, or authorized person.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. xv. 13, 14. From the birth of

but Theodoret<sup>f</sup> and others suppose that the book was written in the wilderness, after the promulgation of the law; and a third hypothesis has been offered from the Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman, that God dictated to Moses all the contents of the book during the forty days that he was permitted to have a communication with the Deity on Mount Sinai, and that at his descent he committed the whole to writing. It is, however, as impossible, as it is of little consequence, to determine which of these opinions is best founded; and it is sufficient for us to know, that Moses was assisted by the spirit of infallible truth, in the composition of this sacred work,<sup>g</sup> which he deemed a proper introduction to the laws and judgments delivered in the subsequent books.

The description which Moses furnishes in this book concerning the creation, as relating to circumstances previous to the existence of mankind, could be derived only from immediate revelation.<sup>h</sup> It was received by the Jews with full conviction of its truth, on the authority of that inspiration under which Moses was known to act. But when the book was first delivered, many persons then living must have been competent to decide on the fidelity with which he relates those events which were subsequent to the creation; they must have heard of and believed the remarkable incidents in the lives of the patriarchs, the prophecies which they uttered, and the actions which they performed: for the longevity of man, in the earlier ages of the world, rendered tradition the criterion of truth; and in the days of Moses, the channels of information must have been as yet uncorrupted; for though ages had already elapsed, even two thousand four hundred and thirty-two years before the birth of the sacred historian, yet those relations were easily ascertained, which might have been conveyed by seven persons from Adam to Moses; and that the traditions were so secure from error, we shall immediately be convinced, when we consider that Methusalem was three hundred and forty years old when Adam died, and that he lived till the year of the flood, when Noah had attained six hundred years.<sup>i</sup> In like manner Shem conveyed tradition

Isaac to the deliverance from Egypt was four hundred and five years. The four hundred and thirty years mentioned in Exodus xii. 40, includes the twenty-five years of Abraham's sojourning in Canaan, before the birth of Isaac. Vid. Patrick in loc.

<sup>e</sup> Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ii. cap. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Theod. Quæst. in Gen. Ven. Bede, &c.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. iv. 3; Gal. iii. 8; James ii.

23.

<sup>h</sup> Origen Homil. 26 in Numer.

<sup>i</sup> Adam died, A. M. 930, one hundred and twenty-six years only before the birth

from Noah to Abraham, for he conversed with both a considerable time. Isaac, also, the son of Abraham, lived to instruct Joseph in the history of his predecessors; and Amram, the father of Moses, was contemporary with Joseph.<sup>k</sup> The Israelites then must have been able, by interesting tradition, to judge how far the Mosaic account was consistent with truth.<sup>l</sup> If the memory of man reached beyond the period assigned to the creation, they must have disbelieved the Mosaic history; but if, through so small a number of immediate predecessors, they could trace up the origin of mankind to Adam, we need not wonder at the implicit veneration which ratified the records of the sacred historian; which accepted a revelation, confirmed by every received account, and stamped by every sanction of divine authority. The sacred character of the book is established also by the internal evidence of its inspiration; by the revealed history of the creation of the world; by the several predictions afterwards fully accomplished; and lastly, by the suffrage of our Saviour and his apostles, who have cited from it at least twenty-seven passages *verbatim* in the New Testament, and thirty-eight according to the sense.<sup>m</sup>

Genesis contains the history of two thousand three hundred and sixty-nine years, to the death of Joseph, or thereabouts, if we follow the account of the ages of the patriarchs, and suppose the flood to have happened about one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years after the creation. It is, perhaps, scarce worth the trouble to observe, that some very futile objections have been made to the period which is assigned by Moses to the creation, as though it were too recent to be reconciled with some natural appearances; for it has ever been found, upon accurate investigation, that though the existence of the world, according to the Mosaical account, be too short<sup>n</sup> to be compatible with the

of Noah, and therefore must have been seen by many of Noah's contemporaries. Lamech, the father of Noah, had certainly seen Adam and his children, being born fifty-six years before Adam's death; and Noah himself might have seen several memorials existing, to prove the truth of those events afterwards recorded by Moses; for Noah died only two years before the birth of Abraham; and Isaac might have seen Shem and Selah, who conversed with Noah many years.

<sup>k</sup> The tradition, then, was conveyed from

Adam, through Methusalem, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Amram, to Moses: seven intermediate persons. This account of the longevity of mankind, in the first ages of the world, is confirmed by Manetho, Berosus, Mochus, Hestæus, &c.

<sup>l</sup> Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. cap. ult.

<sup>m</sup> As Rivet has accurately calculated.

<sup>n</sup> The creation of the world began, according to Usher, on Sunday, October 23; before the birth of Christ 4004 years, if we follow the Hebrew text. The Septuagint version places it 5872, and the



theories of some fanciful men, yet that just philosophical reasoning has always tended to corroborate the assurance of the received date of the creation. The extended accounts of the Chaldæan, Egyptian, and Chinese chronology, which reach far beyond all bounds of probability,<sup>o</sup> and the magnified calculations of some other nations, are now justly considered as the fictions of national vanity, or the exaggerations of erroneous computation. They are often in themselves contradictory,<sup>p</sup> and utterly inconsistent with all observations on the appearance of nature, all philosophical inquiry, and the advancement of mankind in arts, sciences, and refinement. These improbable fabrications are delivered by authors who lived long after Moses, whose veracity is impeached in other instances, and whose general accounts are enveloped in fable and tingured by credulity. The learned Halley has observed, that the oldest astronomical observations made by the Egyptians, of which we have any account at this day, were later than three hundred years before Christ.<sup>q</sup> The Chaldæan calculations are unworthy of attention, since they contradict the account of the flood, and are quite irreconcilable with the general testimony of ancient history; and the chimerical accounts of the Chinese, written in hieroglyphics, and rescued imperfectly and with difficulty from destruction, cannot properly be produced in support of any theory, repugnant to more authentic chronicles,<sup>r</sup> much less can they be suffered to

Samaritan 4700 before the vulgar era. The Septuagint reckons 2262 years before the flood; and the Samaritan only 1307. Vid. Jackson's Chron. Tab. Aug. Civit. Dei, lib. xii. Newton's Hist. of Antidel. World, p. 98. Strauchius Brev. Chron. translated by Sault, p. 166, 176, &c. Capel. Chron. Sac. in Appar. Walton. Some place the creation about the time of the vernal equinox, since Moses and the sacred writers reckon their first month Abib from that time. Vid. Virgil. Georg. ii. 836, et seq.; but this was in memory of their deliverance from Egypt. The first month in civil calculations was the first after the autumnal equinox; this was called Tisri, and answers to part of our September.

<sup>o</sup> The Babylonians reckoned up 33,000 years; the Chaldeans in the time of Cicero talked of 47,000; and Manetho, jealous for the reputation of his country, carried back his chronological accounts to 36,525 years. Vid. Cicer. de Divin. lib. i. Bryant's Mythol. vol. iii. Petav. &c. Maurice's History of Hindostan.

<sup>p</sup> Manetho professes to have transcribed his Dynasties from some pillars of Hermes Trismegistus. As Sanchoniatho also derived his theology from Hermes, different accounts must have been drawn from the same source. Vid. Stilling. Orig. Sac. lib. i. cap. 2. The fountain or the streams must have been corrupt.

<sup>q</sup> Sanchoniatho, the Phœnician historian, according to the most extended accounts of Porphyry, flourished long after Moses, probably not less than two centuries. Manetho and Berosus lived not more than three hundred years before Christ. Vid. Bochart. Geogr. Sac. par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 17. Jos. Scalig. Not. in Euseb. Chron. p. 12. Præp. Evang. lib. i. cap. 9. lib. x. cap. 9. Scalig. Can. Isag. lib. iii. Stilling. Orig. Sac. book i. c. 2. sect. 4. Diod. Bib. lib. i. Lact. de Orig. Error. lib. ii. cap. 12. Voss. de Idol. lib. i. cap. 28. Wootton's Reflect. on Ant. and Mod. Learning, and Stackhouse's Hist. of the Bible, book i. c. 5.

<sup>r</sup> One of the Chinese emperors, about two hundred and thirteen years before

invalidate the chronology of the scriptures. The incredible and contradictory accounts which these nations furnish,\* appear to have been swelled to so great a magnitude, by varying the modes of calculation, by separating contemporary events, and by substituting lunar for solar periods. They are the misrepresentations of pride, or the errors of inattention, and unworthy to be put in competition with the accuracy and documents of revealed information.†

Every circumstance, indeed, in the Mosaic account, bears, if impartially considered, a striking feature of probability and truth, and the whole is far different from the wild and incon-

Christ, ordered all their historical records to be destroyed. The Chinese have not any work, in an intelligible character, above two thousand two hundred years old: Father Amiot considers their nation as a colony, derived from the immediate descendants of Noah; and their traditional knowledge, and religious doctrines, when freed from ignorance and superstitious additions, exhibit a correspondence with the patriarchal principles. Vid. Martini, p. ii. 3, 9. Mem. de l'Hist. des Sciences, &c. Chinois, vol. i. Par. 1776.

\* The Greeks could produce no dates beyond five hundred and fifty years before Christ, and little historical information before the Olympiads, which began seven hundred and seventy-five years before Christ. Herodotus, who flourished less than five centuries before our Saviour, begins with fable; Thucydides rejects, as uncertain, all that preceded the Peloponnesian war; and Plutarch ventured not beyond the time of Theseus, who lived a little before the ministry of Samuel. Vid. Plutarch's Life of Theseus. Strabo's Geograph. lib. xvii.

† Some difficulties, equally futile and unreasonable, have likewise been started against the probability of that account, which derives the whole race of mankind from one common stock, notwithstanding the diversity of complexion, and the separation of country; but actual observation hath ascertained, that climate and local circumstances are sufficient to account for every dissimilarity which is discovered in the appearance of different nations. The supposed difficulties of emigration are likewise obviated by recent discoveries in geography: for these demonstrate a much greater proximity in countries, between which no communication was supposed to exist in the earlier ages of the world, than obtains between those from which early

emigrations have confessedly been made, and those to which they have been directed. It is now determined, by positive examination, that the north-east part of Asia is either connected with the north-west part of America, or separated from it by a very inconsiderable distance: though, indeed, this discovery was not necessary to prove that the savage nations of the western continent must have derived their origin from the same common source as the eastern nations; since, not to insist on the arguments for the recency of their establishment, which might be drawn from their uncivilized state, and their rude ignorance of the useful arts, they retained the vestiges of opinions and customs which were so remarkably similar to those that prevailed in the east, as evidently to point out a former connection: a reverence for the sabbath, and an acquaintance with many appointments of the Mosaic institution, were observed to exist in America by the first discoverers of that country, too numerous indeed to be the result of accident or casual resemblance: all the Americans had some traditionary acquaintance with the particulars of the Mosaic history; as of the flood; of one family preserved; and of the confusion of tongues. The Mexicans had a custom of tinging the threshold of the door with blood, possibly in allusion to the circumstances that distinguished the institution of the passover; and the Canadians had even some idea of the Messiah. Huet. Demon. Evang. cap. 7. sect. 3. Leri Navig. in Brasil. cap. 16. Joann. de Lact. Antwerp. Not. ad Dissert. Grot. de Orig. Gent. American. Acosta's Hist. lib. v. cap. 28. Peter Mart. decad. iv. cap. 8. and decad. viii. cap. 9. Geor. Horn. de Orig. Gent. American. Harris's Introd. to Collect. Voyage. Smith's Essay on the Causes of Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species.

sistent theories which have at different times been imagined and framed by fanciful men ;<sup>u</sup> whose crude and extravagant conjectures concerning the creation, only prove the impossibility of treating such a subject without the aid of inspiration. Moses describes the great work of the creation, not in an exact philosophical detail, but in a style adapted to popular apprehensions, and with a concise magnificence, designed to impress mankind with just notions of God, and of his attributes.<sup>x</sup> The account is given without any attempt to establish system, and in a manner levelled to all capacities, though universally admired for its sublimity. It represents the whole world to be material and created, in opposition to the prevailing notion, that the heavenly bodies were animated by an internal power.<sup>y</sup> The divine agency is represented under images and descriptions accommodated to human conceptions: and though the real mode of God's operation and proceedings cannot be apprehended by us at present, they are in some measure subjected to our understanding, under analogous representations which illustrate their character. But notwithstanding the nature of God's agency is adumbrated under terms and expressions adapted to human actions, the account of the creation is not to be considered as allegorical, or merely figurative, any more than the history of the temptation and of the fall from innocence; since the whole description is unquestionably delivered as real, and is so considered by all the sacred writers.<sup>z</sup> In the explanation of scripture, indeed, no interpretation which tends to supersede the literal sense should be admitted: and for this reason also it is, that those speculations which are spun out with a view to render particular relations in this book more consistent with our ideas of probability, should be received at least with great diffidence and caution. To represent the formation of the woman from Adam's rib, as a work performed in an imaginary sense, or as pictured to the

<sup>u</sup> Cudworth's Intel. System, and Cosmog. Pref. to Univ. Hist. Clarke's Demonst. of Being and Attributes of God.

<sup>x</sup> Some think that the world was instantaneously created, though represented by Moses as performed in succession of time, in accommodation to our conceptions; but it is more reasonable and consistent with the account to believe that it was completed in detail. Moses speaks of the creation of the universe, but treats of the heavenly

bodies only so far as they respected the earth.

<sup>y</sup> Longin. de Sublim. sect. 9.

<sup>z</sup> John viii. 44; 2 Cor. xi. 3; 1 Tim. ii. 13; Rev. xii. 9. Allix's Reflect. on Gen. Waterland's Gen. Pref. to Script. Vind. Watty's Essay towards Vindic. of Mosaic Hist. Nichols's Confer. with a Theist, part i. p. 136. Bochart de Scrip. Tentat. p. 836.

mind in vision, seems to be too great a departure from the plain rules which should be observed in the construction of scripture,\* and inconsistent with the expositions of the sacred writers. So, likewise, the wrestling of Jacob with an angel,<sup>b</sup> though sometimes considered as a scenical representation addressed to the fancy of the patriarch, should rather be contemplated like the temptation of Abraham,<sup>c</sup> as a literal transaction, though perhaps of a figurative character; like that, it was designed to convey information by action instead of words, of certain particulars which it imported the patriarch to know;<sup>d</sup> and which he readily collected from a mode of revelation, so customary in the earlier ages of the world, however it may seem incongruous to those who cannot raise their minds to the contemplation of any economy which they have not experienced, and who proudly question every event not consistent with their notions of propriety.

After having related the disobedience of Adam, and its punishment, softened by the gracious promise of a future seed that should bruise the seducer to sin,<sup>e</sup> Moses describes the multiplication of mankind, and the evil consequences of the entailed corruption; the intermixture of the descendants of Seth, “the sons of God,” with the family of Cain, “the daughters of men;” the progress of impiety, and its punishment; the preservation of Noah and of his family, from amidst the general destruction by the flood: he proceeds to treat of God’s covenant with man;

\* Gen. i. 22, 23. This is related by Moses as a real operation, though performed while Adam was in a deep sleep, and is so considered by the sacred writers; 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. xxxii. 24, 25.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. xxii. The enjoined sacrifice of Isaac is properly considered as a typical representation, which was understood by Abraham to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. Vid. John viii. 56. But it cannot be admitted, that the command was merely an information by action given at the request of Abraham; as this, notwithstanding the arguments of the learned Warburton, must be considered as inconsistent with the passages in scripture where God is said to have tempted Abraham. Gen. xxii. 1; Heb. xi. 17. Vid. Div. Legat. lib. vi. sect. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. xxxii. 24, 25. The successful struggle which Jacob maintained, was in-

tended to convey to him an assurance of that deliverance from the hand of Esau which he had piously entreated: it is represented as an actual event by Moses, and is so received by Hosea, ch. xii. 4. St. Jerom understands it as figurative of spiritual conflicts which we are to maintain. Hieron. in cap. 6. Epist. ad Ephes.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. iii. 15. It is remarkable, that in this first prophecy of the Messiah he is promised as the “seed of the woman.” The Jews were at a loss to account for the restriction, of which the reason is revealed to us in the account of the miraculous conception of Christ by a virgin. It deserves to be noticed, that the bruising of the Messiah’s heel was literally accomplished by the crucifixion. The head likewise of the serpent is said to be the seat of life, his heart being under the throat; and hence his chief care, when attacked, is to secure his head.

of the dispersion of the descendants of Noah; of the confusion of tongues; of the covenant made with Abraham; of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; and of such particulars in the lives of the patriarchs as were best calculated to illustrate the proceedings and judgments of God, and the rise and progress of religion; and he concludes with the interesting story of Joseph, and of the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt. Thus have we a clear, though short, history of the first ages of the world, which profane writers had vainly endeavoured to rescue from the shades of antiquity. The whole is related with a concise and noble simplicity of style, suitable to the dignity of the subject. The sacred writer, anxious only to furnish important intelligence, describes the earlier periods with rapidity, and dilates more copiously on the interesting transactions of which the effects and influence were recently experienced. In the hasty sketch, however, even of the first ages, Moses, by the selection of individual families for consideration, delineates a striking picture of the manners of each period; and by occasionally descending to the minuteness of biography, affords a lively illustration of the smaller features and familiar manners of the patriarchal ages.

In the course of his history, Moses describes events as they occurred, and characters as they appeared. The actions of the patriarchs and favourite ancestors of the Jews, however exceptionable, and even the deceitful cruelty of Levi, (from whom the historian was descended,) as also the curses denounced against him,<sup>f</sup> are related without disguise. One circumstance must, however, be remembered by those who would understand the scope and design of the sacred writer, in furnishing us with particular relations contained in this book; which is, that he always kept in mind the promise of the Messiah; and was desirous of shewing, that the expectation of this great object of the Jewish hopes was predominant in all times, and influenced the opinions and manners of every generation. The recollection of this will furnish the reason of many particulars, mentioned in the book, which might otherwise appear extraordinary and exceptionable. It will explain the conduct of Lot's daughters;<sup>g</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Ch. xxxiv, 13—25; xlix. 5, 6.

<sup>g</sup> R. Samuel and R. Tanchumah, on Gen. xix. 32. This incest certainly proceeded from a desire of producing the

Messiah; as Lot's daughters were previously distinguished for chastity, as it was a concerted and deliberate proceeding, and as they wished to perpetuate the memory of

the violent desire of Sarah for a son; the solicitude of Isaac to remove the barrenness of Rebekah; and the contention between the wives of Jacob. In conformity with this design, also, Moses relates the jealousies between Ishmael and Isaac, and between Esau and Jacob, and many other minute and singular particulars, which an historian of his dignity would not have condescended to describe, but with a view to illustrate the general persuasion of, and gradual preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The book contains likewise some signal and direct prophecies concerning Christ,<sup>b</sup> and other interspersed predictions, which by their accomplishment authenticate the truth of the scripture accounts. Moses describes, also, the predictions of other persons, who were occasionally enlightened by the Holy Spirit to unfold parts of the divine economy, and to keep alive the confidence and hopes of mankind, "delivering the prophecies which have been uttered ever since the world began."<sup>1</sup>

It may be briefly observed, that many particulars in pagan history, as well as many circumstances in the present appearance of the world, both natural and moral, tend to prove the truth of those accounts which are furnished in this book. Innumerable traces of the Mosaic history, and of the events and characters which it describes, are discoverable in every page of profane authors: The spot on which Sodom and Gomorrah stood, still indicates a sulphureous quality,<sup>k</sup> and daily vestiges of the deluge point out its extensive effects. The various manners, customs,

the action by the names which they gave the children; for Moab implies, born of my father, and Ben-ammi has a similar import. Vid. Allix's Reflect. on Gen.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii. 15; xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxi. 12; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14; xlix. 10, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. vi. 3; ix. 25—27; xiii. 15, 16; xv. 5, 13—16; xvi. 12; xvii. 8, 20; xviii. 14; xxi. 12, 15; xxv. 23; xxvi. 4; xxvii. 29, 30, 40; xxxv. 11; xl. 13, 18, 19; xli. 29—31; xlii. 4; xlviii. 19; xlix. 3—27; l. 24.

<sup>k</sup> The lake Asphaltites is a sea of very bituminous nature; it throws up great quantities of asphaltos, a drug formerly used by the Egyptians and other nations for embalming, &c. Vid. Maundrell, Pocock, Univer. Hist. vol. ii. book i. ch. 7. p. 418. Keill's Exam. of Reflect. on Theor. p. 148. Waterland's pref. to Vind. Jenkins's Reason. vol. ii. p. 526; also Joseph. Antiq.

lib. i. cap. 9. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16. and Taciti Hist. lib. v. sect. 7. The account of the latter author is remarkable. He relates, that the plains where the cities stood were said, "Olim uberes, magnisque urbibus habitatos, fulminis jactu arsaie: et manere vestigia, terramque ipsam specie torridam, vim frugiferam perdidisse. Nam cuncta sponte edita, aut manu sata, sive herba tenuis aut flore, seu solitam in speciem adolevere, atra et inania velut in cinerem vanescunt." He adds, "Ego sicut inclitas quondam urbes igne cœlesti flagrasse concesserim, ita halitu lacus infici terram, corrumpi superfluum spiritum, eoque fetus segetum et autumnum putrescere reor, solo cœloque juxta gravi." Vid. also Strabo's Geogr. lib. xvi. Thevenot's Travels and Volney's Voyage en Syrie, &c. vol. i. p. 281.

and superstitions of many ancient nations, unchanged during a long succession of ages, still remain to prove the fidelity and exactness of the descriptions given by Moses;<sup>1</sup> and in the predominant genius and disposition of the modern Jews, we witness a wonderful correspondence with the picture of their ancient character. No length of time, or difference of condition, hath been able to efface those strong features of national peculiarity which are imprinted on this singular people, and which shew themselves so remarkably in their prejudices, conduct, and manners, in different countries, and under different governments. The reason and ground of their observances and ceremonies are traced out in this book; and though in the subsequent parts of the Pentateuch the laws are laid down by which their civil and religious conduct are influenced, yet here chiefly are described the causes and source from which they are derived, as may be instanced in the cases of the sabbath, and of the circumcision,<sup>m</sup> not to mention other particulars. Genesis was, indeed, very properly prefixed to those books in which Moses communicated the divine commands, since herein are displayed the most impressive proofs of God's existence and attributes, and herein is shewn the authority from which Moses derived his commission as a lawgiver; and it was therefore probably written as preparatory to the promulgation of the law.<sup>n</sup> It is likewise excellently serviceable to illustrate the great design and tendency of revelation; which is ever delivered in a manner conformable to the fallen and depraved nature of man. It describes the origin of a distinct immaterial Spirit, derived immediately from God; and the first institution of the marriage union. It points out the true source of evil, in an account consistent with the divine attributes, and confirmed by the character and appearance of mankind in every age. Every moral discourse, as every religious system, must be built on the foundation and conviction that man was created in innocence, but degraded by sin; and hence he is susceptible of good, and prone to evil.<sup>o</sup> On account of the dignity and importance of the subject, and of the serious

<sup>1</sup> His geographical accounts are consistent with the most authentic memorials. Vid. Josephus, Grotius, and Bochart. Harmer's Observations on divers Passages of Script. &c. Huet. Demon. prop. iv. Avenarius in verbo Jarek.

<sup>m</sup> Allix's Reflections on Genesis, repub-

lished in Bp. Watson's Theological Tracts. Vid. ch. xxxii. 32. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. vii. c. 9.

<sup>n</sup> Euseb. Præp. Evan. c. 2. Isid. Pelusiot.  
<sup>o</sup> Wolseley's Reason of Christian Religion, p. 152.

attention which it deserved, the Jews were forbidden to read the beginning of Genesis till they had attained the sacerdotal age of thirty years. A work, indeed, which describes the first creation and lapse of man, which treats of God's counsels and intercourse with his creatures, which opens the prospect of redemption and the grand scheme of prophecy, and exemplifies the high obligations and interests of man, cannot be considered with too mature and deliberate judgment.

## OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

THE title of the second book of Moses is likewise descriptive of its contents. The word Exodus,<sup>a</sup> which is of Greek original, implies emigration; and the book relates the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, after a previous description of their state of servitude, of the appointment of Moses, and of the miracles by which he effected their deliverance. It presents us also with the account of their journey through the wilderness, of the solemn promulgation of the law at Mount Sinai, of the delivery of the decalogue, and of the building of the tabernacle. It is universally allowed to have been written by Moses; and the words of Exodus are cited as the words of Moses, by Daniel, David, and other sacred writers: to whom it is useless to refer, since our Saviour himself always distinguishes the law (by which the whole Pentateuch is implied) from the prophets, as the work of Moses; and Rivet has observed, that twenty-five passages are quoted by Christ and his apostles out of this book in express words, and nineteen as to the sense, and this will be found not to be an exaggerated account.

Exodus contains an history of about one hundred and forty-five years, or perhaps of a somewhat shorter period. Many of the circumstances therein recorded are confirmed by the testimony of heathen writers.<sup>b</sup> This, perhaps, it is unnecessary to

<sup>a</sup> From Ἔξοδος, a departure, or going out. It is called by the Jews, Ve-elleh Semoth; that is, "these are the names," which are the initial words of the book.

<sup>b</sup> Numenius speaks of the opposition of the Egyptian magicians to the miracles of

Moses. The Exodus under Moses is mentioned by Polemon, (as cited by Africanus in Eusebius,) by Manetho, (vid. Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. i.) by Trogus Pompeius, and by Tacitus, with some absurd additions from perverted information. Vid. Tacit.



mention, for our conviction of the truth of its relations is built on much higher evidence. The intrinsic marks of sincerity in the sacred writings are usually too numerous to require any additional support.

This book contains some predictions, of which it relates also the accomplishment; as that of the deliverance of the Jews, which Moses foresaw<sup>c</sup> and effected. It likewise describes some which were not fulfilled till after his death; as that concerning the conquest of Canaan,<sup>d</sup> and the future division and allotment of the land;<sup>e</sup> and also those which related to the revolutions that were to take place in the government of the Jews; their future subjections, captivities, deliverances, and returns.

It may throw some light upon this book, as well as contribute to our general admiration of scripture, if we observe, that the events recorded to have happened under the old dispensation are often strikingly prefigurative of those which occur under the new; and that the temporal circumstances of the Israelites seem designedly to shadow out the spiritual condition of the Christian church. The connexion is ever obvious, and points out the consistency of the divine purpose, and the harmony deliberately contrived to subsist between both dispensations. Thus, in the servitude of Israel, are described the sufferings of the church; in the deliverance from Egypt, is foreshewn its redemption;<sup>f</sup> and the journey through the wilderness is a lively representation of a Christian's pilgrimage through life, to its inheritance in everlasting bliss. So, also, without too minute a discussion, it may be observed, that the manna of which the Israelites did eat,<sup>g</sup> and the rock of which they drank,<sup>h</sup> as well as the brazen serpent by which they were healed, were severally typical of correspondent particulars that were to obtain under the Christian establishment;<sup>i</sup> as under the sacrifices and cere-

Hist. lib. v. §. 3. Other writers, as especially Orpheus, in the verses ascribed to him, speak of the delivery of the two tablets of the law from God, and of the institution of the Hebrew rites.

<sup>c</sup> Exodus vii. 4, 5.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xv. 14—17; xxiii. 22, 23, 31; xxxiii. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Moses also here predicted the constant miracle of protection during the time of worship three times every year—at the feast of the passover, at that of pentecost, and at that of tabernacles; vid. Exod.

xxxiv. 23, 24; the accomplishment of which predictions furnished reiterated evidence of the divine authority of the Mosaic law.

<sup>f</sup> Zacharias applies the very words of the temporal to the spiritual deliverance. Luke i. 68—79.

<sup>g</sup> John vi. 33—38; Rev. ii. 17.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. x. 1—6; Gal. iv. 22, 24; Col. ii. 17.

<sup>i</sup> St. Jerom carries these ideas to a very fanciful extreme. Vid. Hieron. de 42. Mansion, de Veste Sacerdot. &c.

monial service of the church, of which the institution is here recorded, was described the more spiritual worship of the gospel.<sup>k</sup>

It is necessary farther to remark, that if we would understand the reason and intention of many injunctions contained in this book, we must recollect, that the great design with which they were framed, was to preserve the Israelites a distinct and independent people, and to prevent their communications with other nations; lest they, who were to be entrusted with the sacred deposit of the inspired writings, and from whom, as from the seed of Abraham, the Messiah was to arise, should catch the infection of idolatry; or by mingling with the Gentiles, render the accomplishment of the promises doubtful. The many cautions against idolatry, and the precepts levelled against whatever might tend to promote its influence;<sup>l</sup> the nice discriminations, the peculiar and alienating prohibitions, which restrained the Israelites from associating with other nations, were all devised with a view to the accomplishment of this important design. And as not only the country, not only the tribe, but the individual family was foretold, from which the Messiah should spring, it was requisite to ascertain exactly the lineage and descent of each. Hence are the seeds of jealousy industriously sown between the different tribes, and the younger preferred to the elder. Under this idea, the laws which were enjoined to ascertain the virginity of the maidens will be judged necessary; and the punishment decreed against adultery will not appear disproportioned or severe. These instances are produced only by way of illustration: and by attending to the views of God in the establishment of this religious polity, we shall always find much cause to admire the wisdom of his laws;<sup>m</sup> though, indeed, we are too little acquainted with the ancient manners of the Hebrew nation, and of other nations with whom it was connected, to understand the full scope and importance of every particular injunction.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. x.

<sup>l</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. pars ii. c. 37. and Levit. xix. 19, 27, 28; xxi. 3; which passages contain laws that were probably directed against idolatrous and superstitious

practices. Vid. Spencer de Leg. Heb. c. 20.

<sup>m</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. pars ii. cap. 26. 37.

## OF THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

THE third book in the order of the Pentateuch is called Leviticus,<sup>a</sup> in the Latin and English Bibles, because in it are described the office and duties of the Levites; or rather, agreeably to the account of bishop Patrick, because it contains the laws of the Jewish rites and religious sacrifices, of which the charge was committed to Aaron the Levite, and to his descendants, who were consecrated by divine appointment to the priesthood; being assisted in the performance of their sacred office by a second branch of Levi's family, which, by an appropriate title, was called the tribe of Levi;<sup>b</sup> and which obtained the privilege of officiating as a second order of the priesthood, in recompense of the ready zeal that it displayed against idolatry, and the worshippers of the golden calf.<sup>c</sup>

The Jews, according to their custom, denominate the book from the first word in the Hebrew;<sup>d</sup> and imagine, in agreement with some fanciful notions of the Jewish Masorites, from the particular size of one letter in the word, that it has some mysterious signification; but these conceits it would perhaps be somewhat difficult to explain, and but of little use to discuss.

That Moses was the author of this book is proved, not only by the general arguments that demonstrate him to have written all the Pentateuch, but by particular passages in other books of scripture, wherein it is expressly cited as his inspired work.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> ΛΕΥΙΤΙΚΟΥ, in the Greek.

<sup>b</sup> Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. i.

<sup>c</sup> 5. Heb. vii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Aaron was appointed to the priesthood before the idolatrous proceeding here alluded to. What opposition he made to the perverse inclinations of the people is not mentioned. He appears to have been compelled to submit; and probably he designed to discountenance the idolaters by choosing, as a symbol of the divine presence, one of those very images which they knew to have provoked God's anger against the Egyptians. There were three orders in the Hebrew priesthood; the priests, the Levites, and the Nethinims. The Levites instructed the people, were employed in taking care of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple and the sacred books; they were likewise

joined with the priests in deciding on cases of leprosy, and in judging ceremonial causes: they had no appropriate portion or inheritance, but subsisted by the altar, scattered among the rest of the tribes, agreeably to the prediction of Jacob. Vid. Gen. xlix. 7. The Nethinims were descendants of the Gibeonites, condemned by Joshua for their deceit to menial and servile attendance on the priests. Vid. Joshua ix. They were called Nethinims, from נָתַן, Nathan, to give; as given to the service of the temple.

<sup>e</sup> וַיִּקְרָא, Vai-jikrah et clamavit.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. xxx. 16; Jerem. vii. 22, 23; ix. 16; Ezek. xx. 11; Matt. viii. 4; Rom. x. 5; xiii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Gal. iii. 12; 1 Pet. i. 16; and Baruch ii. 29.

The laws of rites and ceremonies which it contains, were delivered from God to Moses in the first month of the second year after the departure from Egypt; that is, about A. M. 2514. They are communicated in a plain and perspicuous style; the precepts are fully and circumstantially given; and their minute particulars are often repeated, and insisted on as important, and expressive of something beyond the mere letter. That the Levitical law had a covert and mysterious signification, is, indeed, justly allowed by all judicious commentators; the whole service had a spiritual meaning; and its institutions, sacraments, and ceremonies were unquestionably prefigurative of gospel appointments.<sup>f</sup> Thus its sacrifices and oblations, which, if performed in faith and obedience, were to conciliate forgiveness of sins,<sup>g</sup> have been justly considered as significant of the atonement to be made by Christ. The requisite qualities of these sacrifices were emblematical of Christ's immaculate character. The mode also prescribed as necessary in the form of these offerings, and the mystical rites ordained, were allusive institutions calculated to enlighten the apprehensions of the Jews, and to prepare them for the reception of the gospel.<sup>h</sup> Thus, likewise, as might have been observed in the account of the preceding book, the ark of the covenant, the whole structure of the tabernacle, the priesthood and its decorations, were all apposite emblems of correspondent circumstances, appropriate to a scheme of more perfect description.<sup>i</sup> So also, in a less important sense, were the outward rites and purgations enjoined by the Mosaic law designed to intimate the necessity of inward purity.<sup>k</sup> Thus the whole service, like the veil on the face of Moses, concealed a spiritual radiance under an outward covering; and the internal import, bearing a precise and indisputable reference to future circumstances and events, is stamped with the indelible proofs of divine contrivance.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>f</sup> John xix. 36.

<sup>g</sup> Ezek. xx. 1; Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 12. Shuckford's Con. vol. iii. b. 11. These were to conciliate forgiveness only, in virtue of Christ's sacrifice, and on the conditions of faith in God's promises, and of obedience to his laws. The Jews understood the conditions, however they might be ignorant of the nature of Christ's meritorious atonement, and however they might have been at length misled to attribute to their legal sacrifices a real efficacy, and power of effect-

ing reconciliation and pardon in a future life.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. xiii. 11, 12. The Israelites must have had at least some indistinct idea of this spiritual reference. Vid. 1 Cor. x. 1—4.

<sup>i</sup> Heb. viii. 5; ix. 8, 9.

<sup>k</sup> Numb. xix. 13, 19; Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6; Heb. x. 22; xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2; Rom. ii. 28, 29; 1 Cor. vii. 19.

<sup>l</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 33; 2 Cor. iii. 13.

These ideas, however, though just, must not be overstrained, since the fancy, if unreined, is apt to run into excess; and the interpretation of the ritual law has been, perhaps, too uncontrolled, particularly by its earlier expositors, who have sometimes built their explanations more on fanciful allusion, than on real analogy, and true connexion.<sup>m</sup> It may be remarked, also, that some of these ceremonial laws seem to have been imposed as a punishment on account of the frequent transgressions of a rebellious people;<sup>n</sup> or rather as a yoke or curb to restrain them from idolatry,<sup>o</sup> as well as to discriminate them from all other nations; which purpose they effectually served in all their dispersions and captivities.<sup>p</sup> The sanctimonious observances, likewise, and the frequent purifications enjoined by the Levitical law, were designed to keep up a reverential awe of the divine majesty, which was supposed personally to reside among this favoured people; and to impress them with an idea of the great holiness which was requisite to qualify them to approach God's presence. So, also, the distinctions between clean and unclean beasts, the regulations concerning leprosy and impurities, deliberately or casually contracted, were so minutely and forcibly enacted, in order to inculcate into the minds of the Israelites their peculiar appropriation to God's service.<sup>q</sup> The multiplied ceremonies, however, and complicated rites which were established in consequence of these designs, were certainly so burdensome, that nothing but a conviction of their divine original could have influenced any people to receive them; especially as the wisdom of their spiritual import was not understood at first, but only gradually unfolded by the interpretations of the prophets. But the ceremonial law, though in fact "a yoke too heavy to be borne," and completely obeyed, was nevertheless well<sup>r</sup> adapted to the time and circumstances under which it was delivered, and to the dull and perverse nation for which it was designed.<sup>s</sup> It was likewise perfect as to its spiritual intention and final views, as a figurative and temporary dispensation. The transient<sup>t</sup> character of its cere-

<sup>m</sup> Hesych. Com.

<sup>n</sup> Gal. iii. 19; 1 Tim. i. 8—10. Irenæ. Hæres. lib. iv. c. 28. Lactant. de Vera Sapient. lib. iv. c. 10. Spencer de Legib. Hebræ. lib. i. c. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Lowman's Hebrew worship, &c. Vid. ch. xix. 26, 28. Spencer de Leg. lib. ii. Ezek. xx. 24, 25.

<sup>p</sup> Juvenal, Sat. xiv. 103, 104. Tacit.

Hist. lib. v. §. 5. Grot. de Jur. Bell. lib. ii. 15. 9. Chrysost. Hom. in Gen. xxxix.

<sup>q</sup> Levit. xx. 25, 26.

<sup>r</sup> Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Deut. xxxii. 28; Jerem. iv. 22.

Barrow's fifteenth sermon on the imperfection of the Jewish Religion. Matt. xix. 8.

<sup>t</sup> Psalm xix. 7—11; cxix.

monies was not explained at first, lest they should be undervalued; but as soon as this religious system was established, its true nature began to appear to the people. Their inspired teachers instructed them, that sacrifices and oblations for sin were figurative atonements of little value in the eyes of God, if unaccompanied by that faith and by those qualifications which he required; as also that the outward purifications and observances commanded by the Mosaic law, were designed to illustrate the importance of internal righteousness.\*

The sacrifices, as well eucharistical as expiatory, of which the regulations are prescribed in this book, were by no means first instituted by the Mosaic law, but appear to have been adopted, probably by divine appointment, as the earliest mode of worship; and they were offered up by our first parents,<sup>7</sup> as an acceptable acknowledgment of God's attributes, and in becoming profession of human submission and humility. They were established, however, under the Mosaic dispensation upon their true principles, and commanded with circumstances that gave them additional importance, and which served to illustrate their real character and intention.\* They were ordained as an atonement for the breach of the ritual laws; and delivered the people from those civil and ecclesiastical punishments to which they were exposed from the wrath of God, considered as a political governor. They "sanctified to the purifying of the flesh," washed away legal defilements, but were never intended to wipe off the stains of moral guilt, or to avert God's anger against sin, except as figurative of that perfect atonement at the coming of which "sacrifice and oblation should cease."<sup>b</sup> They were commemorative acknowledgments of guilt, and typical pledges only of a sufficient sacrifice.

The history of the Israelites advances about one month in this book; which, like the rest, blends instruction and narration in one interesting account. It describes the consecration of

\* Jerem. vi. 20; vii. 21—23; Isaiah i. 11—17; lviii. 6, 7; lxiii. 1—3; Hosea vi. 6; Micah vi. 6—8; Amos v. 21—24; Psalm l. 8—14; li. 16, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Psalm l. 8—15; li. 16, 17; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Prov. xv. 8; Hosea vi. 6; Isaiah i. 11—17; lviii. 6, 7; Zech. vii. 5—10; Rom. ii. 28, 29. Vid. also Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. 9, 10; and lib. ii. c. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. iv. 3, 4; Heb. xi. 4.

\* Heb. ix; x. 1—14.

<sup>a</sup> Falsehood, fraud, and violence, though offences against the moral law, might be atoned for by a trespass-offering to God as a civil ruler, but only on condition of ample reparation to the injured party, which evinced a sincerity of repentance. Lev. vi. 1—7.

<sup>b</sup> Psalm xl. 6, 7; Dan. ix. 27; Heb. vii. 19; ix. 9.

Aaron and his sons, the daring impiety and instant punishment of Nadab and Abihu, and the stoning of the blasphemer; particulars which illustrate God's care for religion, and the jealous severity by which he kept up among the Israelites a reverence for his name. The relation also is animated with some signal predictions that stamp the work with additional marks of inspiration. Moses reveals to the people their future dispersion among the heathen nations; their distress, and decline, and desolation; and yet consoles them with the promise of mercy to be mingled with punishment, in their miraculous preservation.<sup>c</sup> The book contains likewise one most remarkable prophecy,<sup>d</sup> the accomplishment of which was a standing miracle among the Israelites, and which for many ages continued to furnish an assurance of the divine authority and inspiration of Moses. He here foretold, that every sixth year should produce superfluous plenty to supply the deficiencies of the seventh or sabbatical year, when the land was to remain "unsown, and the vineyards unpruned;"<sup>e</sup> and this effectually came too pass: the observance of the law being invariably provided for while it continued to be revered. The same assurance was likewise given of a spontaneous supply to remedy the inconveniencies which would otherwise have resulted from that neglect of cultivation of the land which was enjoined for every forty-ninth or fiftieth year;<sup>f</sup> and to this was annexed a threat, that the land should be brought into desolation, and the people be scattered among the heathen, there to remain for as long a time as they should have neglected the laws of the sabbath and jubilee:<sup>g</sup> threats remarkably accomplished in the seventy years' captivity at Babylon.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxvi; the whole of which is a collection of prophetic threats, that were strikingly fulfilled.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xxv. 20—22.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xxv. 2—9.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. xxv. 8—12. 20—23. The jubilee year either coincided with the seventh sabbatical year, or was provided for by additional abundance in the forty-eighth year. Vid. Cuneus, &c. *Repub.* Heb. c. 6. *Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. 10.* *J. Scaliger, de Emend. Temp. lib. v.*

<sup>g</sup> *Levit. xxvi. 34, 35.* If we suppose

these laws to have been neglected from the beginning of the reign of Saul, A. M. 2909, to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A. M. 3398, which is probably the true period, the seventy years' captivity will exactly allow time for the completion of the rest, proportionate to the space of four hundred and ninety years, during which the laws were violated. It is remarkable, that the Jews were carried away captive towards the conclusion of the sabbatical year. Vid. *Maimon. Schemitta ve Jobel. cap. 10. sect. 3.*

## OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS.

THIS book is called the Book of Numbers, because it contains an account of the numbering or mustering of the people; or rather, indeed, of two numberings: the first in the beginning of the second year after their departure from Egypt; the second in the plains of Moab, towards the conclusion of their journey in the wilderness.<sup>a</sup> The Jews entitle the book, *Vaie-dabbēr*, which in the Hebrew is the initial word; and which some, conceiving it to imply the mercy-seat, have supposed to intimate, that the manifestations of the divine will, herein described, were given in form from the holy oracle, which the Jews distinguished by the name of *Deber*; and some passages from the book might be produced in support of this opinion.<sup>b</sup> However this may have been, it is certain that Moses was the inspired author of the book, and that he delivers in it nothing but what is consistent with truth, and agreeable to the divine will, since it constitutes part of the Pentateuch, which in all ages has been universally ascribed to Moses, and it is cited as his inspired work in various parts of scripture.<sup>c</sup>

The book comprehends a period of about thirty-eight years, reckoning from the first day of the second month after the deliverance from Egypt; during which time the Israelites continued to wander in the wilderness.<sup>d</sup> Most of the transactions, however, described in this book, happened in the first and last of these years. The date of those events which are recorded in the middle of the book cannot be precisely ascertained.

The history presents us with an account of the consecration of the tabernacle, and of the offering of the princes at its dedication. It describes the journeys and encampments of Israel under the miraculous guidance of the cloud; the punishment at *Taberah*; and the signal vengeance with which, on several occasions, God resented the distrustful murmurs of the people, and

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xxvi.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. vii. 89.

<sup>c</sup> Joshua iv. 12; 2 Chron. xxix. 11; xxxi. 3; Ezek. xx. 13; xlv. 27; Matt. xii. 5; John vi. 51; ix. 36.

<sup>d</sup> The Israelites were condemned to

wander so long in the wilderness for their ungrateful murmurs and distrust in God. Vid. Numb. xiv. 23, 33. But by this segregation many important purposes were accomplished.



that rebellious spirit which so often broke out in sedition against his appointed ministers. The promptitude and severity with which God enforced a respect for his laws, even to the exemplary condemnation of the man who profaned the sabbath, were necessary, when even a sense of the immediate presence of the Almighty, and a consideration of the miracles daily performed, could not influence to obedience. Amidst the terrors, however, of the divine judgments which the book unfolds, we perceive likewise the continuance of God's mercies in providing assistance for Moses by the appointment of the seventy elders; in drawing water from the rock; and in the setting up of the brazen serpent. The benevolent zeal of Moses to intercede on all occasions for the people, even when punished for ungrateful insurrections against himself, deserves likewise to be considered. The history is animated with much variety of event; and besides the particulars above alluded to, it contains the account of the resignation and death of Aaron; of the conquest of Sihon and Og; of the conduct of Balaam\* towards Balak;† of the merited fate of Balaam; of the insidious project to seduce the Israelites, its success and effects; and of the appointment of Joshua. We perceive in every relation the consistency of the divine intentions, and the propriety of the laws which God established. When we contemplate, for instance, the arts and contrivance practised by idolatrous nations, we cannot wonder at the rigorous commands‡ delivered for the extirpation of the inhabitants of Canaan; or that the Almighty should desire to purge from pollution a land to be consecrated to his service. The book contains likewise a repetition of many principal laws given for the direction of the Israelites, with the addition of several

\* Balaam was probably a true prophet, who had been seduced by mercenary motives into idolatrous practices, having had recourse to heathen enchantments, when he could not procure divine revelations. Vid. Numb. xxii. 8; xxiv. 1; 2 Pet. ii. 15. He resided at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, towards the banks of the Euphrates. Pethor was afterwards called Bozor by the Syrians. Hence, in 2 Pet. ii. 15, Βαλααμ του Βοσορ, "Balaam of the city of Bosor." Vid. Grotius in loc.

† God's anger appears to have been kindled against Balaam, as well for his general practice of divination, as for his desire to procure "the wages of unrighteousness," by cursing those whom God had

blessed. Maimonides absurdly represents the speaking of Balaam's ass as a circumstance executed only in vision, though there is no shadow of reason why it should not be considered as the account of a real event. Objections to miracles drawn from their difficulty are preposterous, when applied to an omnipotent Being; and that Moses should not stop to describe the surprise of Balaam, was as consistent with the gravity as with the conciseness of his history. 2 Pet. ii. 15; and Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. c. 3. Vid. Maim. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. 42.

‡ Deut. xii. 1—6; xiii. 12—17; xx. 10—18.

precepts, civil and religious. It describes some regulations established for the ordering of the tribes, and for the division of the land which the Israelites were about to possess. It furnishes us also with a list of the tribes; and with that of Levi in particular, which is reserved for a distinct roll, because in possession of an order in the priesthood.

With respect to the numberings which are made in this book, it must be observed, that the tribes are not reckoned in the order in which their heads were born, but in that of their respective mothers, or according to their accidental or acquired precedence. Secondly, that only those males who were twenty years old and upwards are reckoned. And, thirdly, that Ephraim<sup>b</sup> and Manasseh are mentioned as two distinct tribes; but for the particular reasons of every arrangement in the order and circumstances of this enumeration, we must have recourse to the commentators at large. From these an ample solution of the difficulties which occur in considering the particulars of the numberings may be obtained.<sup>1</sup>

The most signal prophecies which are contained in this book, and bear testimony to its inspiration, are those blessings which Balaam<sup>k</sup> was constrained to utter concerning the future prosperity of the Israelites,<sup>1</sup> and the destruction of their several enemies;<sup>m</sup> especially in that distinct and extatic description of the "Star which should come out of Jacob, and of the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel."<sup>n</sup> The denunciation likewise against Moses and Aaron for their disbelief,<sup>o</sup> as well as those against the people for their murmurs,<sup>p</sup> was strikingly fulfilled; and it may be added, that the rites of the passover, of which the observance is again enjoined in this book,<sup>q</sup> were figurative representations of a predictive character.

<sup>b</sup> In the number of the tribe of Ephraim compared with that of Manasseh, we perceive the accomplishment of Jacob's prophecy. Comp. Numb. i. 33—35, with Gen. xlviii. 19, 20. Comp. also, for similar illustration, Numb. i. 21, with Gen. xlix. 3, 4; and Numb. i. 27, with Gen. xlix. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Hieron. Com. Parker's Introd. to Numb. Lewis's Antiq. Heb. l. viii.

<sup>k</sup> Though God had probably rejected Balaam as an apostate prophet, he deigned to employ him on this signal occasion as the herald of the divine oracles, to illustrate the impotency of the heathen arts, and to demonstrate the power and foreknowledge

of the divine Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. xxiii. 8—10, 23; xxiv. 8.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. xxiv.

<sup>n</sup> Ch. xxiv. 17, 19. The expression of "the Star" might be chosen in allusion to those portentous lights which were supposed to precede the appearance of illustrious personages; and it is remarkable, that, as if in exact conformity with Balaam's prophecy, "a Star in the east" indicated the time and place of our Saviour's nativity. Vid. Matt. ch. ii.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. xx. 12; and Patrick in loc.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. xiv. 20—36.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. ix. 12, comp. with John xix. 36.

## OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

THE fifth and last book of the Pentateuch is distinguished among the Jews by its initial word; though sometimes the Rabbinical writers call it the Book of Reprehensions, in allusion to the frequent reproaches which it contains against the Israelites. It is also denominated Thora, which implies the Law; as well as Misna, a copy of the Law; a word which corresponds with the title that the seventy have given it, Deuteronomy<sup>a</sup> signifying a repetition of the Law. It contains indeed a compendious repetition of the Law; enlarged with many explanatory additions, and enforced by the strongest and most pathetic exhortations to obedience; as well for the more forcible impression on the Israelites in general, as in particular for the benefit of those who, being born in the wilderness, were not present at the first promulgation of the Law.<sup>b</sup> It is a kind of manual of divine wisdom, a commentary on the decalogue, and contains such laws as concerned the people in general, as to their civil, military, and religious government, omitting for the most part what related to the priests and Levites. It was delivered by Moses, a little time previous to his death, to the people whom he had long governed and instructed; and bequeathed, with his other writings, to the charge of the Levites,<sup>c</sup> as the most valuable testimony of his regard, in the fortieth year after the departure from Egypt, A. M. 2552.

The book opens with an interesting address to the Israelites, in which Moses briefly recapitulates the many circumstances in which they had experienced the divine favour since their departure from Horeb. He describes the success and victories

<sup>a</sup> From *δευτερος νομος*, "a second law."

<sup>b</sup> Moses, in his address to the Israelites, observes, that "the Lord made not the covenant with their fathers, but with those then alive;" for though many who were present at Sinai were now dead, many also must have been still living; those only having perished in consequence of God's threats, who were twenty years old and upwards when they offended him by their murmurs; and even of those condemned to die in the wilderness, many might, like Moses, be suffered to behold the land

which they were not to enter. Moses, however, may perhaps mean only, that God made not that solemn covenant with their forefathers, the patriarchs, but with the generation of his contemporaries. Vid. Numb. xiv. 29; Deut. v. 3; and Calmet and Estius in loc.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxxi. 26. The two tables of the decalogue were placed in the ark; the rest of the law in the side of the ark. Vid. 1 Kings viii. 9. Patrick in Deut. xxxi. 26.

which had marked their progress; the incredulous murmurs and ingratitude by which the people had incensed God; and the effects of the divine wrath, especially in the inexorable decree by which he himself had been debarred from that land, for the possession of which he had so earnestly toiled. He proceeds with the most animated zeal to exhort them to future obedience; and to rehearse in a discourse, renewed at intervals, the various commandments, statutes, and judgments which had been delivered to them by God, that they might become "a wise and understanding nation," and fulfil the terms of that covenant which the Lord had made with them in Horeb. Moses, while he intersperses with these laws frequent reproaches for their past misconduct, unfolds the glorious attributes of God,<sup>d</sup> and reiterates every persuasive motive to obedience. He commands them to distinguish their first entrance to Canaan, by a public display of reverence for God's law; by erecting stones on which all its words and precepts might be inscribed.<sup>e</sup> He enters into a new covenant with the people; which included not only that previously made at Horeb, but which renewed also and ratified those assurances of spiritual blessings, long since imparted to Abraham and his descendants.<sup>f</sup> He then, in consistency with the promises and sanctions of both covenants, sets forth for their election, "life and good, and death and evil;" temporal and eternal recompense, or present and future punishment.<sup>g</sup>

In the preceding books of the Pentateuch, Moses speaks of himself in the third person; but here, in a more animated manner, he drops as it were the character of an historian, and is introduced as immediately addressing himself to his countrymen.<sup>h</sup> Hence it is that, in describing what he uttered, he repeats the decalogue, with some slight change of expression from that which was used at its first delivery; a variation which, as it affected not the import of the commandment, might have served to

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xvii. 17, 18.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xxvii. 1—5. Moses expressly commands, that "all the words of the law" should be written; which cannot mean, as some have supposed, merely the decalogue.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. xxix. 12, 13. Bishop Bull was of opinion, that only the Abrahamic covenant was here renewed; but it should rather seem, that both this and the covenant of Sinai were renewed and ratified.

Vid. Bull's Diss. Post. c. 11.

<sup>g</sup> Maimonides, conscious that the Mosaic promises of temporal reward were figurative of future recompense, gives this traditional explanation of the sanction in Deut. iv. 40. *Ut bene sit tibi*, "in sæculo quod totum est bonum." *Et prolonges dies*, "in sæculum quod totum est longum."

<sup>h</sup> Chap. i. 6; ii. 17; iv. 8; ix. 13; x. 3.

indicate, that not the letter, but the spirit of the law should be regarded: he likewise introduces some general alterations in the code that he presents, which should be considered as supplementary additions requisite by a change of time and circumstances; and he takes occasion to intimate that spiritual intention of the law, by which it was designed for the inward government of man.<sup>i</sup> It should here be remarked, that the severe spirit which pervades the law, as shewn in the numerous exactions and declaratory curses detailed in this book,<sup>k</sup> was consistently contrived to point out the rigorous character of the divine justice, which, in a covenant of stipulated observances, necessarily required punctilious and universal obedience.<sup>l</sup> For though the divine mercy might compassionate the weakness of human nature, and therefore it prescribed atonements not difficult to be paid, yet God could not, in conformity with his relation to the Israelites, overlook even involuntary deficiencies or casual defilement. A similar spirit of stern equity appeared likewise as to the civil regulations of society; and the law not only suffered, but required an exact retaliation: "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth."<sup>m</sup> A requisition which, while it strongly enforced God's abhorrence of injuries, could not be abused under a government which provided cities of refuge for undesigning offenders, and administered its judgments upon principles universally known and accepted.

The book contains a period of nearly two months: an history of the conclusion of the life of Moses, whose last days were distinguished by increasing solicitude, and by the most active exertions for the welfare of his people. After a commemorative hymn,<sup>n</sup> in which he pathetically exhorts them "to consider their latter end," and after having uttered his prophetic bless-

<sup>i</sup> Chap. x. 16.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xxvii.

<sup>l</sup> Deut. xxvii. 26. The law rigorously enforced the observance of whatever it enjoined, though some precepts were framed with somewhat of lax and indulgent consideration of what the perverse temper of the Israelites would bear; thus, as they had been long accustomed to divorces, it was judged right, rather to restrict them by deliberate regulations, than entirely to abolish them, which might have occasioned bad consequences. Vid. Deut. xxiv. 1—4; Matt. v. 31; xix. 7. *Seldea Uxor. Heb.*

lib. iii. c. 24. The laws with respect to paternal authority, were rather regulations to restrict the unbounded power which parents did possess over their children, than to invest them with new rights.

<sup>m</sup> Vid. chap. xix. 21.

<sup>n</sup> The fine attestation to the praise of God, which is contained in the fourth verse of this hymn, is prefixed as a beginning to the prayer which the Jews repeat at the burial of their dead, and which they call *Tziduck hadin*, that is, "just judgment." Vid. Patrick in Deut. xxxii. 4.

ings in solemn and appropriate promises to the several tribes, this great man is represented to have retired, by divine command, to the top of Mount Nebo; from whence he had a prospect of Canaan, and foresaw the speedy accomplishment of God's promises. He then, in the full possession of his powers and faculties, "when his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," died, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age.

The mention of Dan<sup>o</sup> in the first verse of the last chapter of this book, as well as the account of the death and burial of Moses, and some other seemingly posthumous particulars therein described,<sup>p</sup> have been produced to prove, that this chapter could not be written by Moses: and in all probability these circumstances might have been inserted by Joshua, to complete the history of this illustrious prophet; or were afterwards added by Samuel, or some prophet who succeeded him. They were admitted by Ezra as authentic, and we have no reason to question the fidelity of the account.

The book is cited as the Book of Moses in many parts of scripture;<sup>q</sup> and numberless passages are produced from it in testimony, by Christ and his apostles.<sup>r</sup>

With respect to the prophetic part of Deuteronomy, it should be remarked, that the Messiah is here more explicitly foretold than in the preceding books, and described as the completion of the Jewish economy. "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."<sup>s</sup> The prophecies of Moses increase in number and clearness towards the close of his writings. As he approached the end of his life, he appears to have discerned futurity with more

<sup>o</sup> It has been said, that some names used in the Pentateuch were not applied to the places which they describe till after the death of Moses; if the truth of this remark could be proved, we might suppose the modern names to have been substituted by Ezra, or by some prophet posterior to Moses, for the information of later times; but the assertion often proceeds from mistake, and from a want of distinction: for instance, the Dan spoken of by Moses, might be different from the place afterwards so named in Judges xviii. 29. Josephus conceives it to have been a river, one of the sources of the Jordan. Vid. Antiq. lib. iii. c. 11.

<sup>p</sup> There has been an absurd cavil on chap. i. 1, of this book, where Moses is said to have written it "on this side Jordan." The word *Beeber* applies to either side, in relation to the speaker. Vid. 1 Sam. xiv. 20. Huet. *Demon. Evang. Prop.* c. 4. *Witsius Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. 14.* *Philo de Vit. Mos. lib. iii.* *Joseph. Antiq. lib. iv. c. 6.* Vid. also Patrick in Deut. iii. 11.

<sup>q</sup> Josh. i. 5, 7; 1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Chron. xxv. 4; Dan. ix. 13, &c.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. iv. 4; John i. 45; Acts iii. 22; Gal. iii. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Deut. xviii. 18, comp. with John i. 45, and Acts vii. 37.

exactness. His denunciations concerning the future rewards and punishments, the success, dispersions, and desolations of his people; <sup>1</sup> his description of the rapid victories of the Romans; <sup>2</sup> of the miseries to be sustained by his besieged countrymen; <sup>3</sup> and particularly his prophecies relative to their present condition, as accomplished under our own observation, <sup>4</sup> bear a striking evidence to the truth and inspiration of his writings, and fearfully illustrate the character of the divine attributes.

The book of Deuteronomy brings down the sacred history to A. M. 2552, and completes the volume of the Pentateuch, of which every part is uniformly and consistently perfect.

## GENERAL PREFACE TO THE HISTORICAL BOOKS.

THE historical books of scripture were written by persons who composed them under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Some of them are entitled with the names of distinguished prophets; and the rest are universally attributed to writers invested with the same character. The Hebrew annals were kept only by privileged and appointed persons; <sup>a</sup> and the writers who are occasionally mentioned in scripture as the penmen of the sacred history, are expressly denominated prophets, or seers. <sup>b</sup> It is evident, likewise, that the authors of the historical as well as of the prophetic books must have been inspired, since they everywhere displayed an acquaintance with the counsels and designs of God, developed the secret springs and concealed wisdom of his government, and often revealed his future mercies and judgments in the clearest predictions. They uniformly adhere to the most excellent instruction, illustrate the perfection of God's attributes, and exemplify the tendency of his precepts. They invariably maintain a strict sincerity of intention; and in their

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iv. 25—30; xi. 23—29; xxviii; xxx; xxxi. 2—8; xxxii; and xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxviii. 49—52. The Romans are portrayed under the description of an eagle, in allusion to the image with which their standard was decorated.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xxviii. 52—58, comp. with Joseph. de Bell. Jud.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xxviii; in which a chain of

illustrious prophecies is delivered in one complicated denunciation, and various calamities are blended into one point of view. Vid. Newton on the Prophecies, 7th Dissert.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. xxii. 5; 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7; 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. xii. 15; xx. 34; xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32; Jer. xxviii. 7.

description of character and event they exhibit an unexampled impartiality. Their writings were received as sacred into the Hebrew Canon; and in Ezra's collection they were arranged under the class of Prophetical Books. The books of Joshua, of Judges, (including Ruth,) of Samuel, and of Kings, were called the Books of the Former Prophets;<sup>c</sup> and considered as the production not only of enlightened men of unimpeached veracity, exalted character, and disinterested views, but of persons who were occasionally favoured with divine revelations, who unquestionably wrote under a divine influence, and were employed to register the judgments and designs of God; and as such, indeed, they are cited by the evangelical writers.

It is clear, from all these considerations, that the sacred historians wrote under the influence of the Holy Ghost; which, though it did not disclose to them by immediate revelation those things that might be collected from the common sources of intelligence, undoubtedly directed them in the selection of their materials, and enlightened them to judge of the truth and importance of those accounts from which they borrowed their information. The historical books appear, indeed, to have been generally written by authors contemporary with those periods to which they severally relate; and hence do they often describe such particulars as the prophets themselves had witnessed and beheld, and contain such minute and accurate descriptions, as none but authors coeval with the events could have furnished. Some of them, however, were compiled in subsequent times; and then they may be supposed to have been in part collected from those authentic documents that were known and esteemed by their countrymen, and to have been enlarged with such additional particulars, as must have been derived from divine communications imparted to themselves or others. These books are to be considered, indeed, as the histories of revelations; as commentaries on the prophecies, and as affording a lively sketch of the economy of God's government of his selected people. They were not designed as national annals, to record every minute particular and political event that occurred; but they are rather a compendious selection of such remarkable occurrences as were best calculated to illustrate the religion of the Hebrew

<sup>c</sup> Those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets, being styled the Books of the Later Prophets.



nation; to set before that perverse and ungrateful people an abstract of God's proceedings, and of their interests and duties; as also to furnish posterity with an instructive picture of the divine attributes, and with a model of that dispensation on which a nobler and more spiritual government was to be erected. It is, indeed, evident, that some more diffuse and circumstantial records<sup>d</sup> were sometimes kept by the priests, or other publicly-appointed persons; \* for to such records the sacred writers occasionally allude, as bearing testimony to their accounts; or refer to them for a more minute detail of those particulars which they omit as inconsistent with their designs. These, however, not being composed by inspired writers, were not admitted into the sacred canon; and though Josephus informs us, that the priests were accustomed after every war carefully to correct and to reform their registers;<sup>f</sup> and the author of the second book of Maccabees mentions, that Judas Maccabeus gathered together such writings as had been dispersed;<sup>g</sup> yet after the abolition of the Jewish priesthood, and the many calamities, persecutions, and dispersions which this whole nation hath suffered, we need not wonder that these voluminous writings have perished: and indeed it required the especial protection of Providence, as well as that reverential fondness which the Jews entertained for the sacred books, to preserve their Canon from destruction or injury. We have, however, the less reason to regret the loss of the other Jewish writings, since the scriptures furnish us with the scheme of prophecy, and with the account of that peculiar economy by which the Jews were distinguished from all other nations.

The historical books of scripture, if considered distinctly from the Pentateuch, and the writings more particularly styled prophetic, contain a compendium of the Jewish history, from the death of Moses, A. M. 2552, to the reformation established by Nehemiah after the return from the captivity, A. M. 3595. After the death of Moses, Joshua continued to record those miraculous particulars which demonstrated the divine interposition in favour

<sup>d</sup> As also genealogies, chronicles of the priesthood, &c.

\* Cont. Apion. lib. i. Josephus speaks of genealogical registers, as distinct from the twenty-two canonical books; and observes, that they contained the names of the Hebrew priests for a succession of two thousand years. He speaks also of histories

written by others, respectable for their consistency.

<sup>f</sup> The keepers of these genealogies are sometimes called Maschirim, recorders or memorialists. 2 Sam. viii. 16; 2 Kings xviii. 18; 1 Chron. xviii. 15; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8; 1 Macc. xxiii. 24.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 14.

of the Israelites, and to commemorate the events that preceded and accomplished their settlement in the land of Canaan. The eventful period which succeeded the death of Joshua, during which the Hebrews were subjected to the government of the judges, as ministers of the theocracy, furnished a large scope for the industry of the sacred historians; and Samuel, or some other prophet, appears to have selected such particulars as were best calculated to describe the period, and to have digested them into the book of Judges; having, doubtless, procured much information from the records of the priests or judges, some of whom were inspired, though prophetic revelations were "scarce in those days,"<sup>h</sup> and divine communications were made by means of the Urim and Thummim.<sup>1</sup> From the time of Samuel, the Jews seem to have been favoured with a regular succession of prophets, who, in an uninterrupted series, bequeathed to each other, with the mantle of prophecy, the charge of commemorating such important particulars as were consistent with the plan of sacred history; and who, superior to ostentation of prefixing their names to their several contributions, took up the history where the preceding prophet ceased, without distinguishing their respective contributions. It is possible, however, that the books of Kings and of Chronicles do not contain a complete compilation of the entire works of each contemporary prophet; but rather an abridgment of their several labours, digested by Ezra, in or after the captivity, with intention to exhibit the sacred history at one point of view: and hence it is that they contain some expressions which evidently result from contemporary description; and others, that as clearly argue them to have been composed long after the occurrences

<sup>h</sup> 1 Sam. iii. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxviii. 30; Levit. viii. 8; Numb. xxvii. 21. The Urim and Thummim, which words signify light and perfection, are applied to a miraculous ornament worn on the breastplate of the high-priest, and erroneously supposed by some to be descriptive of the twelve jewels in the breastplate, which were engraven with the names of the tribes of Israel, but which in reality meant something distinct from these. Compare Exod. xxxix. 10, with Levit. viii. 8. Some imagine that they were oracular figures that gave articulate answers; others, that they implied only a plate of gold, engraven with the Tetragrammaton, or sacred

name of Jehovah. Whatever the ornament was, it enabled the high-priest to collect divine instruction upon occasions of national importance. Some conceive that the intelligence was furnished by an extraordinary protrusion or splendour of the different letters. But others, with more reason, think that the Urim and Thummim only qualified the priest to present himself in the holy place, to receive answers from the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, and in the camp from some other consecrated place whence the divine voice might issue. Vid. Prid. Con. part i. book 3. Jennings's Jewish Antiq. lib. iii. c. 4. Philo Jud. de Monarch. lib. ii. Spencer's Urim and Thummim.

which they relate. Hence also it is, that though particular periods are more diffusely treated of than others, we still find throughout a connected series of events, and in each individual book a general uniformity of style.

The object of the sacred historians was to communicate instruction to mankind, and to illustrate the nature of God's providence in small, as well as in great occurrences, in particular instances, as well as in general appointments; they therefore often descend from the great outline of national concerns to the minute detail of private history. The relations, however, of individual events, that are occasionally interspersed, are highly interesting, and admirably develop the designs of the Almighty, and the character of those times to which they are respectively assigned. Those seeming digressions, likewise, in which the inspired writers have recorded such remarkable events as related to particular personages, or such occurrences in foreign countries as tended to affect the interests of the Hebrew nation, are not only valuable for the religious spirit which they breathe, but are to be admired as strictly consistent with the sacred plan. Thus the histories of Job, of Ruth, and of Esther, though apparently extrinsic appendages, are in reality connected parts of one entire fabric, and exhibit, in minute delineation, that wisdom which is elsewhere displayed on a larger scale; as they likewise present an engaging picture of that private virtue which in an extended influence operated to national prosperity. These books constitute, then, an important part of the sacred volume; which furnishes a complete code of instructive lessons, conveyed under every form, diversified with every style of composition, and enlivened with every illustration of circumstance.

While the twelve tribes were united under one government, their history is represented under one point of view. When a separation took place, the kingdom of Judah, from which tribe the Messiah was to descend, was the chief object of attention with the sacred historians; they however occasionally treat of the events that occurred in Samaria, especially when connected with the concerns of Judah: they draw instructive accounts of the government of Israel, from the separation of the ten tribes to their captivity; and place the circumstances which produced it in striking colours before the inhabitants of Judah, whose unrighteousness was afterwards punished by a similar fate.

Some account of the circumstances which occurred in Samaria was kept, probably, by those prophets who were born or laboured among the people of that country;<sup>k</sup> and the same prophets furnished materials for the sacred authors of the historical books, who were prophets of Judah.

The prophets who were mercifully raised up to console the Hebrew nation during the Babylonish captivity, have scattered among their predictions some few lines of contemporary history; but they have furnished no particular account of the circumstances that distinguished the condition of their countrymen; who, however, must have received every possible mitigation of the severity of their affliction, from the good offices of such among them as conciliated the favour of the Babylonish sovereigns, and from the prophetic assurances which opened to them the prospect of a return to their country.

As the succession of the prophets ceased in Malachi, the volume of the sacred history was closed with the account of the restoration of the Jews, and of their exertions to rebuild their cities, and to re-establish the order and security of their government. The last description represents them settled and reformed by the pious zeal of Nehemiah, and animated to the expectation of that "greater glory," which should shine in their latter temple, when "the desire of all nations should come."<sup>l</sup>

In possession of the complete volume of the scriptures, the Jews required no farther revelations of the divine will to explain and inculcate the terms of their acceptance. Enabled by the sacred records to look back on the vicissitudes which their nation had experienced, and to contemplate the character of God's judgments in the instructive scenes, they needed no longer any living prophet to warn them of that wrath which sin and idolatry would provoke,<sup>m</sup> or to assure them of that recompense which obedience would obtain. The design and character also of the old covenant, its spiritual import, and its figurative contexture, were now unravelled for the instruction of mankind, and no fit subject remained for the employment of the inspired penmen till the appearance of a new dispensation. Of the period, therefore, that intervened between the death of Malachi and the arrival of that messenger whom he foretold, no authentic account can be

<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings xix. 18; xi. 29; xiv. 2; xvi. 7; 2 Chron. xxviii. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Haggai ii. 7, 9.

<sup>m</sup> Luke xvi. 29, 31.

obtained.<sup>a</sup> An awful interval of expectation prevailed, on which but little light is thrown by the occasional accounts of apocryphal and profane historians. The nation, however, appears to have been successively subjected to the Persian, Egyptian, and Syrian monarchies, till rescued into liberty by the valour of the Maccabees, in whom the successors of David were re-established on the throne. These continued to flourish, with diminished splendour, and in subserviency to the Roman power, till the days of Herod, under whom Christ was born, and “the sceptre departed from Judah.”<sup>o</sup>

In a retrospect of the sacred history, it is obvious to remark, that one design of the inspired writers was to place before us the melancholy proofs of that corruption which had been entailed on mankind; and to exhibit in the depravity of a nation highly favoured, miraculously governed, and instructed by inspired teachers, the necessity of that redemption and renewal of righteousness which was so early and so repeatedly promised by the prophets. The universal iniquity overwhelmed by the flood,<sup>p</sup> the incorrigible perverseness of the Hebrew nation, the lapse of the most upright persons, and the hardened and obdurate wickedness of confirmed sinners, are industriously displayed with this view; and in a long succession of dark scenes, no perfect character can be found; and but few, comparatively, whose virtues could be proposed for imitation to mankind. The sacred writers described characters and passions as they beheld them, without flattery or disguise, often without comment or remark; leaving them to excite those sentiments of esteem or repugnance which they were severally calculated to awaken. In some righteous characters, however, they transcribe and exemplify the purity of God's laws; and those precepts which they interweave in their

<sup>a</sup> Eusebius attempts not to go beyond Zerubbabel.

<sup>o</sup> Gen. xlix. 10. The sceptre departed from Judah when Herod, who was an Idumæan proselyte, ascended the throne. The descendants of Zerubbabel, as also the Asmonæans, who till this time had possessed the government, (sometimes, indeed, in restricted subjection to foreign powers,) were of the tribe of Judah, though the Asmonæans were by the female line. In consequence of this predicted change of government, the expectation of “the Shiloh” was so general, that it gave rise to a sect called Herodians, who flattered Herod as

being the Messiah; as well as to the notion afterwards maintained by some, that Agrippa, the grandson of Herod by Mariamne, (the granddaughter of Hyrcanus, the Asmonæan priest,) was entitled to that distinction; not to mention the numberless false prophets who called themselves “the Christ.” Vid. Cyril. Alex. cont. Julian. Hieron. in Sophon. cap. 1. Epiph. Hæria. 20. Tertul. de Præfer. Schol. in Persii Satyr. v. 180. Baron. Appar. ad Annal. Eccles. par. i. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. §. 8. 1 Chron. iii; Matt. i; Luke iii.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. vi. 5.

relations are always excellent. In the judgments of God they likewise portray his attributes, represent him as watching over innocence, as indulgently suspending wrath, but as finally avenging himself on unrepented sins. They select from the events of their history those circumstances which are best calculated to furnish instruction, and therefore often pass with rapidity over great national events, and dilate with minuteness on whatever may serve to shew the nature of the divine government, or to illustrate the interests and duties of mankind. If they sometimes admit particulars, of which the design in these respects is not obvious, it must be recollected, that such particulars might have had an importance among the Jews, though we are no longer sensible of their utility.

The chronological and genealogical accounts, which now serve chiefly to prove the information and accuracy of the sacred historians, formerly assisted to keep up necessary distinctions, and to ascertain the exact accomplishment of prophecy. If, with regard to these, or any other minute particulars, the sacred books now seem to contain any inconsistencies or errors, these must be attributed to the negligence of copyists, and to the insensible corruptions which must arise from frequent transcription, especially in such points. The errors, however, which industrious objection affects to discover, are often imaginary; and it is not probable, even if we suppose the authors of these books to have been merely human, unassisted writers, that they should be so little conversant with the history of their country, as to be guilty of the contradictions which modern commentators have pretended to point out; and which, if they had existed, must, as more glaring to their contemporaries whom these writers addressed, have necessarily diminished their credit. The truth is, that if we are sometimes perplexed with difficulties, it is in consequence of the want of contemporary accounts, and an effect of that obscurity which must be supposed to overshadow periods so long elapsed; and the genealogical and chronological differences which are said sometimes to prevail, have arisen not only from the corruptions to which numbers are particularly subject, but from the different scope which the writers took.

In the detail of lineage, the sacred writers often inserted only illustrious persons, and sometimes added collateral kindred.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Le Clerc *Sentimens de quelques Theol. Theod. Præf. in Quæst. Lib. Reg. R. David Kimchi. Michael, &c.*

They sometimes altered names, where variety admitted preference; and in chronological accounts they calculated frequently in round numbers, where accuracy was of no consequence.<sup>r</sup> They likewise assumed various eras. Thus in Genesis, Moses reckoned only by the ages of the patriarchs. In Exodus, he, as succeeding prophets, dated from the departure out of Egypt; and others, who lived in later times, from the building of the temple;<sup>s</sup> from the commencement of the reigns of their several kings;<sup>t</sup> from their captivities and deliverances,<sup>u</sup> and other important national events;<sup>x</sup> or, lastly, from the reigns of foreign kings;<sup>y</sup> whom if they described by names different from those under which they are mentioned in profane history, it was in accommodation to the titles by which they were known to the Jews. The difficulties which occur on a superficial perusal of the scriptures chiefly originate in want of attention to these considerations; and they who have not the leisure and industry which are necessary to elucidate such particulars, will do well to collect the obvious instruction which is richly spread through every page of the sacred volume, rather than to embark in speculations of delicate discussion, or to entangle themselves in objections which result from ignorance. The historical, like all other parts of scripture, have every mark of genuine and unaffected truth. Many relations are interwoven with accounts of other nations, yet no inconsistencies have been detected. A connected and dependent chain of history, an uniform and pervading spirit of piety, a cooperating design, invariably prevails in every page of the sacred books; and the historical unfold the accomplishment of the prophetic parts.

## OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

It has been contended by some writers, that the book which passes under the name of Joshua in all the copies, was not written by him; but that this title was chosen rather as descriptive of the chief personage of the book, than with design to

<sup>r</sup> Gen. xv. 13; 1 Kings vi. 1. Usser.  
Chron. Sac. c. 12.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Chron. viii. 1.

<sup>t</sup> As the earlier prophets.

<sup>u</sup> Ezek. i. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Amos i. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Ezek. xi. 1; Dan. x. 1; Zechar. i. 1;  
Haggai i. 1.

intimate its author; in the same manner as the books of Esther, of Job, or of Ruth are so called, because they treat principally concerning the actions of those persons whose names they respectively bear. But if we waive all arguments that might be drawn from the title, there will still remain sufficient grounds to conclude, that the book, or at least the greater part of it, was written by Joshua himself, agreeably to the general opinion. It is, indeed, expressly said, towards the conclusion of the book, that Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God;<sup>a</sup> which seems to imply, that he subjoined this history to the Pentateuch.

Joshua is represented through the whole work as appointed by God to govern and instruct his people. He is likewise described in the book of Ecclesiasticus,<sup>b</sup> under the title of “Jesus the son of Nave,” as “the successor of Moses in prophecies:” there is therefore ample reason to be convinced, that Joshua was the author of the book, except, perhaps, of a few verses towards the conclusion; the account of his death being added by one of his successors, in like manner as he might have supplied what was necessary to complete the history of Moses. The ancient Talmudists, and the voice of general tradition, attribute the book to Joshua; and it is expressly said in Bava Bathra, that Joshua wrote the book distinguished by his name,<sup>c</sup> and the eight last verses of the law. It is also added, in the same place, that Eleazar wrote the twenty-ninth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Joshua, as Phineas did the thirty-third; and probably all the five last verses were added by Eleazar the high-priest, his son Phineas, or Samuel.

The principal objections made against the assignment of this book to Joshua are, first, that in the thirteenth verse of the tenth chapter, the circumstance of the sun and moon being stayed, is said to be written in the book of Jashir; by which it is meant to insinuate, that the book of Joshua is only a compendious history, selected from larger chronicles, in later times. Now to whatever book this reference may be supposed to apply, whether to a previous narrative, or to a song composed on the occasion of the great event here spoken of, it does not follow that Joshua

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xxiv. 26. See also 1 Kings xvi. 34, comp. with Joshua vi. 26.

<sup>b</sup> Eccles. xlvi. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Bava Bathra, cap. 1. Spanheim. Hist. Eccl. Vet. Test. tom. i. p. 359.



could not be the author of a work in which the book of Jashir is quoted, as probably containing a more minute and circumstantial account of this remarkable miracle.<sup>d</sup> Secondly, those expressions which have been brought to prove, that the history was written long after the events therein recorded, as that the stones which Joshua set up "are there unto this day,"<sup>e</sup> with similar passages, which argue that the relation was sometime subsequent to the occurrences described, do in reality only serve to shew, what other circumstances confirm, that Joshua wrote the book towards the conclusion of his days; and then, as speaking of the earlier periods of his government, he might consistently use these and similar expressions.<sup>f</sup>

It has been asserted, farther, that some things are related in this book which did not happen till after the death of Joshua; as the expedition of the Danites against Leshem;<sup>g</sup> which apparently is related as a subsequent event in the book of Judges. Hence some have attributed the book to Eleazar, some to Samuel, and some to Isaiah, or Ezra: but it is not necessary on this account to deprive Joshua of his title to the book; for if the relation in Judges be not the history of a different expedition,<sup>h</sup> we may suppose the account in this book to be an interpolation made by Ezra, or some prophet posterior to Joshua: and this is the more probable solution of the difficulty, since the verse which records the conquest of the Danites appears evidently to be an extrinsic addition, afterwards inserted to complete the account of the Danites' possessions. It may be remarked, farther, that whatever is said of Othniel and Achsah, in the book of Judges, is only a recapitulation of what happened under Joshua.<sup>i</sup> The land of Cabul, mentioned in Joshua,<sup>k</sup> is by

<sup>d</sup> Joshua describes this miracle according to the received notions of astronomy. Vid. Calmet Dissert. sur le Commandement, &c.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. iv. 9; v. 9. Vid. also chap. x. 14; Matt. xxvii. 8.

<sup>f</sup> The book must have been written by a person at least nearly contemporary with Joshua, since Rahab was living in the author's time. Vid. chap. vi. 25, and v. 1; where the author speaks of himself as present at the passage over Jordan. Observe also chap. viii. 28; xv. 63; xvi. 10; and the circumstantial detail of particulars which argues a contemporary writer.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xix. 47.

<sup>h</sup> Judges xviii. 27—29. It is possible

that the Laish mentioned in Judges was a different place from the Leshem spoken of in Joshua. The accounts, indeed, vary in some circumstances. In Joshua, Leshem itself is said to have been called Dan. In Judges, Laish is represented to have been burnt, and the city which was built in its room was called Dan.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. xv. 13, 19, and Judges i. 11—15; or the passage might be a subsequent insertion into the book of Joshua.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xix. 27, and 1 Kings ix. 13. The former a city on the borders of Ptolemais, the latter a district containing several towns. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. Huet. Demon. Evan. prop. iv. The idea

Josephus distinguished from that which is spoken of in the book of Kings; and "the house of God" in this book does not imply the temple, which was not built till long after the death of Joshua, but means the tabernacle and ark, which did exist in his time. These difficulties being thus removed, we may conclude that Joshua was the author of the book that bears his name. It contains an account of the distribution of property, which must soon have been committed to writing. It was admitted by Ezra into the Canon as inspired, and it is cited as scripture by many of the sacred writers,<sup>1</sup> and especially as the work of Joshua in Kings, where his words are said to be the words of God.<sup>m</sup>

Joshua, who was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was first called Osea, or Hosea,<sup>n</sup> a name which, as it signifies Saviour, was well adapted to his character, as typical of our spiritual Saviour. He is also by St. Luke, and by the author of Ecclesiasticus, styled Jesus; a just representative of that Jesus who leads us into a Canaan of endless felicity, through the water of baptism.<sup>o</sup> Joshua was "filled with the spirit of wisdom," and took upon him the government of Israel by command of God,<sup>p</sup> agreeably to the prediction of Moses, who had promised that "the Lord should raise up a prophet like unto him, as his successor."<sup>q</sup> The piety, courage, and disinterested integrity of Joshua are conspicuously displayed through the whole course of his conduct. Independently of the inspiration which enlightened his mind and writings, he derived divine inspiration, sometimes by immediate revelation from God,<sup>r</sup> and sometimes from the

that places are in this book sometimes distinguished by names not adopted till later times, is, perhaps, often fanciful, since the origin and date of names are extremely uncertain; but where modern names are found, they might have been affixed by those who read, copied, or revised the book.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. ii. 7; xii. 15; Psa. cxix. 3; Isa. xxviii. 21; Acts vii. 45; Heb. xi. 31; xiii. 5; James ii. 25, 28; Eccles. xlv. 4; 1 Mac. ii. 5, 6.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings xvi. 34.

<sup>n</sup> יהושע, Hosea salvator; יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, Joshua dominus salvator. The former denotes an hope, the latter an assurance of salvation. Moses appears to have made this slight change in the name of Joshua, in order to commemorate his appointment "to spy out the land," into which he was afterwards to conduct the people. Vid.

Numb. xiii. 16, 17. August. cont. Faust. tom. vi. lib. xvi. c. 19.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xvii. 45; Eccles. xlv. 1; Heb. iv. 8. Grot. Com. in Matt. i. 21.

<sup>p</sup> Numb. xxvii. 18—20; Deut. xxxi. 7, 14; xxxiv. 9; Joshua i. 5.

<sup>q</sup> Deut. xviii. 15. This prophecy is in a more especial sense applicable to Christ, the archetype of the prophets.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. iii. 7; v. 13—15. It is generally supposed, in conformity with the sentiments of the ancient Hebrew and Christian churches, that the person who, in the instance last referred to, is related to have appeared to Joshua, was God himself, as he is afterwards called the Lord, (Jehovah, in the Hebrew,) ch. vi. 2; and Joshua would not have been suffered to worship, much less required to reverence, a created being. Vid. Rev. xxii. 8, 9. It was therefore probably the divine *λογος*,

sanctuary, and by the mouth of Eleazar the high-priest, the son of Aaron, who having on the breastplate, and presenting himself before the veil over-against the mercy-seat, whereon rested the divine presence,\* consulted God by the Urim and Thummim, and God answered him by a voice which issued from the mercy-seat. During the life of this excellent chief, the Israelites were preserved in some obedience to God, and flourished under his protection; and we contemplate with satisfaction the description of a well-governed and successful people.

Joshua, the leader, as the historian of the Israelites, represents in lively colours the progress of a nation, led on to rapid and great victories by the guidance of the Lord; yet occasionally checked in their career, that they might be convinced of their dependence on God for success, and that it was not "their own arm" which had procured it. He relates, with all the animation of one who was appointed to be an agent in the scenes displayed, the successive miracles that favoured and effected the conquest of the country; and unfolds the accomplishment of the Mosaic prophecies concerning the possession and division of the promised land.<sup>†</sup>

In the course of the narrative, Joshua points out the attention paid to the divine precepts in the circumcision of the people,<sup>‡</sup> in the setting up of the tabernacle, and in the appointment of the cities of refuge. The book concludes with the account of the renewal of the covenant, and of the affecting exhortation and death of Joshua, which terminates an interesting history of about

the angel of the covenant, who appeared. Euseb. Hist. lib. i. c. 2.

\* The Shechinah was a visible symbol of the divine presence, which, after having conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, rested in a glorious cloud between the cherubims in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple; and hence the divine oracles were delivered. Vid. Lowman's Rationale of the Hebrew Ritual, part ii. c. 2.

† Gen. xii. 7; xvii. 8; Exod. xv. 14—17; xxiii. 23; xxxiii. 2; Numb. xxxiv. 2; Deut. i. 7, 8; xxxii. 49.

‡ The command given to Joshua to circumcise again the children of Israel, was only to renew a rite which had been omitted in the wilderness. "The reproach of Egypt," which was thereby "rolled away," meant probably the opprobrium incurred by the Egyptians, who might have

neglected the rite in compliance with the requisitions of the uncircumcised Horites that overran Egypt, or who, perhaps, might not yet have adopted it. If we understand that the Egyptians upbraided the Israelites for the neglect of circumcision, it will by no means follow, that the latter nation learnt it from the former; but rather, that the Egyptians make it a subject of reproach to the Israelites, that they neglected in the wilderness what they professed to consider as a rite of distinction and the seal of the promises. Vid. Shuckford's Conn. vol. iii. b. 12; and Patrick in Joshua, ch. v. 6—9. Spencer conceives, that the reproach of Egypt was the slavery to which they had been subjected, and from which they were now rescued and declared free, by this token of a free people. Vide Spencer de Leg. Heb. lib. i. c. 4.

thirty years, from A. M. 2553 to A. M. 2583;<sup>x</sup> the whole of which is animated by the display of God's attributes, and recommended by the noblest sentiments of piety. It is occasionally interspersed with prophecies,<sup>y</sup> and distinguished throughout by every mark of fidelity and truth. Joshua, like his predecessor, describes the disobedience and transgressions of the Jews, not concealing his own errors. He conspires in the same zealous designs with Moses, and earnestly recommends an attention to the laws and statutes which that legislator had delivered. The book must have been a most valuable possession to the Israelites, as it contained the earliest and most authentic documents relative to the property of every tribe, and furnished to each the title of its respective inheritance.

It is necessary to remark, that there is some accidental derangement in the order of the chapters of this book, occasioned probably by the mode of rolling up manuscripts anciently observed. If chronologically placed, they should be read thus: first chapter to the tenth verse; then second chapter; then from the tenth verse to the end of the first chapter; afterwards should follow the sixth and consecutive chapters, to the eleventh; then the twenty-second chapter; and, lastly, the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, to the twenty-fourth verse of the latter.<sup>z</sup>

Joshua succeeded Moses in the government of Israel about A. M. 2553, and died in the one hundred and tenth year of his age, A. M. 2578, at Timnah-serah; where he had retired, contemplating from Mount Ephraim the well-ordered and peaceful government which he had established;<sup>a</sup> and exhorting the people with his last words to a remembrance of God's mercy, and to an observance of his laws.

The memory of Joshua, and of his victories, was long preserved, and his reputation spread among the heathen nations.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>x</sup> Including the account of Eleazar's death, who outlived Joshua about five or six years. This computation is likewise grounded on a supposition that Joshua was employed seven years in completing the conquest of the country, and that he survived it about eighteen years. Some do not admit that he governed the people so long. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.

<sup>y</sup> Chap. iii. 10—17; vi. 26, compared with 1 Kings xvi. 34; Josh. xxiii. 15, &c.

<sup>z</sup> Bedford's Scrip. Chron. book v. p. 590.

<sup>a</sup> The Vatican copy of the Septuagint version has the following addition annexed to the account of Joshua's burial, in the thirtieth verse of the last chapter: "There they put with him into the sepulchre in which they buried him, the knives of flint with which he circumcised the kingdom of Israel in Gilgal, when he brought them out of Egypt, as the Lord commanded them;" and they are there unto this day. The Alexandrian copy has it not. Vide Harmer, vol. iv. p. 398.

<sup>b</sup> Some traces of the miracle of the sun

He is generally considered as the original of the Phœnician Hercules; and the scene of his victories, as well as the conquests themselves, is still discernible in the disfigured accounts which are given concerning that fictitious hero.<sup>c</sup> It has been collected from monuments still extant, that the Carthaginians were a colony of the Tyrians who fled from the exterminating sword of Joshua;<sup>d</sup> as also, that the inhabitants of Leptis in Africa were primarily derived from Zidonians, who had been compelled to forsake their country in consequence of calamities brought upon it by the conquests of this great commander.

The Samaritans are by some writers supposed to have received the book of Joshua: there is still extant a Samaritan book entitled the Book of Joshua, which differs considerably from the Hebrew copy, containing a chronicle of events badly compiled from the death of Moses to the time of the emperor Adrian. It consists of forty-seven chapters, swelled with fabulous accounts. It is written in Arabic, in the Samaritan character.<sup>e</sup> After having been long lost, it was recovered by Scaliger, and deposited at Leyden, in manuscript, and has never been published.

The Jews suppose Joshua to have been the author of a prayer which they repeat in part on quitting the synagogue. It is in celebration of God's goodness for having granted them an inheritance superior to that of the rest of mankind.<sup>f</sup>

## OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

THIS book has been generally attributed to Samuel, in agreement with the opinion of the talmudical doctors.<sup>a</sup> Some writers have

and moon being stayed for a whole day by Joshua, are discovered in the Chinese records, as well as in the disfigured accounts of Statius and Ovid. Vid. Martini Hist. Sinic. lib. i. p. 37. Stat. Thebais, lib. iv. 307. Ovid. Metamor. de Phaeton.

<sup>c</sup> Procop. Vandal. lib. ii. c. 10. Polyb. Frag. 114. Sallust. Bellum Jugurth. The Mahometans relate many fabulous stories of Joshua. Vid. Herbelot. Bib. Oriental. sub voce Jeschowa.

<sup>d</sup> Allix's Reflect. on Books of Old Test.

<sup>e</sup> Fabric. Apocryph. Vet. Test. p. 876, et seq.

<sup>f</sup> Vagen's Tela Syriac, p. 223, et seq.

<sup>a</sup> Bava Bathra, c. 1. Kimchi Abarh. Isid. lib. vi. c. 2. The Talmud, from תלמוד, doctrine, is a Jewish book, containing explanatory remarks on the Law, and revered by the Jews as much as or more than the Law, as the great source of their religious opinions. It consists of two parts: the Mischna, or text; and the Gemara, or complement. The former the Jews profess to have received as an oral law, delivered to Moses by God; but in reality it consists of traditions accumulated from the time of Simon, or Ezra, and con-

assigned it to Phinehas, some to Hezekiah, and some to Ezekiel ; and others have supposed that Ezra collected it from such memoirs as every judge respectively furnished of his own government. It seems, however, most probable, that Samuel was the author ; who, being a prophet or seer, and described in the book of Chronicles as an historian, may reasonably be supposed, inasmuch as he was the last of the judges, to have written this part of the Jewish history ; since the inspired writers alone were permitted to describe those relations, in which were interwoven the instructions and judgments of the Lord.<sup>b</sup>

The book appears to have been written after the establishment of the regal government, since the author, in speaking of preceding events, observes, that “in those days there was no king in Israel ;”<sup>c</sup> which seems to imply, that there were kings when he wrote. There is also some reason to think, that it was written before the accession of David ; since it is said in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter, that “the Jebusites were still in Jerusalem,” who were dispossessed of that city early in the reign of David.<sup>d</sup> It was likewise written before the books of Samuel ;<sup>e</sup> and therefore if the author be understood, as he is usually supposed, to speak, in the thirtieth verse of the eighteenth chapter, of that captivity<sup>f</sup> which happened in the time of Eli, when the ark was captured by the Philistines, and the idol of Micah was destroyed,<sup>g</sup> there is no objection to the general opinion, which attributes the book to Samuel ;<sup>h</sup> who may be conceived to have written it in Ramoth-Gilead, after the election of Saul.

tains some useful instructions. The Gemara is a commentary of wild fancies on the Mischna. There are two Talmuds, that of Jerusalem, and that of Babylon ; the last of which is most esteemed. It appeared in the sixth or seventh century, about two hundred years after the former. Maimonides published a good abridgment of it. Vide Buxtorf. Recensio oper. Talmud. Porta Mosis, in Pocock's works, vol. i. Morin. Exercit. Biblic. Lexic. Buxtorf. Rabbin. p. 2610. Prid. Con. part i. b. 5. Mark vii. 7, 8, 13. The popes, where they have had influence, have often procured the destruction of the Talmuds, as containing pernicious opinions. Much truth, however, is concealed under the chimerical expositions and accounts therein contained.

<sup>b</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xix. 1 ; xxi. 25.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. v. 6—8.

<sup>e</sup> Compare 2 Sam. xi. 21, with Judges ix. 53.

<sup>f</sup> The captivity here spoken of must have happened before the reign of David, who would not have suffered the idolatrous images to remain among his people. When the ark was captured, many of the Israelites must have been taken likewise ; and the psalmist expressly calls this taking of the ark, “a captivity ;” vid. Psal. lxxviii. 60—62 ; as the wife of Phinehas lamented that then “the glory was departed from Israel ;” vid. 1 Sam. iv. 22.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. iv. 11, and ch. v. Selden de Syntag. i. de Dias. Syria, cap. 2. and Calmet on Judg. ch. xviii. 30.

<sup>h</sup> The word נָבִיא, Nabia, which is used in this book, might well be employed by Samuel, who wrote the first part at least of the first book of Samuel. Vid. 1 Sam. ix.

The book is properly inserted between those of Joshua and Samuel, as the judges were governors intermediate between Joshua and the kings of Israel. They were illustrious princes of the house of Judah,<sup>1</sup> raised up by God, not in regular succession, but as emergencies required, when the repentance of the Israelites influenced him to compassionate their distress, and to afford them deliverance from their difficulties. They frequently acted by a divine suggestion, and were endowed with preternatural strength and fortitude.<sup>2</sup>

After the death of Joshua, the people appear for a short time to have had no regularly appointed governor,<sup>1</sup> but to have acted in separate tribes. They were for a few years retained in the service of God by the elders who survived Joshua, but afterwards fell into a state of anarchy, for a period of which we have no account, but as to those particulars scattered towards the beginning and conclusion of this book. We find, however, that the people proceeded to the conquest of the remaining part of the country, but that, gradually forgetting the instructions of Moses and of Joshua, and notwithstanding a rebuke which they received from an angel of God,<sup>m</sup> they suffered the inhabitants to remain tributary among them; who became, as had been repeatedly predicted, "scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes," and, as it were, "snares and traps" to seduce them to idolatry.<sup>n</sup>

9. The house of God means the tabernacle, as in Joshua.

<sup>1</sup> They were called Shophetim, in the Hebrew, which signifies judges. They had the supreme power, under some restrictions; and without the ensigns of royalty, being ministers of God, subservient to the theocracy. Vid. chap. viii. 23. Some reckon fifteen and some sixteen judges. They were sometimes elected by the people on the performance of great exploits, and generally continued for life.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ii. 18; vi. 14, 34; xi. 29; xiv. 6, 19. The Jews imagine, without sufficient reason, that they were endued with the spirit of prophecy. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. 45. Grot. in Jud. i. 1.

<sup>1</sup> In the Samaritan Chronicle, it is said that Joshua appointed his nephew, Abel, to succeed him, upon whom the government fell by lot; but this is a fabulous account. Vid. Saurin. Dissert. sur Heglon Roi des Moabites. Hotting. Smeg. Oriental. c. viii. p. 522.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. ii. 1, by the word  $\gamma\alpha\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ ,

*nuntius*, some understand a prophet, which it sometimes signifies, as in Haggai i. 13. But there is no reason why we should not suppose the messenger to have been an angel; as angels undoubtedly appeared on other occasions, the ministers of God's miraculous government of the Israelites.

<sup>n</sup> Exod. xxiii. 33; xxxiv. 12; Josh. xxiii. 13; Judg. ii. 2. The Israelites were permitted to render tributary those nations who submitted to them, though they were to suppress their idolatrous worship, "to break down their images, and to destroy their groves." But those nations who in defiance of God's declared favour opposed them, were to be destroyed; and as to the seven nations of Canaan, of those who resisted, "nothing that breathed was to be saved alive," that every trace of idolatry might be swept away. Vid. Deut. xx. 10—18; vii. 1—6; 1 Sam. xv. 5. Though this destruction was enjoined only in case of resistance, yet with no idolatrous city whatever were the Israelites allowed, by the divine command, to make any league or covenant; for in these, the authority of

For this they were punished, and given up to their enemies, and held eight years in servitude to Cushan, king of Mesopotamia, till God raised up judges to deliver them. Othniel appears to have been the first judge; though some writers say that Simeon, and others that Caleb<sup>o</sup> preceded him in the government of the people. During the intervals between the judges, each tribe was governed by its respective elders; affairs of importance being referred to the great council, or Sanhedrim.<sup>p</sup>

The history of this book may be divided into two parts; the first, containing an account of the judges from Othniel to Samson, ending at the sixteenth chapter. The second part, describing several remarkable particulars that occurred not long after the death of Joshua, which are placed towards the end of the book in the seventeenth and following chapters, that they may not interrupt the course of the history. What relates to the two last judges, Eli and Samuel, is recorded in the following book. The chronology of this period is entangled with many difficulties; but if we include the period of thirty-four years, which may be supposed to have intervened between the death of Joshua and the judicature of Othniel, the book extends its history from A. M. 2578, to the death of Samson, A. M. 2887; and the government of the judges may be conceived to have continued from A. M. 2612, to the twenty-first year of Samuel's judicature, when Saul was anointed, A. M. 2929, that is, about three hundred and seventeen years.<sup>q</sup>

those deities, whose sanction must have been adjured, would have been admitted, and some toleration given to a worship that might have tended to the seduction of the Israelites. Vid. Exod. xxiii. 32. They were therefore enjoined, gradually, to extirpate the civil and religious communities of the land, and to render the people tributary and dependant as individuals. All these instructions, however, the people violated, and suffered for their disobedience. Vid. Shuckford's Con. vol. iii. b. 12.

<sup>o</sup> Bedford's Script. Chron. lib. v. c. 3.

<sup>p</sup> The great council appointed by Moses continued probably to exist at least till the establishment of the monarchical government, though there are no proofs that its members retained the gift of inspiration. Whether the Sanhedrim were the same council continued, or a subsequent institution in the time of the Maccabees, is uncertain. Like that, however, it consisted of seventy or seventy-two elders: these

were mostly priests and Levites, over which the high-priest generally, but not necessarily, presided. It decided on momentous affairs, civil and religious, and subsisted to the time of Christ, but with authority diminished in subjection to the Roman power. Vid. Matth. v. 21; Mark xiii. 9. Selden de Synod. Beausobre's Introd. to Script. There were several inferior and dependant Sanhedrims. The word is derived from *συνεδριον*, a council, or assembly.

<sup>q</sup> St. Paul appears to reckon four hundred and fifty years from the division of the land till the time of Samuel, (exclusive of Samuel's government, which is reckoned under the forty years assigned in the next verse to Saul;) but as this computation would be inconsistent with other statements in scripture, and especially with that in 1 Kings vi. 1, where the fourth of Solomon's reign is made to coincide with the four hundred and eightieth year after the deliverance from Egypt, Usher accepts from ancient



The period stated in the book, if computed in succession, would swell to a much greater number of years; but they must be conceived sometimes to coincide as contemporary, being reckoned from different eras which cannot now be exactly ascertained; and, perhaps, as Marsham has conjectured, some of the judges were coeval, reigning over different districts.

The book of Judges furnishes a lively description of a fluctuating and unsettled nation; a striking picture of the disorders and dangers which prevailed in a republic without magistracy, when "the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways;"<sup>r</sup> when few prophets were appointed to control the people,<sup>s</sup> and "every one did that which was right in his own eyes."<sup>t</sup> It exhibits the contest of true religion with superstition; displays the beneficial effects that flow from the former, and represents the miseries and evil consequences of impiety. From the scenes of civil discord and violence which darken this history, St. Paul, or the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, hath presented us with some illustrious examples of faith in the characters of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.<sup>u</sup>

Amidst the great vicissitude of events described in this book, in which the justice and mercies of God are conspicuously shewn, we are much struck with the account of the illustrious exploits of the judges, of Sisera's defeat and death, of the victory of Gideon, of the punishment of Abimelech, of Jephthah's inconsiderate vow,<sup>x</sup> of the actions of Samson, of the flagitious

manuscripts a different reading of Acts xiii. 20; according to which, the four hundred and fifty years are referred, not to the duration of the judges, but to the period which intervened between the promise of Canaan made to Abraham, and the division of the land. The present reading, however, is more agreeable to the scope of St. Paul's discourse, as well as best supported by authority; and therefore various other solutions of the difficulties that result from this account have been proposed. Many chronologers have imagined that *τετρακοσίοις* is a mistake of the copyist of the Acts, for *τριακοσίοις*: in which case, St. Paul, speaking loosely, (*έξ*,) might well reckon three hundred and fifty years; for if we deduct from four hundred and eighty years the forty-seven years which intervened between the Exodus and the division of the land, together with the eighty-four years which must be assigned to Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon, before the foundation of the

temple, we shall have exactly three hundred and forty-nine years. Vid. Usser. Chron. Sac. c. 12. Poli Synop. in 1 Kings vi. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. v. 6.

<sup>s</sup> We read but of two prophets in this book. Vid. chap. iv. 4, and vi. 8. The high-priest, however, had the power of consulting God by means of the Urim and Thummim.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. xvii. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Heb. xi. 32.

<sup>x</sup> It has been a subject of endless controversy, whether Jephthah did really offer up his daughter "a burnt-offering to the Lord," or only devote her to perpetual virginity; which might be considered as a sacrifice, when every woman looked forward to the production of the promised seed. The Jews and primitive church believed, that he did actually immolate her. In favour of this opinion, it has been observed, that it is supported by the construction of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate ver-

conduct of the Benjamites, of the destruction of Gibeah, with the description of many other particulars that enliven the narrative; which is likewise much embellished by the beautiful song of Deborah and Barak, and the significant parable of Jotham. Many of the sacred writers, as well as St. Paul, allude to or quote from the book;<sup>7</sup> and several relations contained in it point out the origin of numberless heathen fables.\* The whole period is distinguished by a display of extraordinary events, and by the most glaring and miraculous proofs of divine interposition. The history of God's government must necessarily be characterized by the marks and demonstrations of his immediate agency; and the selected instruments of his will may well be expected to exhibit a succession of unprecedented exploits.

It should be observed, indeed, that some of the actions which in this book are represented to have been subservient to God's designs, were justifiable only on the supposition of divine warrant, which superseded all general rules of conduct.<sup>a</sup> Without this, the deeds of Ehud<sup>b</sup> and of Jael<sup>c</sup> might be pronounced censurable

sions, and by the Chaldee paraphrase; that if the vow extended not to the life, Jephthah might have "gone back;" Levit. xxvii. 2—8. That a devotion to celibacy was uncustomary among the Jews, and must have been dishonourable; that it could not have been requisite in a dedication to God's service, nor a sufficient subject for that general lamentation which prevailed on the occasion, and was continued with superstitious observance till later times; and, lastly, that if Jephthah esteemed himself bound to give up every consideration, rather than violate a solemn engagement with God, he might, for his intention, or general character, be commended by St. Paul, however censurable and extravagant his promise and the performance of it might have been. See Heb. xi; Paal. xv. 4. Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. 9. Tertul. adv. Marcion. Chrysost. Hom. de Jephth. Epiph. adv. Hæres. lib. iii. vol. i. p. 1055. and Dodwell. Dr. Randolph proposes, by a new rendering of the text, to maintain that Jephthah vowed to dedicate whatsoever or whomsoever came out of the door of his house, to meet him; and also, to offer a burnt-offering. See his Discourse, and on Levit. xxvii. 28, 29. Concerning the Cherem, see Selden de Jure. Nat. et Gent. cap. 6, 7.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Sam. xii. 9—11; 2 Sam. xi. 21; Ps. lxxxviii. 11; Isaiah ix. 4; x. 26; and perhaps Matt. ii. 23, comp. with Jud. xiii. 5.

\* The story of Nisus's hair; of the golden hair given by Neptune to his grandson Pterela, which rendered him invincible while uncut; that of Hercules and Omphale; of the pillars of Hercules; of the death of Cleomedes Astypaleus; of Agamemnon and Iphigenia; and, to enumerate no more, that of the Sabine rape, appear to have been ingenious fictions fabricated from the accounts of this book.

<sup>a</sup> God may on particular occasions authorize what without his sanction would be unjust; as where he commands the Israelites "to spoil the Egyptians," and to extirpate the nations of Canaan. Vid. Exod. iii. 22; Deut. xx. 10—18.

<sup>b</sup> We are not to conceive, because God "raised up the judges," that he directed them in all their actions. The relation, however, seems to intimate, that Ehud on this occasion acted by divine authority.

<sup>c</sup> Jael's conduct, like that of Rahab, as described in the book of Joshua, appears to have arisen from a desire of assisting in God's declared designs in favour of his chosen people. As the exploit is approved in the hymn of Deborah, an inspired prophetess, we may suppose it to have been performed in compliance with a divine impulse, otherwise it could not have been a subject of praise. Some, however, have thought that Deborah only foretells Jael's future celebrity.

for their treachery, however prompted by commendable motives. And with respect to some other particulars, it is obvious that the sacred author by no means vindicates all that he relates; and that the indiscriminate massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, and the rape of the virgins at Shiloh, were certainly stamped with the marks of injustice and cruelty, and must be condemned on those principles which the scriptures have elsewhere furnished, though in the brevity of the sacred history they are here recorded without comment. The characters, likewise, of God's appointed ministers, however spoken of in this book, and in other parts of scripture, as commendable for their general excellence or particular merits, are presented to us in some points of view, as highly defective and blameable. It is easy, however, to discriminate the shades from the light, and to perceive, that in the description of such mixed characters as that of Samson, much is detailed as reprehensible; and while we are led to admire his heroic patriotism, we are taught also to condemn his criminal infatuation and blind confidence in Delilah.

With respect to those objections which a mistaken levity has suggested against the credibility of some transactions recorded in the book, they proceed either from a want of attention to those constructions which the researches of the learned have enabled them to make,<sup>d</sup> or from a disregard to the character of the times described, when a boundless enthusiasm resulted from a confidence in the divine favour.

## OF THE BOOK OF RUTH.

THE book of Ruth is a kind of supplement or appendix to the book of Judges, and may be considered as an introduction to

<sup>d</sup> The relation, for instance, of Samson's setting fire to the corn of the Philistines, cannot reasonably be questioned by those who consider the character of Samson; and the great abundance of foxes (or thoes, or jackals) that prevailed in Judea, which, indeed, was so remarkable, that many cities, and even provinces, were denominated after the word which we translate *foxes*. Vid. 1 Sam. xiii. 17; Josh. xv. 28; xix. 42; Judg. i. 35; also Cantic. ii. 15. Some writers,

indeed, think that instead of *schoalim*, *foxes*, we should read *schoalim*, *sheaves*, and translate *zanab*, *the extreme end*, instead of *the tail*. Vide Bernard *Repub. des Lett.* p. 407. Stackhouse's *Hist. of Bib.* book 5. vol. i. The *Vulpinaria*, or feast of the foxes, observed among the Romans, might have derived its origin from this transaction, some of the particulars of which Ovid describes in a fabulous account. Vid. *Fast. lib. iv.* 684. et seq. Bochart. *Hieros. lib. iii.*

the history of David,<sup>a</sup> related in the books of Samuel. In the Hebrew Canon it composed but one book with the former; and though various opinions have been entertained respecting its chronology,<sup>b</sup> it is properly placed in our Bibles between the books of Judges and Samuel.<sup>c</sup> The famine which occasioned Elimelech to leave his country, is said to have come to pass "in the days when the judges ruled;" hence some have assigned the beginning of the history to the time of Gideon, who was raised up in defence of Israel, about A. M. 2759,<sup>d</sup> and under whom a famine is related to have happened;<sup>e</sup> notwithstanding which, some Jewish writers suppose the history to have occurred much earlier, in the time of Ehud.<sup>f</sup>

The chief difficulty which occurs in settling the chronology of this period, arises from a genealogical account of St. Matthew,<sup>g</sup> in which it is stated that Boaz, who was the husband of Ruth, and the great-grandfather of David,<sup>h</sup> was the son of Salmon by Rachab; for if by Rachab we suppose to be meant, as is usually understood, Rahab,<sup>i</sup> the harlot, who protected Joshua's spies, about A. M. 2552, it is difficult to conceive that only three persons, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, should have intervened between her and David, who was not born till about 2919. We must, however, in this case conclude, either with the learned Usher, that the ancestors of David, as eminent for righteousness, or as designed to be conspicuous, because in the lineage of the Messiah,

cap. 13. The extraordinary strength of Samson is not to be considered as the physical effect of his hair, though God judged proper to render the continuance of the former dependent on the preservation of the latter, which was the mark of his consecration to God as a Nazarite.

<sup>a</sup> Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. 25. Hieron. Prolog. Gal. Aug. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. 8.

<sup>b</sup> Houbigant Bib. pref. to vol. ii.

<sup>c</sup> The modern Jews place Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, immediately after the Pentateuch, giving Ruth sometimes the first and sometimes the fifth place.

<sup>d</sup> Patrick, in chap. i. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Judges vi. 3—6.

<sup>f</sup> Seder Olam. cap. 12.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. i. 5, 6.

<sup>h</sup> Ruth iv. 21, 22; and Matth. i. 5, 6.

<sup>i</sup> We cannot now discover any motive which should have induced St. Matthew to mention Rachab in the genealogy of Christ,

unless she were some person previously spoken of in scripture; but many reasons may be assigned why she should be introduced in the lineage, if she were the Rahab whose conduct is mentioned by Joshua, (and who, though styled רַחַב, zónah, in the Hebrew, and πόρνη, by the evangelists, is celebrated as an example of faith;) still, however, it may be diffidently suggested, that the chronological differences would be less considerable, if we could suppose her to have been a different person; and that the four hundred years which intervened between the birth of Pharez and the time Shamgar, were filled up by Boaz and his six immediate ancestors. As a slight support to which, it may be remarked, that the wife of Salmon is spelt 'Ραχαβ by St. Matthew; whereas in Hebrews xi. 31, and in James ii. 25, the harlot's name is written 'Ρααβ, as in the Septuagint version of Josh. ii. 1. There is no mention in the book of Joshua, or in any part of the Old Testament, of Rahab's marriage with Salmon.

were blessed with extraordinary length of life;<sup>k</sup> or else, that the sacred writers mentioned in the genealogy only such names as were distinguished and known among the Jews. If, however, Boaz be considered as the grandfather of David, the history cannot by any computation be assigned to the time of Eli,<sup>l</sup> under whose judicature it is placed by Josephus,<sup>m</sup> but should be understood to have come to pass at some earlier period; and perhaps under Shamgar, agreeably to the calculation of Usher, who places it in the 2686th year of the world, about one hundred and thirty-three years after the conquest of Canaan.<sup>n</sup>

The book has been by some considered as the production of Hezekiah; by others it has been attributed to Ezra; but it was, in all probability, written by Samuel, agreeably to the opinion of many Jews and Christians;<sup>o</sup> and the prophet may be supposed, by this addition to the book of Judges, to have brought down the history to the time of his own birth. It certainly was written not only after the judges had ceased to rule, but after the birth, if not after the anointing of David;<sup>p</sup> whose descent from Judah the sacred writer seems to have designed to certify, as, according to the prophecy of Jacob, the Messiah was to spring from that tribe;<sup>q</sup> and with this view he traces back the lineage of Boaz to Pharez, the son of Judah,<sup>r</sup> and grandson of Jacob.<sup>s</sup>

The book contains an account of the conversion of Ruth, a Moabitess, and, according to Jewish tradition, of the royal race of Moab; which nation was descended from Lot,<sup>t</sup> and settled near the land of Judah, at the end of the salt sea. Ruth, having married Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, who had sojourned in Moab on account of a famine which prevailed in Judæa, resolved, on the death of Mahlon, to accompany her mother-in-

<sup>k</sup> Usher. Chron. Sac. cap. 12. Poli Synop. in Ruth. And in Matt. i. 5. Patrick, Whitby, &c.

<sup>l</sup> The famine which occasioned Naomi to reside ten years in Moab, could not have come to pass so late as in the days of Eli, from the tenth year of whose judicature to the birth of David were only forty years. Vid. Ruth i. 1, 4; Acts xiii. 21; 2 Sam. v. 4: for we cannot suppose so short a space of time only as thirty-nine or forty years to have intervened between the birth of Obed and that of his grandson David, who was the youngest of eight sons

of Jesse. Vid. 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.

<sup>m</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. v. c. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Chron. Sac. par. i. c. 12. Du Pin, Lightfoot, &c.

<sup>o</sup> Talmud, Schalsch. Abarb. Brentius, Huet. Drusius, Patrick, &c.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. i. 1; iv. 22. It is probable, that David was not pointed out as an object of attention to the sacred historians till he was selected for the throne.

<sup>q</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. xxxviii. 29.

<sup>s</sup> Gen. xxix. 35.

<sup>t</sup> Gen. xix. 37.

law in the return to her country. As Mahlon was of the house of Judah, Ruth relied probably on the promises made to that tribe, and had certainly become a proselyte to the Hebrew religion.<sup>u</sup> After their arrival at Bethlehem, the former residence of Naomi, Ruth was compelled, by her distress, to claim kindred with Boaz, who, as the law of Moses directed,<sup>v</sup> took her to wife and begat a son, from whom David descended.

It may be here observed, that the Holy Spirit, by recording the adoption of a Gentile woman into that family from which Christ was to derive his origin, might intend to intimate the comprehensive design of the Christian dispensation.<sup>w</sup>

It must be remarked, also, that in the estimation of the Jews it was disgraceful to David to have derived his birth from a Moabitess; and Shimei, in his revilings against him, is supposed by the Jews to have tauntingly reflected on his descent from Ruth. This book, therefore, contains an intrinsic proof of its own verity, inasmuch as it records a circumstance so little flattering to the sovereign of Israel;<sup>x</sup> and it is scarce necessary to appeal to its admission into the canon of scripture for a testimony of its authentic character; or to mention that the evangelists, in describing our Saviour's descent, follow its genealogical accounts.<sup>y</sup>

The story related in this book is extremely interesting: the widowed distress of Naomi, her affectionate concern for her daughters, the reluctant departure of Orpah, the dutiful attachment of Ruth, and the sorrowful return to Bethlehem, are very beautifully told. The simplicity of manners, likewise, which is shewn in the account of Ruth's industry and attention to Naomi, of the elegant charity of Boaz,<sup>b</sup> and of his acknowledgment of his kindred with Ruth, affords us a very pleasing contrast to the turbulent scenes which had been described in the precedent book. The respect, likewise, which the Israelites paid to the

<sup>u</sup> Cap. i. 16.

<sup>v</sup> The ancient law ratified by Moses in Deut. xxv. 5, is supposed to have applied only to the brother, or, according to the rabbins, only to the elder brother by the same father. Custom, however, seems to have extended the obligation of marrying the widow of the deceased to the next of kin. Vid. Ruth i. 13. Boaz was only a kinsman of Elimelech, and by his marriage with Ruth he fulfilled the law in its extended interpretation, as well as that in

Levit. xxv. 24, 25. Vid. Selden. de Success. in bona, c. 15. Uxor. Hebr. c. 12.

<sup>w</sup> Gen. xlix. 10.

<sup>x</sup> Hieron. in Tradit. Heb. ad 1 Kings iii. Calmet's Preface to Ruth; and Ruth iv. 22.

<sup>y</sup> Matt. i. 3—6; Luke iii. 32, 33.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. ii. 16. Howel's Hist. of Bible, vol. i. book 4; and Thomson's Palemon and Lavinia. Strangers were allowed to glean by the charitable precepts of the Mosaic law. Vid. Levit. xix. 9, 10.

Mosaic law,<sup>c</sup> and their observance of ancient customs,<sup>d</sup> are represented in a very lively and animated manner. St. Jerom has remarked, that Ruth, in her wandering condition, verified the prophecy of Isaiah, who predicted that the "daughters of Moab should be as a wandering bird cast out of the nest."<sup>e</sup>

## OF THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

THE relations contained in the book of Ruth were a kind of digression in the sacred history, with a particular view; but the general thread is now resumed respecting the judges of Israel; and we are furnished in this, and in the following book, with an account of the events and occurrences which happened in the time of the two last judges, Eli and Samuel; and of the two first kings, Saul and David. It is uncertain whether these books are called the books of Samuel, because he was the author of them, or only because his history constitutes a principal part of the sacred account. They are in the Vulgate<sup>a</sup> styled the First and Second Book of Kings,<sup>b</sup> as two of those four books which contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. iv. 5, 10. Buxtorf. de Sponsal. et Divort. sect. 27.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. iv. 7. The form of redemption here referred to was apparently different from the degrading ceremony observed towards him who rejected his brother's wife, as enjoined in Deut. xxv. 9; though Josephus conceives that it was the same concisely described, Antiq. lib. v. c. 11. The Chaldee paraphrase represents the kinsman to have drawn off his right-hand glove, instead of his shoe. The mark of transfer among the more modern Jews was an handkerchief, as R. Solomon Jarchi informs us. Vid. Selden de Jure, Nat. et Gent. Juxt. Disc. Heb. c. 5. Vid. also, Ruth. iv. 11; et Seld. Uxor. Heb. lib. ii. c. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Isa. xvi. 2. Hieron. Epist. ad Paulin.

<sup>a</sup> The Vulgate was a very ancient version of the Bible into Latin, but by whom, or at what period it was made, is not known. The Old Testament of this version was translated from the Septuagint. It was in general use till the time of St. Jerom, and called also the Italic version. St. Jerom's translation was made immediately from the Hebrew into Latin, and

it was gradually received in the Western church, in preference to the Vulgate or Italic. The present Vulgate, which is declared authentic by the council of Trent, is the ancient Italic version revised and improved by the corrections of St. Jerom and others. This is the only translation allowed by the church of Rome; and it is used by that church upon all occasions; except that, in the Missal and Psalms, a few passages of the ancient Vulgate are retained, as are the apocryphal books, many of which St. Jerom did not translate. There are two principal editions of the present Vulgate: one published by pope Sixtus the Fifth, the other by Clement the Eighth; which differ much from each other, though both are declared authentic from the papal chair. Vid. Kennicot's State of the printed Hebrew Text, vol. ii. p. 198. Some of the ancient Italic version (of which the copies are now lost) has been recovered from citations in the writings of the fathers, and is published, with supplementary additions, in Walton's Polyglot.

<sup>b</sup> These and the two succeeding books are called in the Greek βασιλειων, the books of "kingdoms."

The two books of Samuel were in the Hebrew Canon considered but as one. The Talmudists<sup>c</sup> suppose that Samuel wrote the twenty-four first chapters of the first book, and that the rest was furnished by the prophets Gad and Nathan. This opinion is founded upon these words, in the first book of Chronicles,<sup>d</sup> "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer;" and it is approved by many writers of considerable authority,<sup>e</sup> who maintain that the prophets were the historians of contemporary events. It will appear evident, at least, that the books of Samuel were written before either the books of Kings or of Chronicles, if we compare them together; for in each of these last-mentioned books, many circumstances are manifestly taken and repeated from the books of Samuel. We may therefore assent to the general opinion, that Samuel was the author of at least the greater part of the first book;<sup>f</sup> and probably he composed it towards the latter end of his life.<sup>g</sup> Certain, however, it is, from its admission to the Canon, as well as from the predictions which it contains, that the book was the production of a prophet; not to mention that it is referred to by our Saviour, in vindication of his disciples.<sup>h</sup> The first book of Samuel contains a space of near eighty years, if we reckon from the birth of Samuel, about or soon after A. M. 2868, to the death of Saul, which happened A. M. 2948.

The history opens with an account of the birth of Samuel. It describes his consecration to the ministry, and his appointment to the prophetic office; the capture of the ark; and the completion of God's judgments on the house of Eli; the curse on those who possessed the ark; its return, and the signal punishment of

<sup>c</sup> Beva Bathra, cap. 1. Kimchi.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

<sup>e</sup> Huët. Demonst. Evang. prop. iv. Isid. Orat. lib. vi. cap. 2. R. Kimchi, &c.

<sup>f</sup> Procopius Gazæus informs us, that the Syrians call the book, the Prophecy of Samuel.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. v. 5; vi. 18; xxx. 25; ix. 9. In this last passage, Samuel incidentally observes, that they who in his time and in that of Saul were called prophets, were anciently denominated seers. The word prophet, (nabi,) was in use, indeed, in the time of Moses or Abraham. Vid. Gen. xx.

7. But it then only implied a man favoured of God; whereas in the time of Samuel, it was appropriated to one who foresaw future events. Vid. 1 Sam. iii. 20; x. 5; xix. 24. In the latter part of Samuel's life, the word seer might have become nearly obsolete, though occasionally used in and after his time. But perhaps this remark might have been afterwards inserted for the instruction of later times, as possibly were some few other particulars. Vid. vii. 15; xiii. 5; xxvii. 8.

<sup>h</sup> Comp. 1 Sam. xx. 16, with Matt. xii. 3, 4.



such as daringly profaned its sanctity;<sup>1</sup> the election of Saul in conformity to the unadvised desire of the Israelites for a king;<sup>k</sup> the wars and evils which arose, as had been foretold,<sup>1</sup> in consequence of this change of government; the sins and rejection of Saul; the anointing David, and the first display of his piety and heroism;<sup>m</sup> the disinterested friendship of Jonathan and David; the envious and ungenerous suspicions of Saul; the death of Samuel; the appearance of his spirit,<sup>n</sup> denouncing God's judgments against the impiety of Saul; in the accomplishment of which the book terminates, with the account of the miserable fate of Saul, and of his sons. The sacred writer illustrates the characters, and describes the events of his history, in the most engaging manner. The weak indulgence of Eli is well contrasted with the firm piety of Samuel. The rising virtues of David, and the sad depravity of Saul, are strikingly opposed. The sentiments and instructions scattered through the work are excellent; and the inspired hymn of Hannah, which much resembles that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vi. 19. The text, as it now stands, represents fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh to have been smitten upon this occasion, for the presumptuous violation of God's express command. Vid. Numb. iv. 20. But the original words are more properly translated by Bochart: "He smote threescore and ten men, fifty out of a thousand men;" that is, the number being one thousand four hundred, God smote seventy, a twentieth part. Josephus understood the passage thus; and it must be observed, in support of this interpretation, that Bethshemesh was but a village. Vid. Patrick on 1 Sam. vi. 19.

<sup>k</sup> The impropriety of this request will be more obvious, if we recollect that God had condescended to be held in the character of a temporal king to the Israelites, residing, as it were, among them, and issuing his decrees from the tabernacle; to require a king was therefore to reject his theocracy. Vid. chap. viii. 7; xii. 12. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. ii.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. viii. 11—18.

<sup>m</sup> The character of David is very beautifully delineated by the sacred writer, and his actions are placed before us in a manner well calculated to produce effect. He is first introduced to our notice as "a valiant and prudent man," anointed on the rejection of Saul: and the historian then goes back to relate an achievement of David's "youth;" for it appears that the combat with Goliath was previous in point of time to the driving away of the evil spirit of

Saul, otherwise Saul and Abner must have known "whose son the stripling was;" and therefore the seventeenth chapter records particulars prior in point of chronology to those related in the sixteenth. Vid. Warburt. Div. Legat. b. iv. sect. 6. note e. Such anticipations are not uncustomary in the sacred writings, and they give much animation to the history; and the narration should be read in the following order: ch. xvii; xviii. 9; xvi. 14—23. Some writers, however, consider the thirty-nine verses which are omitted in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint, as an interpolation introduced into the Hebrew text, and the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xxviii. The most probable and best supported opinion concerning this relation is, that God suffered Samuel's departed spirit, or a miraculous representation of his person, to appear to Saul, and, as a punishment for his presumptuous impiety, to disclose his impending fate. The text positively calls him Samuel, ("himself," in the original,) and he prophesied truly; for "on the morrow," that is, soon after, Saul and his sons were slain, and the host of Israel defeated. The woman was herself terrified at a real appearance, when probably she designed a deception, and was preparing her incantations. Vid. Eclus. xvi. 20. Calmet. Dissert. pref. to 1 Sam. Note in Sept. l. 1 Chron. x. 13. Justin Martyr, Dial. Tryphon, and Commentators.

of the Blessed Virgin,<sup>o</sup> furnishes us with a grand prophecy of Christ; who is here, for the first time in scripture, described as the Messiah,<sup>p</sup> or the Anointed of the Lord; as the exalted Sovereign and appointed Judge of the earth.

Samuel, the reputed author of this book, was obtained by the prayers of Hannah,<sup>q</sup> and dedicated from his infancy to God. He appeared as a prophet at a time when the prophetic spirit was but rarely known; he accepted the supreme power in the government of his country without ambition,<sup>r</sup> and executed the important duties of his office with irreproachable integrity. When required by God, he resigned his power without reluctance; and in compliance with the divine commands, elected two strangers in the government, to the exclusion of his sons. He was much feared and respected by Saul, and the whole nation; and was allowed by that monarch to judge Israel "all the days of his life."<sup>s</sup> The author of Ecclesiasticus justly celebrates him as a favourite servant of God, a righteous judge, and a faithful prophet.<sup>t</sup> He was addressed by many revelations from God;<sup>u</sup> and the miraculous circumstances that demonstrated his appointment, as well as the prophetic spirit which inspired him, were so conspicuous, "that all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord, who let none of his words fall to the ground." His first predictions concerning the destruction which impended over the house of Eli were literally completed,<sup>v</sup> and these were followed by others which came to pass with striking exactness.<sup>w</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Com. 1 Sam. ii. 1—10, with Luke i. 46—55.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 10. The Messiah and the Anointed are synonymous: מָשִׁיחַ, Maschuah, is derived from מָשַׁח, Maschach, to anoint.

<sup>q</sup> The word Samuel, according to the Hebrew derivation, implies one desired of God.

<sup>r</sup> Some deny that Samuel succeeded to the priesthood, as he was not of the posterity of Aaron, and assert that he only succeeded to the judicature. Vid. Hieron. cont. Jovin. lib. i. and in Psal. xcvi; others maintain that he was dignified with both characters. Vid. August. in Psal. xcvi. He is not reckoned in the catalogue of priests given by Josephus. Vid. Selden de Success. ad Pontiff. lib. i. c. 14.

<sup>s</sup> 1 Sam. vii. 15. Patrick observes, that

this verse may mean, that Samuel was so diligent in the discharge of his office, that he gave himself no rest, but sat to judge causes every day. Some consider it as a subsequent interpolation. Samuel may be supposed to have died about two years before Saul, in the ninety-eighth year of his age.

<sup>t</sup> Ecclus. xvi. 13—20.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iii; Psal. xcix. 6, 7; Acts iii. 24.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. iii. 11—18. Vid. also chap. ii. 34, 35; which contain prophecies that were verified in Zadoc and his predecessor Abiathar, but which were more fully accomplished in Christ, the great high-priest "for ever." Vid. 1 Kings i. 39; ii. 26, 27; 1 Chron. xxix. 22; Heb. v. 10.

<sup>w</sup> Chap. viii. 15—18; x. 2—9; xii. 25; xxviii. 19.

## OF THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL.

IF we assent to the opinion of the Talmudists, that Samuel did not continue the history beyond the twenty-fourth chapter of the first book of Samuel, we may assign this second book, as well as the latter part of the former, to the prophets Gad and Nathan. Many learned Jews have contended, from a fanciful resemblance of style between these and the works of Jeremiah, that this prophet compiled them from the memoirs of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan.<sup>a</sup> We may conclude, then, either that they were written entirely by Samuel; or partly by him, and finished by some of those inspired persons that issued from the schools of the prophets, which he is supposed to have established. These were colleges for the instruction of select youths in the knowledge of the law, and the exercise of devotions.<sup>b</sup> Upon many of these disciples God conferred the spirit of prophecy; and probably most of the subsequent prophets were elected from these schools;<sup>c</sup> not, indeed, necessarily, but because therein fitted and prepared for the sacred influence. They were under the direction of a prophet really inspired, who was considered as a father to the society; and Samuel was probably the first who possessed that dignified character.<sup>d</sup>

This second book of Samuel bears an exact relation to the preceding history, and is likewise connected with that which succeeds. We see throughout the effects of that enmity against other nations which had been implanted into the minds of the Israelites by the Mosaic law, and which gradually tended to the extirpation of idolatry.

The history contains a period of near forty years, from about A. M. 2948 to 2988. It describes the establishment and prosperity of David's reign; which he deserved, as well by his generous respect for the memory of Saul, as by the excellency

<sup>a</sup> Bava Bathra, Abarbinel, Grotius, and Locke. In 2 Macc. ii. 13. it is said, that Nehemiah gathered together the Acts of David, with other writings; which perhaps means only that he collected them for the library which he is there said to have founded.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5.

<sup>c</sup> For Amos informs us that he was not, chap. vii. 14. It was likewise proverbially said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Is he raised to a dignity to which he was not disciplined by his education?

<sup>d</sup> Whitby's School of the Prophets; Smith's Discourse on Prophecy.

of those many other qualities which his maturer piety displayed. It relates the extinction of Saul's family, and David's grateful and unsuspecting kindness to the surviving son of Jonathan. The inspired author then records the fall of David; and exhibits a sad proof of the unconscious depravity to which the noblest minds may be seduced by passion. He represents to us God's anger softened, but not appeased, by David's repentance; who was soon after punished by the death of the child, and by many domestic calamities. The transgression of Ammon was the first consequence of his bad example; and "evil rose up against him out of his own house,"<sup>e</sup> in the ambitious intrigues and rebellion of Absalom. We soon behold him a degraded and fugitive sovereign, reviled by his meanest subjects; and severely punished for his conduct towards Uriah, by the incestuous outrage of his son.<sup>f</sup> The submissive repentance, however, and restored virtues of David, procured his pardon and re-establishment on his throne; which he dignified by the display of the greatest moderation, justice, and piety. If in the exultation of his recovered prosperity, God suffered him<sup>g</sup> to be betrayed into an ostentatious numbering of the people, "his heart smote him" to immediate repentance; and he piously threw himself on God's mercy, and entreated that he only might suffer from the indignation which he had provoked. The vicissitude of events which the book describes, the fall and restoration of David, the effects of his errors, and his return to righteousness, are represented in the most interesting manner, and furnish valuable lessons to mankind. The author, in the concise style of sacred history, selects only the most striking features of character, and the most important incidents of those revolutions of which he treats; and among the conspicuous beauties of the book, we can never sufficiently admire the feeling lamentation over Saul and Jonathan,<sup>h</sup> the expressive parable of Nathan, and the triumphant hymn of David.

The prophecies contained in the book are, first, that which blended temporal and spiritual blessings in the promises relative to Solomon and the Messiah, the permanency of David's throne,

<sup>e</sup> Nathan's prophetic threat, ch. xii. 11.  
<sup>f</sup> Chap. xvi. 21, 22.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xxiv. 1; and 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

<sup>h</sup> This song is supposed to have been sung at the funeral of Saul and Jonathan; it being customary among the Jews to

solemnize the obsequies of their friends with dirges accompanied by music. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24; Matt. ix. 23. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. 9. Maimon. c. 14. sect. 23.

and the perpetuity of that kingdom which is prefigured;<sup>i</sup> secondly, the predictive denunciations of Nathan;<sup>k</sup> and, lastly, the figurative descriptions of David's psalm,<sup>l</sup> by whom the "spirit of the Lord spake," assuring him of an everlasting covenant."<sup>m</sup>

This book, likewise, as well as the former, contains other intrinsic proofs of its verity. By describing without disguise the misconduct of those characters that were highly revered among the people, the sacred writer demonstrates his impartial sincerity; and by appealing to monuments that attested the truth of his relations when he wrote, he furnished every possible evidence of his faithful adherence to truth. The books of Samuel connect the chain of sacred history by detailing the circumstances of an interesting period. They describe the reformation and improvements of the Hebrew church established by David: and as they delineate minutely the life of that monarch, they point out his typical relation to Christ; and likewise illustrate remarkably his inspired productions, which are contained in the book of Psalms. Many heathen authors have borrowed from the books of Samuel, or have collected from other sources, many particulars of those accounts which he gives.<sup>n</sup> This remark will equally apply to the books of Kings; and, indeed, to all the books of sacred history.<sup>o</sup>

## OF THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

THIS and the following book<sup>a</sup> were in the Hebrew Canon reckoned but as one. They cannot be positively assigned to any particular author, though some have ascribed them to Jeremiah,<sup>b</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Chap. vii. 12, 16; Heb. i. 5. David seems to have apprehended the great extent of God's promises; and, in consequence, to have burst out in rapturous acknowledgment of his goodness. 2 Sam. vii. 19—21; 1 Chron. xvii. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xii. 11—14.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xxii.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. xxiii. 2, 5.

<sup>n</sup> Eupol. ap. Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. Nic. Damasc. lib. iv. Hist. ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib. vii. c. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. cap. 2. Menand. Theophr. lib. iii. ad Autol. Euseb. Præp. lib. x. Clem. Alex. Strom. 1.

<sup>a</sup> The Jews call them the Third and Fourth Book of Kings. In the time of Origen, they denominated them from the first words, "Vammelech David," David the king. Orig. ap. Euseb. Præp. lib. vi. c. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Bava Bathra, Grotius, Isidore, Procopius, Kimchi, &c.

and some to Isaiah. There are many, likewise, who contend that they are the production of Ezra: and probably this opinion is most just, for they appear to be a collection, or historical abridgment, selected from the memoirs and books of the prophets; which are herein frequently referred to,<sup>c</sup> as records, doubtless, of contemporary prophets. Thus "the Book of the Acts of Solomon," is mentioned in this very book,<sup>d</sup> and was probably written by Nathan, Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer.<sup>e</sup> And hence those who by the Book of the Acts of Solomon have understood the books of Kings, have supposed that they were composed by these prophets;<sup>f</sup> but we elsewhere read that Shemaiah the prophet was employed with Iddo the seer in writing the acts of Rehoboam;<sup>g</sup> that the acts of Abijah were written in the story of Iddo;<sup>h</sup> the book of Jehu the prophet likewise related the acts of king Jehoshaphat;<sup>i</sup> and Isaiah wrote the acts of Uzziah,<sup>k</sup> of Hezekiah,<sup>l</sup> and probably of the two intermediate kings, Jotham and Ahaz, in whose reigns he flourished; so that we may conclude, that from these several records, as well as from other authentic documents, were compiled the books of Kings. They appear to have been arranged by one person, as the style and manner are uniform; and therefore they may with much probability be assigned to Ezra, who possibly compiled them during the captivity.<sup>m</sup>

The first book comprises a period of one hundred and twenty-six years, from the death of David, A. M. 2989, to that of Jehoshaphat. After the description of the decay and death of David, we are presented with a most striking history of the reign of Solomon, of his wisdom and magnificence, of the building of the temple, of his extended commerce to Ophir,<sup>n</sup> and of the

<sup>c</sup> Diodor. in 1 Sam. ix. 9. Theodor. Præf. in Lib. Reg. Huet. Propos. iv.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xi. 41.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. ix. 29.

<sup>f</sup> Caijetan, Serrarius, &c.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. xii. 15.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Chron. xiii. 22.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. xx. 34; and 1 Kings xvi. 1.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. xxxii. 32; and Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, and xxxix; where much of Hezekiah's history is incorporated with Isaiah's prophecies. Theodor. Præf. in Lib. Reg.

<sup>m</sup> The Chaldaic names by which the months in these books are denominated,

were not used by the Jews till in or after the captivity.

<sup>n</sup> Various have been the conjectures concerning the situation of Ophir. Josephus places it in the East-Indies, in a country which, by his description, should appear to be Malacca. Bochart contends that it was Taphrobana, or Ceylon. Calmet places it in Armenia, Montanus in America, and Huetius in the eastern coast of Africa. As various have been the sentiments with respect to Tharshish, some considering it as having been near, and others as distant from Ophir: all that the scriptures tell us is, that the navy of Tharshish came in once in three years, and furnished Solomon

visit of the queen of Sheba.<sup>o</sup> To this succeeds an account of the miserable dotage and apostasy of Solomon, and of his death, preceded by a prospect of that threatened rending of the kingdom which should take place under his son.<sup>p</sup> Afterwards are related the accession of Rehoboam; his rash and impolitic conduct, and the consequent separation of the ten tribes, which happened about A. M. 3029. This is followed by a concise sketch of the history of the two kingdoms, in which particular periods are characterized by very animated relations; as that of the disobedient prophet, of the widow of Zarephath, of Elijah and the prophets of Baal, of Benhadad's pride and defeat, of Ahab's injustice and punishment. In the course of these events, we contemplate the exact accomplishment of God's promises and threats, the wisdom of his dispensations,<sup>q</sup> and the mingled justice and mercies of his government.

The book is stamped with the intrinsic marks of inspiration: of the prophecies which it contains, some were speedily completed,<sup>q</sup> but that which foretold that "Josiah should be born unto the house of David, and slay the high priests," was not fulfilled till above three hundred and fifty years<sup>r</sup> after it was

immense wealth, of which we know not the amount, since we can make no exact estimate of the value of the talents specified; they were, however, certainly of less value than the Mosaic talents. Vid. Prid. Pref. to Con. Bochart. Phaleg. l. ii. c. 27. Bruce's Travels.

<sup>o</sup> The most learned writers maintain, that the queen of Sheba came from Yemen, in Arabia Felix. She is called by Christ, "the queen of the South," and is said by him to "have come from the utmost parts of the earth," as the southern part of Arabia was considered by the ancients. She is supposed to have been a descendant of Abraham by Keturah, whose grandson Sheba peopled that country: she therefore probably resorted to Solomon for religious instruction. Vid. 1 Kings x. 1; and hence our Saviour's encomium, Matt. xii. 42. She is called Balkis by the Arabians. The Ethiopians pretend that she was of their country; and many fabulous stories are told of her by different writers, under the names Nicaule, Candace, Marqueda, &c. Vid. Ludolph's Hist. of Ethiopia. Dr. Johnson's Disc. on Queen of Sheba, vol. xv. Calmet. Dict. under the word Nicaule.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. xi. 11, 12. God is represented in scripture as sometimes (especially in

cases of idolatry) "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," when the measure of guilt was completed; and in the foreknowledge that their descendants should persist in evil, God revealed, as a punishment to the disobedient, those calamities which awaited their families. It was in the power, however, of those who repented, to avert the divine vengeance. Vid. Levit. xxvi. 40—42; 1 Kings xxi. 29.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. vi. 12; xi. 11—13, 30—39; xiv. 10, 11, 14; xvi. 1—4. Jehu, in this last prophecy, foretold that God would make the house of Baasha like that of Jeroboam; and it deserves to be remarked, how exactly the threat was fulfilled; for as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned two years, so did Elah the son of Baasha; and both were slain by the sword. Vid. ch. xv. 25—28; xvi. 8—10. Vid. also, for other predictions, chap. xvii. 1; (compared with James v. 17.) xx. 13; xxi. 19—24. Observe, that in the nineteenth verse of the twenty-first chapter, instead of *in the place where*, we should read, *in like manner*, as the dogs licked Ahab's blood in Samaria. The prophet points only to the cause of Ahab's punishment. Vid. Patrick, &c.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xiii. 1—3, compared with 2 Kings xxiii. 15.—20. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 5.

delivered. Some of its prophetic denunciations were uttered under figurative description :<sup>3</sup> and Micaiah, to illustrate the infatuation which God had suffered to prevail in the counsels of Ahaz, that it might mislead him to destruction, unfolds to the misguided monarch the danger of his projected enterprise, under a representation received in vision; in which an imaginary council and the supposed agency of a lying spirit are introduced, in order to explain the divine conduct in some analogous proceedings.<sup>4</sup> Both the books of Kings are cited as authentic and canonical by our Saviour and his apostles.<sup>5</sup>

## OF THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS.

CONCERNING the author of the second book of Kings, it has been treated in the preceding preface; and it is here only necessary to repeat, that the second was united with the first book of Kings in the Hebrew Canon, and considered but as one with it; and that it was compiled by Ezra, or some other inspired person, from the records of former prophets.

The history contained in this book records the government and actions of many successive kings of Judah and Israel, for the space of about three hundred years: from the death of Jehoshaphat, A. M. 3115, to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, A. M. 3416. The connection and occasional quarrels which subsisted between the two nations during part of this time, till the conquest of Samaria by Shalmanezar, seem to have induced the sacred writer to blend the two histories, as in some measure treating of the same people. Both nations appear to have departed, with almost equal steps, from the service of the true God; and in the history of each we are presented with a succession of wicked and idolatrous kings, till each had completed the measure of its iniquity. Both Israel and Judah, though they invariably experienced prosperity and affliction in proportion to their obedience or disobedience, were infatuated by their perverse inclinations; and in a long series of their re-

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xxii. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xxii. 19—28. Vid. also 2 Kings

<sup>5</sup> Matth. xii. 42; Luke iv. 25—27; Acts vii. 47; Rom. xi. 2—4; James v. 17, 18.



spective sovereigns, we find a few only who were awakened by God's judgments to a sense of their true interest and duty. The whole period seems to have been dark and guilty, the glory of the kingdom being eclipsed by the calamities of the division, and by the increasing miseries of idolatry and ambition. Successive tyrannies, treasons, seditions, and usurpations, and the instant punishment which they produced, serve at once to illustrate the evil character of the times, and the vigilant equity of the divine government. The events are described with great simplicity, though in themselves highly interesting and important. The account of Elijah's assumption into heaven, of Elisha's succession to his ministry and of the series of illustrious miracles performed by Elisha, the story of Naaman and of the panic flight of the Syrians, the history of Benhadad and Hazael, of the predicted death of Ahab and Jezebel and their children, and of the destruction of Baal's prophets, are all pregnant with instruction, and have furnished a theme for frequent dissertation. We perceive in these impressive histories the characters and qualities of men painted with great fidelity, and the attributes of God displayed with great effect. The particulars and circumstances are sketched out with a brief and lively description, and the imagination lingers with pleasure in filling up those striking outlines that are presented to our view. The sacred author, regardless of minute order, and of the succession of events, seems sometimes desirous only of furnishing us with a view of the state of religion among the people, and of illustrating the genealogy of Christ. In particular we observe, how the revolt of the ten tribes and their subsequent captivity contributed to keep up the distinction of the tribe of Judah, and to make the prophecies which foretold that the Messiah should descend from this branch more conspicuously accomplished.

The predictions described as delivered and fulfilled in this book are those which foretold the death of Ahaziah,<sup>a</sup> the birth of a son to the Shunammite,<sup>b</sup> the recovery of Naaman,<sup>c</sup> plenty in Samaria,<sup>d</sup> the crimes and cruelty of Hazael,<sup>e</sup> the success of Joash,<sup>f</sup> the defeat of Sennacherib,<sup>g</sup> the prolongation of Heze-

<sup>a</sup> Chap. i. 16.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. iv. 16.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. v. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. vii. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. viii. 10, 12.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. xiii. 19.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xix. 6, 7, 28, 29, 33; and Herod. lib. i. This destruction is said, in the Babylonish Talmud, and in some Targums, to have been occasioned by lightning. It

kiah's life,<sup>b</sup> the Babylonish captivity,<sup>i</sup> and the peaceful reign of Josiah.<sup>k</sup>

After the captivity of the ten tribes, the colony brought up from Babylon and other places adopted the Hebrew religion, and blended it with their own idolatries; and henceforward, in point of time, we hear little of the inhabitants of Samaria. The kingdom of Judah still continued for above a century to provoke God's anger by its disobedience and idolatry, notwithstanding Isaiah and many other prophets conspired during all this period to exhort the people to repentance, by every motive of interest and fear. The good reign of Hezekiah, though lengthened by divine providence, was too soon succeeded by the "evil days of Manasseh," in whose time the temple, and even the volume of the Law, seem to have been almost entirely neglected. In the reign of Josiah, religion for a short time revived; the public copy of the Law was discovered and read,<sup>l</sup> and idolatry for a few months suppressed; but the tide of iniquity having rolled back with accumulated force, Jerusalem is besieged and taken, the city and temple spoiled, and the noblest of the nation led captive to Babylon. The book concludes with the account of the second siege by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about eighteen years after the first; then the city and temple were burnt,<sup>m</sup> and soon after the whole destruction completed by the massacre or flight of the remnant which had been left amidst the ruined cities of Judæa.

might, perhaps, have been effected by the destructive hot winds so frequent in those parts. Vid. Thevenot's Travels, part ii. book i. ch. 20; book ii. ch. 16; part i. book ii. ch. 20. Jeremiah calls this a destroying wind, where the Arabic renders it a hot pestilential wind, chap. iv. 11; li. 1. Isaiah threatens Sennacherib with "a blast," which might be called the angel of the Lord. Isaiah xxxvii. 7; 2 Kings xix. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xx. 6.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. xx. 17, 18. God appears to have revealed to Hezekiah the calamities which awaited his descendants in the Babylonish captivity, as a punishment for his ostentatious display of his treasures, in which he seemed to confide; and for not having rather professed his confidence in God, whose mercies he had so recently experienced. These prophecies, however, and those in the ensuing chapters relative to the same captivity, were literally fulfilled above one hundred years after. Vid. chap. xxi.

12—14, xxiii. 27, compared with ch. xxiv. 13, and Dan. i. 1—6.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xxii. 20.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xxii. 8; xxiii. 2.

<sup>m</sup> According to Usher's computation, the temple was burnt about four hundred and twenty-four years after it was built. Josephus, who conceives it to have been burnt four hundred and seventy years, six months, and ten days, from the time of its building, observes with astonishment, that the second temple was burnt by the Romans in the same month, and on the same day of the month, that the first temple was set on fire by the Chaldeans; and the Jewish doctors add, with as little truth, that the Levites were singing the same hymn in both destructions, repeating, from Psal. xciv. 23, these words: "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and he shall cut them off in their own wickedness, yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." Vid. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11.

## OF THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

THE JEWS formerly reckoned the two books of Chronicles but as one,<sup>a</sup> which was entitled the Book of Diaries,<sup>b</sup> or Journals, in allusion to those ancient journals which appear to have been kept among the Jews. The books of Chronicles, indeed, as well as those of Kings, were in all probability copied, as to many of their historical relations, from these ancient chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah. Such chronicles must unquestionably have existed, since in the books of Kings there are frequent references to books of Chronicles, as containing circumstances which are not found in those so entitled in our Canon, not to mention that these were written after the books of Kings. The books of Chronicles which we now possess, were so named by St. Jerom: they are distinguished in the Septuagint as the books of "things omitted;"<sup>c</sup> and they are supposed to have been designed as a kind of supplement to the preceding books of scripture, to supply such important particulars as had been omitted, because inconsistent with the plan of former books. They are generally, and with much probability, attributed to Ezra;<sup>d</sup> who has used a similar style of expression, and whose book appears to be a continuation of them.<sup>e</sup> Ezra, if he were the author, might have digested them by the assistance of Haggai and Nehemiah; as well from historical records, as from the accounts of contemporary prophets.

These books were certainly compiled after the captivity, as they mention the restoration by Cyrus, and some circumstances

<sup>a</sup> They now adopt our division, as well as in the preceding books, in conformity to our mode of citation in concordances, of which they borrowed the use from the Latin church.

<sup>b</sup> דברי הימים, *dibré hajjamim*. Verba Dierum; that is, The Words of Days; Extracts from Diaries. They are called Chronicles, from the Greek word *χρονικα*.

<sup>c</sup> Παραλειπομενων. Thus Xenophon wrote the *paralipomena* of the Peloponnesian war, as a supplement to the history of Thucydides.

<sup>d</sup> This book appears to have been compiled before that of Nehemiah, by whom it is cited, (Neh. xii. 23.) though the genea-

logy of the descendants of Zerubbabel is said to be brought down much below the time of Ezra; for if the Zerubbabel here mentioned were the same who conducted the people back from the captivity, the account may have been swelled by collateral kindred, or possibly increased by a subsequent addition. St. Matthew, however, gives, in his first chapter, a genealogy so different, that it appears to be that of a different branch, if not of a different family. Comp. 1 Chron. iii. 19, et seq. with Matth. i. 13, et seq. and Grot. in Matt. i. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Comp. the last verses of 2 Chron. with beginning of Ezra. Patrick's Comm. in 2 Chron. xxix. 21.

that occurred after the return.<sup>f</sup> The author, however, appears sometimes to speak as one who lived previous to the captivity ;<sup>g</sup> but this must have been in consequence of his transcribing, without alteration, the accounts of earlier writers.

The books of Chronicles, though they contain many particulars related in preceding books, and supply several circumstances omitted in preceding accounts, are not to be considered merely as an abridgment of former histories, with some supplementary additions, but as books written with a particular view ; in consistency with which, the author sometimes disregards important particulars in those accounts from which he might have compiled his work, and adheres to the design proposed, which seems to have been to furnish a genealogical sketch of the twelve tribes, deduced from the earliest times ; in order to point out those distinctions which were necessary to discriminate the mixed multitude that returned from Babylon, to ascertain the lineage of Judah, and to re-establish, on their ancient footing, the pretensions and functions of each individual tribe. The author appears to have intended to furnish, at the same time, an epitome of some parts of the Jewish history ; and in this first book, taking up the account at the death of Saul, he presents his countrymen with the picture of David's reign, especially dilates on his zeal for religion, and on the preparations which he made for the building of the temple, probably with design to excite the reverence and emulation of those who were about to rebuild it. He describes particularly the regulations and arrangements adopted by David with relation to the priests and Levites, as well as to the appointment of the musicians and other persons employed in the service of the temple, which David established on a great and magnificent scale ; improving it with the introduction of hymns, of which there is a fine specimen in the sixteenth chapter of this book.

The author, in repeating some particulars related in the preceding books, specified the names of the persons employed, and active on great occasions ; and by this means furnished each individual tribe with an account of the actions of its respective ancestors.

The genealogical tables of this book must have been highly

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21—23 ; xxxv. 25.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. iii. 19 ; iv. 41—43 ; 2 Chron. v. 9 ; xxi. 20 ; xxii. 26 ; xxv. 25.

important among the Jews, who were led by the prophetic promises to be extremely observant of these particulars. They exhibit the detail of the sacred line through which the promise of the Messiah was transmitted.<sup>h</sup> The precedency of the several families, likewise, their marriages, and many advantages, were often dependent on the accuracy of these accounts; and those who could not prove their descent, were deprived of many privileges. A regular and unpolluted lineage was especially necessary to those who aspired to the priesthood; and such as could not produce it were deemed incapable of admission to that high office.<sup>l</sup> Ezra, likewise, by pointing out the division of families, as recognised before the destruction of Jerusalem, enabled each tribe, at the return from the captivity, to be restored to its appropriate inheritance. The genealogical accounts are likewise still useful in many respects;<sup>k</sup> and, however they may appear sometimes irreconcilable with modern systems of chronology, they were certainly considered as accurate by the evangelical writers, as they are cited in the New Testament.<sup>l</sup>

The authority of the book is likewise established by the accommodation of a prophetic passage selected from it to the character of our Saviour by St. Paul,<sup>m</sup> and by a positive prophecy of the eternity of Christ's kingdom,<sup>n</sup> as well as by other occasional predictions.<sup>o</sup> It may be added, also, as remarkable, that an inspired acclamation of David to the praise of God in this book, breathes the same sentiments of piety which were afterwards uttered in similar expressions by our Saviour, and which by St. John, in his enraptured visions, are ascribed to the blessed spirits who celebrate the praises of God in heaven.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>h</sup> The genealogies contained in this book are carried back without interruption to Adam, through a period of near three thousand five hundred years. They furnish a striking proof of the solicitude which prevailed among the Jews to ascertain the completion of the promises, as also of the vigilant care with which the sacred accounts were preserved. They could not be corrupted formerly, for most of the people could repeat them *memoriter*. The veneration for them was condemned by St. Paul, as excessive and useless, after the appearance of the Messiah. 1 Tim. i. 4; Tit. iii. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Ezra ii. 61, 62. Selden de Success. ad Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 2. p. 213; and cap. 3. p. 215. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Maimon.

in Mishnah Biath. c. 6. sect. 11.

<sup>k</sup> We collect from them, among other things, that Nathan, from whom, according to St. Luke, our Saviour was descended, was the son of David by Bathshua, or Bathsheba, 1 Chron. iii. 5.

<sup>l</sup> Matth. i; Luke iii. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Grotius Annot. in Lib. Carpzov. p. 292. Huet. Demonstrat. Evang. Prop. iv. Walton Officin. Bib. p. 555. Lightfoot Chron. Vet. Test. p. 142.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Chron. xvii. 13; xxii. 10; Heb. i. 5.

<sup>n</sup> 1 Chron. xvii. 14.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xxii. 9, 10.

<sup>p</sup> Compare 1 Chron. xxix. 10, 11, with Matth. vi. 13, and with Rev. v. 12, 13.

## OF THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

THIS book, as well as the former, with which it was originally united, was probably collected by Ezra, from the writings of the different prophets who are severally mentioned in scripture as the historians of their respective periods;<sup>a</sup> as well as possibly from ancient chronicles which are supposed to have existed, and which may be conceived to have been composed by the priests, some of whom are called memorialists, or recorders, as Jehoshaphat,<sup>b</sup> and Joah the son of Asaph.<sup>c</sup> The book contains many things omitted in the historical books which precede. It begins with a description of the reign of Solomon, and dilates with particular exactness on the munificent piety of that monarch, in the construction of the temple; minutely specifying its ornaments as typical of spiritual decorations which were to embellish the Christian church: a subject highly interesting and useful to the Jews, who at the time when this book was written were preparing to rebuild the temple. Hence the account of the solemn consecration of the first building, of the noble and comprehensive prayer of Solomon, and of the covenanted promises which God graciously imparted at the dedication, must have furnished much consolation to the Jews, scarce yet reviving from the despondence of captives. Then is repeated from the book of Kings, the representation of the magnificence and prosperity which Solomon enjoyed, agreeably to God's promise.<sup>d</sup>

After this, we are furnished with a recapitulation of the history of the kings of Judah, occasionally intermixed with relations respecting Israel, when connected with Judah. Great part of this history is selected either immediately from the book of Kings, or both Kings and Chronicles were copied from some larger annals, known under the title of the Books of Kings, since frequent references are herein made to some books of Kings, and sometimes for circumstances not extant in the canonical books.<sup>e</sup> These accounts, however, in the books of Chronicles, are

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 32; xx. 34; xxvi. 22; xxxii. 32; xxxiii. 19; xxxv. 5.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 16.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Kings xviii. 18.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. i. 11, 12.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xvi. 11; xxi; xxiv. 27; xxv. 26; xxviii. 26; xxxii. 32; xxxiii. 18; xxxv. 27.

enriched with many additional particulars. They present us with a lively picture of the state of the kingdom of Judah, and of the various vicissitudes and revolutions which it sustained under different princes. They serve, as the author seems to have designed, greatly to illustrate the necessity of depending on God for defence, without whose protection kingdoms must fall. The advantage derived from obedience to God, and the miseries that resulted from wickedness and sin, are strikingly shewn. The book abounds with useful examples; and the characters are forcibly displayed by a contrasted succession of pious and depraved princes. The change and defection even of individual persons, and their decline from righteousness to evil, is shewn with much effect. The rebellion of Israel and the contest between the two kingdoms, the preservation of Joash from the destruction which overwhelmed the rest of the house of Judah, the struggles between idolatry and true religion, the opportune discovery of the copy of the Law, with many other interesting particulars, which exhibit the interposition of the Almighty, defeating evil, and effecting his concerted purposes, deserve to be considered with great attention.

Several predictions are scattered through the book; as the promises made to Solomon,<sup>f</sup> to Jehoshaphat,<sup>g</sup> and to others.<sup>h</sup> Some sentiments appear to be transcribed from it into the New Testament.<sup>i</sup>

The varieties and apparent differences which exist between these books and those of Kings, with respect to numbers, names, and dates, have deterred the Hebrew writers from commenting on them. These, however, are to be attributed to those various causes which have been before detailed,<sup>k</sup> to our ignorance of periods so long elapsed, to the different scope of the sacred writers, and to those mutilations and corruptions in minute particulars which have especially prevailed in the books of Chronicles; for these appear to have been copied with unusual carelessness, and in none is the punctuation so defective.

The second book contains a brief sketch of the sacred history, from the accession of Solomon to the throne, A. M. 2288, to the return from the captivity, A. M. 3468: a recapitulation not

<sup>f</sup> Chap. i. 12; vii. 17—22.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xix. 2; xx. 15, 17, 37.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xxxiii. 8.

<sup>i</sup> Comp. 2 Chron. ii. 5, 6, with Acts vii.

48, 49, and xvii. 24; also 2 Chron. xix. 7, with 1 Pet. i. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Introduction, and Preface to Historical Books.

only very useful to the Jews, but which reflects great light on other parts of scripture.<sup>1</sup>

The two books jointly considered, furnish, in a connected view, a compendium of the Jewish history. In almost all the Hebrew manuscripts they are placed as the conclusion of the Bible. In most of the versions, as in our translation, they immediately succeed the books of Kings, and precede the book of Ezra. This appears to be the proper and original order, and is supported by the Cambridge manuscript. Dr. Kennicott supposes, that the two last verses of the second book of Chronicles were improperly added to it by a transcriber, who carelessly wrote down the beginning of Ezra; and on discovering his mistake, broke off abruptly, and beginning Ezra again, repeated the verses with proper distinction of place.<sup>m</sup>

## OF THE BOOK OF EZRA.

THIS book was certainly written by Ezra. That he wrote the four last chapters has never been questioned, since, in several parts of these, he evidently professes himself the author, by speaking in the first person.<sup>a</sup> Some critics, indeed, have pretended that the six first chapters must have been written by a person more ancient than Ezra, because Ezra is said in the seventh chapter,<sup>b</sup> to have gone up from Babylon after the events described in the six first chapters, in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus; whereas in the fifth chapter, the author has been thought to speak of himself as present at Jerusalem, in the time of Darius Hystaspes:<sup>c</sup> if this be not a mistake, Ezra may perhaps be supposed to have accompanied Zerubbabel in the first return from the captivity;<sup>d</sup> and might have been again sent up

<sup>1</sup> Hieron. Epist. ix. ad Paulin. et Epist. ad Dominion. St. Jerom justly remarks, that it were folly to pretend to a knowledge of scripture without an acquaintance with the book of Chronicles.

<sup>m</sup> See Kennicott Dissert. on 1 Chron. xi. 1. p. 491.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. vii. 27, 28; viii. 1, 15, 24; ix. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. vii. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. v. 4. This verse is usually con-

sidered as an answer of the Jews. It may possibly, however, be considered as a question of Tatnai and his companions. See verse 10. Perhaps we should read, as in the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic versions, "then said they," and the objection is removed, and the sense amended.

<sup>d</sup> Nehem. xii. 1. If the author of this book were not the same person with the Ezra mentioned by Nehemiah, he might still have have gone up from Babylon to



to Babylon, to counteract the representations of those who opposed at the Persian court the rebuilding of the city and temple; and the account of his departure, which is given in the seventh chapter, perhaps refers only to his going up with that commission and power which he received from Artaxerxes. But whether Ezra were or were not at Jerusalem at the time when this answer is supposed to have been made to Tatnai, he may well be conceived, either as copying a public record of the transaction, or as relating a speech of the Jews, to have used the expression of "We said unto them," meaning by "we," his countrymen, which is surely no uncommon mode of speaking. Such objections are very futile: and there is no reason to question the authenticity of any part of the book, which from the highest antiquity has been attributed to Ezra; who certainly at least digested it, and probably towards the end of his days.\*

This book is written with all the spirit and fidelity that could be displayed by a writer of contemporary events. It is a continuation of the Jewish history, from the time at which the Chronicles conclude; and the connection of the two accounts is evident, since the book of Ezra begins with a repetition of the two verses which terminate the books of Chronicles. The sacred writers pass over the time of the captivity as a sad period of affliction and punishment; during which, if the people were indulged in the exercise of their religion, they had few historical events to record; and therefore we have no general history of their circumstances, and must have recourse to the books of those illustrious prophets who flourished among them in Assyria, for the only particulars that can be obtained concerning their condition.

The present book begins with an account of God's having disposed Cyrus, either by positive injunction, or by discovering to him his long-predicted designs, to promote the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem. It relates the accomplishment of some illustrious prophecies in the release of God's people,† which that monarch granted in the first year of his reign over Babylon,

Jerusalem before the seventh year of Artaxerxes.

\* Huet. *Demon. Evang. Carpvov*. *Introd. in Lib. Hist. Vet. Test. Brentii Præf. Colonii Bibl. Illust. in Lib. Esd. Walteri Officin. Biblic. p. 559.*

† *Isaiah xlv. 26—28.* A prophecy uttered concerning Cyrus, described by name near two hundred years before he appeared: justly noticed with admiration by heathen writers.

and in the return of the Jews to their own country,<sup>g</sup> after a captivity of seventy years,<sup>h</sup> A. M. 3468. We then are presented with a list of the leaders and numbers of the captives who returned under Zerubbabel, and perceive how fatally the nation had been diminished and brought low by successive defeats and dispersions.<sup>i</sup> We contemplate the picture of an harassed people restored from captivity, and returning to their country, which had long lain desolate.<sup>k</sup> We behold them erecting a temporary altar and service, and laying the foundation of their temple. Afterwards are described the lamentations of those who remembered the magnificence of Solomon's building; the opposition excited by the Samaritans and others, whose assistance had been rejected; the interruption occasioned by their intrigues; and at last, the finishing and dedication of the temple, about A. M. 3489,<sup>l</sup> and the celebration of the passover.<sup>m</sup> Ezra then relates his return with his companions to Jerusalem; confesses the disobedience of the people to God's laws, in intermarrying with the Gentile nations of the land; describes his own pious and con-

<sup>g</sup> Scaliger *Isag. lib. iii. p. 260. et de Emend. Temp. lib. vi. p. 576.*

<sup>h</sup> The name of Jews seems first to have been applied to this people after the return from captivity. *Joseph. Antiq. xi. c. 5.* The Jews returned from Babylon fifty years after the taking of Jerusalem; but the seventy years which Jeremiah predicted as the period for the duration of the captivity, are reckoned from the third or fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, A. M. 3398. *Vid. Jer. xxv. 1, 11; xxix. 10;* when Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Judea, and carried off captives. *Dan. i. 1, 3; 2 Kings xxiv. 1. Patrick in Jerem. xxv. 11; xxix. 10; Dan. i. 1; Zech. i. 12; vii. 1—5; and Prid. Ant. A. C. 518.*

<sup>i</sup> Many of the Jews remained in the countries into which they had been carried. The Jewish writers say, that only the dregs of the people returned. It should be remarked, that Ezra says, that "the whole congregation together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty;" though if we calculate the separate numbers, they amount but to twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen. Ezra, perhaps, omits the detail of some individuals, collectively reckoned; as those of the ten tribes, or those who could not find their register; or possibly the numbers are in some instances corrupted.

<sup>k</sup> As the land had lain desolate only fifty-

two years from the death of Gedaliah, Prieux supposes that the Jews had neglected the law concerning the sabbatical year, only from the beginning of the reign of Asa; that is, three hundred and sixty-four years. *Vid. Preface to Leviticus, p. 109, note g.*

<sup>l</sup> The Jews tell our Saviour, that their temple had been forty-six years in building; which must mean the temple as repaired and enlarged by Herod. This work was begun in the eighteenth year of his reign; from whence to the thirtieth year of Christ was a period of forty-six years; and the temple was not even then entirely finished, nor, according to the account of Josephus, till the time of Agrippa, near sixty years after the death of Christ. *Vid. John ii. 20. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 14; lib. xx. c. 8.*

<sup>m</sup> It is necessary here to mention, that Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho, asserts that the following speech of Ezra was in the ancient Hebrew copies of the Bible, but expunged by the Jews; viz. "Ezra said to the people, this passover is our Saviour, and our refuge; and if you will be persuaded of it, and let into your hearts, that we are to humble him in a sign, and afterwards shall believe in him, this place shall not be destroyed for ever, saith the God of hosts; but if you will not believe in him, neither hearken to his preaching, ye shall be a laughing-stock to the Gentiles."

ciliatory prayer; the repentance of the people, and their separation from the wives and children, who not being of the holy seed, might, if suffered to intermingle with the Jews, have rendered uncertain the accomplishment of the promises; and he concludes with an enumeration of those who had transgressed, stigmatizing, with impartial indignation, the names of even the priests and rulers who had offended in this important violation of the law.

The history contains a period of about seventy-nine years; from A. M. 3468, when Cyrus became master of Persia, to A. M. 3547, when Ezra effected the reform described in the last chapter of his book: for between the dedication of the temple and the departure of Ezra from Babylon, in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, is a period of fifty-seven or fifty-eight years; which this book passes over in silence, only mentioning that the Jews had during that time intermixed with the Gentiles.

This book is written in Chaldee,<sup>n</sup> from the eighth verse of the fourth chapter to the twenty-seventh verse of the seventh chapter; for as this part of the work contains chiefly letters, conversation, and decrees uttered in that language, it was consistent with the fidelity of the sacred historian to describe the very words which were used; especially as the people, recently returned from the captivity, were familiar, and perhaps more conversant with the Chaldee, than even with the Hebrew tongue: and it was probably about this time that the Chaldee paraphrases began to be used; for it appears, by Nehemiah's account,<sup>o</sup> that all could not understand the law; which may mean, that some of them had forgotten the Hebrew during their dispersion in the captivity.<sup>p</sup> Some assign, likewise, to this time, the origin of the Jewish synagogues, though it is possible that they existed before the captivity.<sup>q</sup>

Ezra was of the sacerdotal family, a descendant of Seraiah,<sup>r</sup> in a right line from Aaron. He succeeded Zerubbabel in the government of Judæa, by a commission which lasted twelve

<sup>n</sup> The Chaldee, or Syriac, was the language then used over all Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, &c.

<sup>o</sup> Neh. viii. 2, 8. Casaubon. Epist. 590.

<sup>p</sup> Univ. Hist. vol. x. book 2. p. 220.

<sup>q</sup> Psal. lxxiv. 7, 8.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. vii. 1—5. He calls himself the

son of Seraiah, which only implies his descendant; or, at least, it is not probable that he was the immediate son of the high-priest Seraiah, who was slain at the taking of Jerusalem. 2 Kings xxv. 18. Prid. Con. part i. b. 5.

years, to A. M. 3558; at the expiration of which term, he either returned to Babylon, to give an account of the state of the province of Judæa, or else retired into a private station in his own country; cooperating, doubtless, in the pious designs of Nehemiah his successor, by whom he is related soon after to have produced and read the law of Moses to the people. Ezra, indeed, appears to have been particularly well skilled in the law, to have given much attention to the study of the scriptures, and to have been well versed in the interpretation of them. He styles himself, a ready scribe;\* and professes to have prepared himself to instruct the people in the statutes of God: the tradition, therefore, of his having made a collection of the sacred writings, is extremely probable. We know, indeed, from Josephus, that the Jewish priests, after every important war, were accustomed, on the establishment of peace, both at home and abroad, publicly to ascertain, recognise, and copy out the registers of the priesthood;† by which we must either understand the scriptures, or believe that the same practice prevailed as to them.

Ezra, therefore, may well be supposed to have published a correct edition, after the re-establishment of the Jews; and probably with the assistance of the great synagogue,‡ which particularly flourished in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus; not that there is any reason to imagine that the sacred books were lost during the captivity, as some have absurdly conceived, from the fabulous relation of a pretended burning of the law, and of the restoration of the scriptures by divine revelation, which account is given only in the apocryphal book of Esdras,§ a work of little or no authority. The copies of the law were too much revered to be lost; and Daniel we know was in possession

\* Ezra vii. 6. The word, סופר, soupher, implies, one skilful in the interpretation of scripture. The origin of the scribes is uncertain; they were probably first employed in subserviency to the prophets, and perhaps educated in their schools. Judges v. 14; 1 Chron. xxvii. 32; Jerem. xxxvi. 26. They seem to have been established as an order of men after the captivity, and to have risen into repute after the cessation of prophecy. They are mentioned in the New Testament as doctors of the law, and teachers of the people. Matt. xxii. 35, and Mark xii. 28, &c. They appear in later times to have corrupted the law by their traditions, and to have become defi-

cient in purity of manners. Matt. xv. 3; v. 190; Luke xx. 46. Of the inspired scribes, of whom Simon speaks, there is no account in scripture.

† Οἱ περιλειπομένοι τῶν ἱερῶν καινὰ πάλιν ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων γραμμάτων συνίσταται, are the words of Josephus, lib. i. cont. Apion.

‡ Irenæus. adv. Hæres. lib. iii. c. 25. Tertul. de Habit. Mulier. c. 3. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. Basil. Epist. ad Chilon, &c. Chrysost. Homil. in Epist. ad Hebræ. Herbelot Biblioth. Orient. sub Voce Ozair. Ben. Seraiah et Koran. cap. Baera. Introd. p. 6.

§ 2 Esdras xiv. 21.

of one during the captivity.<sup>7</sup> He likewise quotes the prophecies of Jeremiah;<sup>8</sup> and probably other persons had copies of the scriptures, many of them being favoured by the conquerors: and if the sacred vessels of the temple were so carefully preserved, we may well conceive that the authentic manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures were safely deposited at Babylon, and perhaps restored to Zerubbabel, or Ezra, on their return to Jerusalem; but wherever preserved, Ezra certainly produced the law, and read it to the people;<sup>9</sup> and the other books of scripture were collected by him and Nehemiah,<sup>b</sup> or by the great synagogue.

Ezra was a most useful person to the Jews, who reverence his memory with a regard almost equal to that which they entertain for Moses. He is not particularly styled a prophet in scripture; but our Saviour makes no distinction between the authors of the sacred books, except that of "Moses and the Prophets." Ezra was undoubtedly an appointed minister of God; and he wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, or his book would not have been admitted into the Hebrew Canon, or received as sacred from the earliest ages of the Christian church.

Ezra is reported by some traditionary accounts to have died in the hundred and twentieth year of his age, and to have been buried at Jerusalem;<sup>c</sup> though others say that he died in Persia, and was buried on the banks of the river Samura, where his tomb is shewn.<sup>d</sup> Besides the books which are ascribed to Ezra in the apocryphal part of our Bible, there have been spurious constitutions, benedictions, and prayers attributed to him; as likewise a revelation, a dream, and a prophecy relative to the Roman empire, together with a calendar of pretended auspicious and unlucky days, none of which require attention.

## OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THE book of Nehemiah being subjoined in the Hebrew Canon to that of Ezra, as a continuation of his history, was often con-

<sup>7</sup> Chap. ix. 11, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Dan. ix. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Nehem. viii. 2; and Ancient Univ. Hist. vol. iii. p. 418.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 5.

<sup>d</sup> Benjamin Tudela.

sidered as his work :<sup>a</sup> and in the Latin and Greek Bibles it is called the second book of Ezra ; but it undoubtedly was written by Nehemiah, for he professes himself the author of it in the beginning, and uniformly speaks in the first person. It was probably admitted into the catalogue of the sacred writings by some of the great synagogue.<sup>b</sup>

Ezra appears to have continued near ten years in the government of Judæa, after the reform which he mentions in the last chapter of his book ; persisting, probably, in his endeavours to restore religion, and to promote the prosperity of his country. Circumstances were, however, so unfavourable and adverse to his designs, that in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus,<sup>c</sup> A. M. 3559, we find, from Nehemiah, that representations were made to him at Babylon of the afflicted state of the Jews, and of the ruinous condition of their city, of which the walls were yet unrepaired.

This book begins with an account of Nehemiah's grief at this report ; of his application to Artaxerxes for permission to visit and rebuild Jerusalem, "the place of his fathers' sepulchres." This he obtained, probably by the entreaty of Esther the queen,<sup>d</sup> who favoured the Jews. Nehemiah then relates his departure, and arrival at Jerusalem with authority ; feelingly describes the desolate state of Jerusalem, and his exertions to repair its dismantled walls. He records the names of those patriotic men who assisted him on this occasion ; the conspiracy of the Ammonites, and other enemies against the work, and the defeat of their designs. After the finishing of the walls and fortifications, Nehemiah applied himself to other public objects. The scarcity of the inhabitants in the large city of Jerusalem first excited his attention. He fortunately at this time found a register of those persons who returned from the captivity under Zerubbabel ; which he repeats in the seventh chapter,<sup>e</sup> in order

<sup>a</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Reg. Euseb. Chron. ad An. 1584.

<sup>b</sup> When Isidore asserted that the second book of Ezra was not in the Hebrew Canon, he meant the apocryphal book attributed to him ; for he says, that Ezra's first book contained the words of Ezra and Nehemiah. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Not Artaxerxes Mnemon, as some have imagined. Vid. Scalig. Proleg. Oper. de Emend. Temp. lib. vi. et Patrick. The

month Chisleu, mentioned in the first verse of Nehemiah, answers to a part of our November and December.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. ii. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. vii. This genealogy differs from that given by Ezra in the second chapter of his book, with respect to names and numbers ; which difference Prideaux attributes to alterations made by Nehemiah, in compliance with changes that had happened since the departure from Babylon. It is remarkable, that the two accounts agree in

to complete the restoration of their possessions to the respective tribes, and that none but the Levites and descendants of Aaron might officiate in the service of the temple and of the priesthood.

Nehemiah then describes the public reading of the law to the people, the celebration of the feast of the tabernacles,<sup>f</sup> and other religious appointments, observed with a pathetic commemoration and thanksgiving for God's former mercies, as described in preceding books of scripture. Then follows an account of the renewal of the covenant of obedience and respect to God's law, recorded as a memorial, with the names of those who signed it; a catalogue of those who were appointed by lot, or consented to live at Jerusalem, which was surrounded by hostile neighbours; and the book concludes with a description of the reformation, both civil and religious, which Nehemiah effected; the last act of which, the removal of the strange wives, was, according to the general computation, accomplished about A. M. 3574;<sup>g</sup> but which could not have happened, as Prideaux has on very sufficient grounds determined, till A. M. 3595;<sup>h</sup> at which time he supposes the first period of Daniel's prophecy to conclude,<sup>i</sup> and the scripture history to close.

Nehemiah was the son of Hachaliah, and, according to tradition, of the tribe of Judah,<sup>k</sup> though it had been fancied, from

the total amount; and the sum of the numbers, which are separately detailed, will correspond, if to the 29,818 specified by Ezra, we add the 1765 persons reckoned by Nehemiah, which Ezra has omitted; and, on the other hand, to the 31,089 enumerated by Nehemiah, add the 494 which is an overplus in Ezra's book, not noticed by Nehemiah: both writers including in the sum total 10,777 of the mixed multitude, which is not particularized in the individual detail. The accounts unquestionably agreed when they were received into the Canon, unless where there might be some cause for a variation; and probably the differences that now exist have originated in the carelessness of the copyists. Vid. commentators.

<sup>f</sup> The Scenopægia, or feast of tabernacles, was a grand festival in memory of the Israelites' having dwelt in tents in the wilderness. It began the 15th of September, and was celebrated for eight days with great joy. The observance of it seems to have been much insisted on by the prophets; and as it argued a sense of God's

former mercies, it seems to have been attended with a blessing. Vid. Zech. xiv. 16, 17.

<sup>g</sup> Blair's Chronol.

<sup>h</sup> The last act of Nehemiah's reformation took place under the pontificate of Joiada; (for the original of chap. xiii. 28. will not admit a construction which should represent Eliashib as the high-priest;) and Joiada succeeded to the priesthood, A. M. 3591.

<sup>i</sup> Prideaux dates the period of the seven weeks, from the seventh year of Artaxerxes, An. A. C. 458; when Ezra was commissioned by a decree to rebuild the temple, and to restore Jerusalem; from that time, to the reformation effected by Nehemiah, were forty-nine years, when the church and state were re-established; or, according to the figurative description of Daniel, when "the street and the walls were rebuilt in troublous times." Vid. Dan. ix. 25. Prid. Con. An. Ant. Chr. 409.

<sup>k</sup> R. Abarb. in Cabal. Euseb. Chron. Can. A. 1584. Isidore, Genesb, &c.

an apocryphal account of his offering sacrifices at the head of the priests, that he was of the tribe of Levi.<sup>1</sup> He appears to have been a different person from the Nehemiah mentioned by Ezra,<sup>m</sup> and in this book, as one who returned from the captivity with Zerubbabel; since from the first year of Cyrus to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, no fewer than ninety-one years intervene; so that Nehemiah must, on the supposition that they were the same persons, have been at this time much above an hundred years old: at which age it can hardly be thought probable,<sup>n</sup> that he should have taken a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and have been capable, during a government of twelve years, and afterwards of all those active exertions which in this book he is described to have made. Nehemiah, however, the author of this book, appears to have been born at Babylon; and was so distinguished for his family and qualities, as to be selected for the office of cupbearer to the king; a situation of great honour and emolument in the Persian court. He was likewise distinguished by the title of *Terashata*, which was in general appropriated to the king's deputies and governors.<sup>o</sup> By his privilege of daily attendance on the king, he had constant opportunities of conciliating his favour; and was enabled by the royal bounty to support his government with great magnificence at his own private charge, and generously to relieve his people from the burden of that expense which they had necessarily sustained under preceding governors.<sup>p</sup> In every other respect, likewise, he displayed the most exemplary and disinterested zeal for the prosperity of his country.<sup>q</sup> If Nehemiah were not absolutely a prophet, he professes himself to have acted under the authority and guidance of God.<sup>r</sup> He seems to have conspired with Ezra in all his pious designs; and probably assisted him in the revisal of the Canon.<sup>s</sup> The Jews report him to have been one of the great synagogues. The author of the second book of Maccabees attributes to him writings which are now no longer extant, if they ever existed.<sup>t</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Macc. i. 18, and following verses.

<sup>m</sup> Ezra ii. 1; Nehem. vii. 7.

<sup>n</sup> Michael. Præf. in Nehem.

<sup>o</sup> Neh. ii. 63; x. 1; and Michael. in Loc.

<sup>p</sup> Neh. v. 14, 18. His name signified consolation.

<sup>q</sup> Ecclus. xlix. 13.

<sup>r</sup> Neh. ii. 8, 18.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 13.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 13. Vid. Carpz. *Introd. ad Lib. Hist. Vet. Test.* p. 343. Frischmuth's *Diss. de non Sperand. Restitut. Arcæ. Fædor.* iii. cap. 10.



After a continuance of twelve years<sup>u</sup> in the government of Judæa, Nehemiah appears to have returned to Shushan, agreeably to his promise.<sup>v</sup> What length of time he continued in Persia cannot be ascertained. Prideaux, to allow a sufficient interval for the corruptions that took place during his absence, supposes at least five years; the text only says "certain days,"<sup>w</sup> which is an ambiguous expression. It is probable that he soon obtained permission to return to his country, where he appears to have ended his days. It is not possible to determine how long he survived his return. Many learned writers—conceiving that Jaddua and Darius, mentioned in the twenty-second verse of the twelfth chapter of this book, must have been the high priest Jaddua, and Darius Codomannus, who was contemporary with the former during his priesthood,<sup>x</sup> and who did not begin to reign till one hundred and ten years after the date of Nehemiah's commission—have remarked, that he must have lived an extraordinary length of time, to have inserted this account; and, indeed, though it is by no means incredible that Nehemiah might have been permitted by God to live one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty years, because his eminent virtues were highly conducive to the restoration of his country, yet it is, perhaps, more probable to believe, that the whole, or at least the latter part of the register, contained in the twenty-six first verses of the twelfth chapter, was a subsequent addition,<sup>y</sup> made by those who received the book into the Canon; that is, by some members of the great synagogue; and, indeed, the whole detail appears to be an unconnected and foreign interpolation.

Nehemiah frequently in this book calls upon God not to wipe

<sup>u</sup> Chap. xiii. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Nehem. ii. 6.

<sup>v</sup> Nehem. xiii. 6. In the Hebrew it is, "at the end of days;" which means, perhaps, at the end of the year.

<sup>w</sup> Some have imagined that Darius, the Persian, might have been Darius Nothus; but the only Darius who was contemporary with the priesthood of Jaddua was Darius Codomannus. Besides, the text, enumerating the succession of the high-priests, evidently speaks of Jaddua as high-priest, who did not enter on his office till A. M. 3663; and therefore the verse must have been written above one hundred years after Nehemiah went up from Babylon, when

we cannot suppose him to have been less than one hundred and twenty or one hundred and thirty years of age. The text would even lead us to suppose that it was written after the death of Jaddua; which would tend still farther to convince us that the passage is a subsequent interpolation. Josephus supposes Sanballat to have lived to the time of Alexander the Great; but the historian must have meant a different person from Sanballat the Horonite, who opposed Nehemiah; or he must have been mistaken. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 8. Prid. An. Ant. Christ. 459.

<sup>y</sup> Vossi Chron. Sac. c. x. p. 149. Prid. Con. An. Ant. Christ. 458.

out the good deeds that he had done; rather in pious supplication to be remembered on their account,<sup>b</sup> than in any arrogance of heart. To have concealed the actions of his government, would have been inconsistent with the office of a faithful historian, and have deprived posterity of an excellent example. The sacred writers, conscious of their own dignity, are equally superior to disguise or vanity. They record their own virtues and their own failings with equal sincerity.

Nehemiah was probably the last governor delegated by the Persian kings; who, possibly, after his death, left the government of Judæa to the high priest of the Jews, till the Persian empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great.<sup>c</sup>

## OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

THIS book is in the Hebrew styled "the Volume of Esther:" it was received into the Jewish Canon with peculiar veneration; and esteemed above many of the prophetic books, probably because therein are described the origin and ceremonies of the feast of Purim. It is called the Book of Esther,<sup>a</sup> because it contains the history of this Jewish captive; who, by her remarkable accomplishments, gained the affections of Ahasuerus, and by a marriage with him was raised to the throne of Persia. The author of the book is not certainly known. Some of the fathers<sup>b</sup> suppose it to have been written by Ezra; others contend that it was composed by Joachim, high priest of the Jews, and grandson of Josedech. The Talmudists attribute it to the joint labours of the great synagogue,<sup>c</sup> which succeeded Ezra in the superintendence of the Canon of Scripture. The twentieth verse of the ninth chapter of the book has led others to believe that Mordecai was the author;<sup>d</sup> but what is there

<sup>b</sup> Chap. v. 19; xiii. 14, 22, 31.

<sup>c</sup> Cornel. Bertram, de Rep. Jud. p. 168, 173, 175.

<sup>a</sup> The word Esther is of Persian derivation, Starith, Astram, 'Esterpa: its signification is uncertain. The vowel is prefixed for softness, according to the Hebrew idiom. Vid. Castel in Lexico Persico, col. 329, et Pfeiffer in Dub. Vex. p. 458. The original word was descriptive, and signified

dark, which was deemed beautiful by the Jews. Hilar. (Econ. 621. Theocrit. Idyl. x. 26—29. Esther was called by her own family Hadaasah, which implies a myrtle. Vid. Targum. ad cap. ii. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Epiphanius de Ponder, et Mena. cap. 4. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 36. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. cap. 2.

<sup>c</sup> Bava Bathra, cap. i. f. 15.

<sup>d</sup> As most of the Latin fathers, and

related to have been written by him, seems to refer only to the circular letter which he distributed.\* There are, lastly, other writers who maintain, that the book was the production of Esther's and Mordecai's united industry;† and probably they might have communicated an account of events so interesting to the whole nation, to the great synagogue at Jerusalem, some of the members of which may, with great reason, be supposed to have digested the information thus received into its present form.‡ We have, however, no sufficient evidence to determine, nor is it, perhaps, of much importance to ascertain precisely who was the author; but that it was a genuine and faithful description of what did actually happen, is certain, not only from its admission into the Canon, but also from the institution of the feast of Purim; which from its first establishment has been regularly observed, as an annual solemnity,§ on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, in commemoration of the great deliverance which Esther, by her interest, had procured; and which is even now celebrated among the Jews with many peculiar ceremonies, and with rejoicings even to intoxication. This festival was called Purim, or the feast of lots, (*pur*, in the Persian language, signifying a lot,) from the events mentioned in chap. iii. 7; ix. 24.

The Jews<sup>1</sup> maintain that this book was unquestionably inspired by the Holy Ghost; and that though all the books of the Prophets and of the Hagiographi shall be destroyed at the coming of the Messiah, that of Esther shall continue with those of Moses; for Esther had said, that “the days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews.”<sup>2</sup> This is meant, however, only of that part of the book which our church considers as canonical; for the six chapters which are only in the Greek and Latin copies, were never received by the Jews; and they are rejected as apocryphal by us, in conformity to the sentiments of the ancient church, for this and other reasons which will be here-

Clemens Alexandrinus among the Greeks, Strom. lib. i. Vid. also, Elias in Maas. Aben-Ezra, Abrah. Hispan. &c.

\* Chap. ix. 20, 23, 26.

† Chap. ix. 29.

‡ Huet. Demonstrat. Evang. Prop. iv.

§ 2 Macc. xv. 36, 37. Codex. Theod. Tit. de Judæia. The feast is called also the feast of Haman and Mordecai. The month Adar corresponds with our February and March. Esther and Mordecai appear

to have ordained only a feast; but the Jews observe, as they profess long to have done, a fast on the thirteenth, which was the day destined for their extirpation. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 6. Huet. Prop. iv. Christian Magaz. vol. iv. p. 260. Prid. Con. Ann. 452. Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 24. Calmet. Dict. word Purim.

<sup>1</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. ix. 28. Pfeiffer. Thesaur. Hermeneut. p. 599.

after assigned.<sup>1</sup> It is to be lamented, indeed, that the spurious chapters should ever have been annexed to the authentic part, since they tended to discredit the sacred book; and it has been supposed, that a disrespect for the apocryphal additions induced some ancient writers to leave it out of the catalogue of the canonical books,<sup>m</sup> and occasioned Luther to express a wish that it might be expunged from the list.<sup>n</sup> These, however, being rescinded, the remainder is entitled to our reverence as canonical. It is established by the suffrage of antiquity, and bears every mark of authenticity and truth.<sup>o</sup>

There has been much difference of opinion concerning the period which we should assign to the events recorded in this book. It is certain, from many instances, that the Jews distinguished foreign persons by names different from those which they bear in profane history;<sup>p</sup> as, indeed, all nations are accustomed to corrupt proper names, in conformity to the genius and pronunciation of their own language. Scaliger contends, from a fanciful resemblance of names, that Ahasuerus was the same with Xerxes;<sup>q</sup> whose queen, Amestris, he conceives might have been Esther. Others, upon grounds nearly as conjectural and fallacious, have imagined that Ahasuerus was Cyaxares; and others contend that he was Cambyses.<sup>r</sup> Usher supposes, that by Ahasuerus we are to understand Darius Hystaspes;<sup>s</sup> who resided at Susa, and whose extent of dominion and actions correspond with the accounts of this book. But to each of these opinions considerable objections may be drawn from the accounts of profane historians;<sup>t</sup> and probably the opinion of Prideaux is best supported, who maintains, agreeably to the ac-

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the apocryphal chapters of Esther.

<sup>m</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 26. Athan. Epist. 39. Gregor. Nazianz. de Ver. et Gen. lib. S. Script. Some think that Esther was included in these catalogues, under the book of Ezra, as it was supposed to have been written by Ezra. It was in the catalogues of Origen, Cyril, Hilary, Epiphanius, and Jerom, and in that of the council of Laodicea. Vid. infra, preface to apocryph. chapters of Esther, note e.

<sup>n</sup> Conviv. Serm. f. 494. and Lib. de Serv. Arbit. tom. iii. f. 82.

<sup>o</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. l. vi. c. 25. Hilar. in Psalm i.

<sup>p</sup> Vitringa in Hypot. Sac. p. 100. §. 49.

<sup>q</sup> Scaliger de Emendat. Temp. lib. vi.

p. 284. Grotius, Michaelis, &c. Capellus places the history so late as the time of Ochus, who was the successor of Artaxerxes Mnemon.

<sup>r</sup> Targ. R. Salomon, Seder Olam Rabba, p. 86.

<sup>s</sup> Usleri Annal. Vet. Test. Period. Jul. An. 4193. Du Pin, Maius Econ. Vet. Test. p. 1073. The advocates for this opinion maintain, with the Rabbinical writers, that Esther was the Artystona of Darius: but Artystona was the daughter of Cyrus; and the history of Atossa by no means accords, any more than does that of Parmis, with the account here given of Vashti. Vid. Herod. lib. iii. et lib. vii.

<sup>t</sup> Vitringa, lib. vi. p. 110.

count of Josephus,<sup>u</sup> of the Septuagint, and of the apocryphal additions to the book of Esther, that Ahasuerus was Artaxerxes Longimanus;<sup>x</sup> whose extraordinary favour to the Jews might in some measure arise from the suggestions of Esther: the history, therefore, may be supposed to have commenced about A. M. 3544,<sup>y</sup> and it contains an account of a period which extends from about ten to twenty years.

The book describes the advancement of Esther; who, by the interest which he conciliated with Ahasuerus, delivered the Jews from a great destruction which had been contrived for them by Haman, an insolent favourite of the king. It presents an interesting description of mortified pride, and of malice baffled to the destruction of its contrivers. It likewise exhibits a very lively representation of the vexations and troubles, of the anxieties, treachery, and dissimulation of a corrupt court. The manners are painted with great force and fidelity; and the vicissitudes and characters are displayed with dramatic effect. The author seems to have been so intimately acquainted with the Persian customs, that some have conceived a notion that he transcribed his work from the Persian chronicles.<sup>z</sup> It has been remarked, that the name of God is not mentioned throughout the book; his superintendent providence is, however, frequently illustrated: it is shewn, indeed, in every part of the work; disconcerting evil designs, and producing great events, by means seemingly inadequate.

Calmet asserts, on the authority of Paul Lucas, that the tombs of Mordecai and Esther are still shewn at Amadam in Persia, in the synagoge of the Jews, who are very numerous there.

## OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

CONCERNING the nature, and author of this book, various opinions

<sup>u</sup> Joseph. Ant. lib. xi. c. 6.

<sup>x</sup> Prid. Con. An. 470. Sulpit. Sever. Hist. Sac. lib. ii. p. 307. Calmet. Dict. word Vashai. Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 137. The chief objection to the period of Artaxerxes Longimanus is drawn from Esther ii. 5, 6; but that passage may imply, that Kish was carried away captive with Jeco-

niah; or that Mordecai was a descendant of some one of Nebuchadnezzar's captives.

<sup>y</sup> Petav. Indoct. Templi xii. c. 27. Auctor. Eccles. Goth. p. 319.

<sup>z</sup> Hottinger Thesaur. Philolog. lib. ii. cap. l. p. 488. Aben-Ezra, Com. in Procem. Selden in Theolog. lib. iii. exercit. 5. p. 486.

have been entertained. Some, as well Christian as Rabbinical writers, have ventured to consider it as a fictitious relation of the parabolical kind, without any historical foundation;<sup>a</sup> and others as a dramatic work, grounded on some traditional accounts of a real personage; or as an allegory, in which, under real characters and circumstances, are shadowed out the Jewish nation, and some particulars of the Jewish history<sup>b</sup> or after the Babylonish captivity.<sup>c</sup> But to indulge in such unauthorized fancies is very dangerous, and inconsistent with the respect due to sacred writ; and in the present instance there is no sufficient foundation for supposing that the book is any other than a literal history of the temptation and sufferings of a real character,<sup>d</sup> since it has every external sanction of authority, and is stamped with every intrinsic mark that can characterize a genuine relation.

Of the real existence of Job no reasonable doubt can be entertained, if we consider that it is proved, by the concurrent testimony of all eastern tradition, that the whole history of this illustrious character, with many fabulous additions, was known among the Syrians and Chaldeans; that many of the noblest families among the Arabians are distinguished by his name,<sup>e</sup> and boast of being descended from him; and, lastly, that Job is mentioned as a real character by Ezekiel<sup>f</sup> and St. James.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Bava Bathra, Anabaptists, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Garnett, taking up some ideas of bishop Warburton, has etched out an ingenious allegory, in which the condition of Job is considered as descriptive of the Jewish sufferings during the captivity. But though he has strained every circumstance in the history in order to accommodate it to this representation, he has produced no conviction. A lively fancy may readily discover such resemblances as he has pointed out; but if the judgment be allowed to reflect, it will suggest unanswerable objections to the theory, however specious it may be. Vid. Garnett's Dissert. on Job. The Use and Intent of Prophecy, diss. ii. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. iii. c. 22. Bava Bathra, c. 1. fol. 15. Sentimens de quelq. Theolog. Holland. p. 184. Grot. Com. in Job, lib. i. Le Clerc, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Bishop Warburton imagined, that Job was intended to personate the Jewish people on their return from the captivity; that by his three friends were meant the three great enemies of the Jews—Sanballat,

Tobiah, and Geshem; and by Job's wife, the idolatrous wives which some of the Jews had married, as we learn from Nehemiah. A strange conceit, of which the improbabilities are by no means glossed over by the elaborate reasoning and extravagant assertions of the learned writer. Vid. Peter's Dissert. on Job.

<sup>d</sup> Spanheim Hist. Job, Schultens Com. in Job, and commentators in general.

<sup>e</sup> As was Zalach Eddin, usually styled Saladin, sultan of the Mamalukes; who bore the name of Job, as did also his father. Vid. Elmezin. Hist. Saracen. Job appears also to be mentioned by Aristotle, in his Dissertation de Magnitudine Animalium. There are even now traditionary accounts concerning the place of Job's abode. Vid. Thevenot's Voyage, p. 447. Le Roque Voyages de Syrie, tom. i. p. 239.

<sup>f</sup> Ezek. xiv. 14.

<sup>g</sup> James v. 11. Vid. also Tobit ii. 12, 15. in Vulgate; Clemens Epist. ad Cor. c. xvii; and Arast. ap. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 25.

The book of Job was likewise certainly written as a literal relation of actual events: for this is evident from the style of the author; from his mode of introducing the subject; and also from the circumstantial detail of habitation, kindred, and condition, as well as from the names of the persons therein mentioned; which correspond with other accounts of that age and country, in which Job is generally supposed to have existed.<sup>b</sup> The book then must be allowed to contain a literal history of real events, though, agreeably to the opinion of Grotius, the subject is poetically treated; for though the first and last parts of the book, being entirely narration, be expressed in a style nearly as simple as that of the historical books of Samuel or of Kings, the rest resembles rather the poetical works of David and of Solomon.

Considering, then, that the work is in a great measure poetical, and that probably it was written in metre, we shall readily account for that want of order and arrangement which, by the omission of trivial particulars, and by the neglect of distinction of times, sometimes gives an air of improbability to the book: for many circumstances which must have occurred at intervals, are related in a continued and uninterrupted series by the author; intent only on delivering to posterity memorable events, and sublime instruction, and neglecting every particular not immediately conducive to this design.<sup>1</sup> It must likewise be observed, that the verity of the book is not invalidated by the allegorical manner in which some things are related. Human events are literally described; but the proceedings of providence, of which we are unable to form any apprehension, unless from figurative illustration, are perhaps here, as in other parts of scripture,<sup>k</sup> parabolically represented under familiar allusions.

<sup>b</sup> It has been said, that the names of Job and his friends have a mystical meaning; but most of the Eastern names have some descriptive signification. Spanheim derives the name of Job from an Hebrew root, *אִב*, *אִבְרָהָם*, *amare*, a word which imports love, or beloved. And this is more probable than the derivation sometimes given from a word expressive of grief; which, if accepted, must be supposed to have been applied after Job's misfortunes. Michaelis, in his preface, derives the name of Job from a word which signifies repentance, which was perhaps suggested by Mahomet. Vid. Koran, c. xxxviii. 40, 44.

<sup>1</sup> The calamities of Job succeeded each other with a miraculous rapidity. His friends might have literally observed seven days silence in ashes, from respect to his affliction. The artificial regularity which the learned Michaelis conceived to exist in the numbers mentioned in this book, does not appear really to obtain; except that when Job's possessions are said to have been doubled, they are enumerated by an interesting periphrasis. Comp. chap. i. 3, and xlii. 12.

<sup>k</sup> Gen. xxviii. 12; Isa. vi; 1 Kings xxii. 19—22; Zech. iii. 1; Rev. xii.

Thus are "the sons of God," or the obedient angels, described as appearing before the presence of the Lord, as at the tribunal of an earthly judge; so also the discourse and agency of Satan are indirectly shadowed out, in a manner agreeable to the mode of human intercourse, in order to accommodate to our conceptions what would otherwise be utterly unintelligible. The government of God, in permitting and in restricting the temptations of the faithful, is not immediately referrible to our senses, though his justice and mercy may be obliquely intimated by familiar allegory.<sup>1</sup> The interlocutory parts of the book should be considered also as descriptive of real discourse, at least as to the substance. They are conducted with every appearance of probability, and the passions of the speakers seem to kindle as they proceed. There is also no sufficient reason why we should not suppose God (whose decision of this important controversy had been earnestly desired<sup>m</sup>) to have actually spoken by himself or his angel out of the whirlwind;<sup>n</sup> though some writers have chosen to consider the introduction of the Deity as a prophetic vision, represented to Job and his friends in a trance. This account, then, of the suffering and restoration of Job, must be admitted as a real and authentic history; nowhere allegorical, except perhaps in those parts which reveal the agency of superior beings.

The origin of Job is uncertain. There is an appendix<sup>o</sup> annexed to the Greek, Arabic, and Vulgate versions of the book, said to be taken from the ancient Syriac, which represents Job to have been the son of Zareh, a descendant of Esau; and which relates that he reigned in the land of Ausis, upon the borders of Idumæa and Arabia: and upon this authority many ancient writers, and most of the fathers, concur in supposing that he was the same with Jobab, the son of Zerah, mentioned in Genesis;<sup>p</sup> but as this addition is not found in the Hebrew

<sup>1</sup> Le Clerc in Loc. Codurc. Præf. in Job. Pfeiffer Dub. Vex. Cent. iii. Loc. 31.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. x. 2; xii. 5; xiii. 3, 21, 22, 24.

<sup>n</sup> The Chaldee paraphrast, taking the word whirlwind in a metaphorical sense, renders it improperly "out of the whirlwind of grief;" as if God had suggested to Job, amidst the conflict of his sorrows, the following thoughts.

<sup>o</sup> Sixt. Senen. Bib. lib. i. and a translation of this Appendix in Wall's Critical Notes. Vid. also, Athan. Synopa. Chrysost.

de Patient. Hom. ii. Aristæas, Philo, Polyhistor. Euseb. Præp. lib. ix. cap. 25. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 47.

<sup>p</sup> Gen. xxxvi. 33, and 1 Chron. xliii. 44. Spanheim in Job, ch. iv. Mercer. Pineda, &c. There is likewise in the Greek, a discourse of Job's wife, which is generally rejected as apocryphal. Vid. Origen. ad African. Hieron. Præf. in Dan. et in Job. et in Quæst. Heb. in Gen. Chryso. Polych. Olymp. Procem. et ad Caten. in Job. Some have imagined that Job's wife was Dinah, the daughter of



copies, it is considered as spurious; and the learned Spanheim has, upon very strong grounds, endeavoured to prove, that Job, who is the subject of this history, was a very different person from the son of Zerah; and that he derived his origin from Uz, the son of Nahor, brother to Abraham; or from Abraham himself, by Keturah. We may assent, likewise, to the opinion of bishop Lowth, that Job dwelt in that part of Arabia Petræa which was called Edom, and bordered upon the tribe of Judah to the south, being situated between Egypt and the land of the Philistines; and we may suppose that his friends inhabited the country immediately adjacent.

Job does not appear to have been a sovereign, though styled the greatest man of the East, with respect to his possessions. He and his friends were, however, persons of considerable rank and importance, as may be collected from various circumstances incidentally mentioned in the course of the history. If they were not directly descended from Abraham, they must be classed among those, who, out of the family of Israel, worshipped God in sincerity and truth. The exact period in which they existed cannot be determined. Without descending to minute inquiries on the subject, we may remark, that they appear to have lived some time during the servitude of the Israelites in Egypt; and that the period of their history may properly intervene between the death of Joseph and the departure from Egypt, which includes a space of about one hundred and forty or one hundred

Jacob. She is called Rachman by the Arabs; and is supposed by them to have been the daughter of Ephraim; or, according to others, of Machir, the son of Manasseh. Vid. Sale's Notes in Koran. She was probably of the country and religion of Job, though censured by him upon one occasion as having spoken foolishly. Vid. Wesley's Dissert. xxvi.

¶ Hieron. Quæst. Hebr. in Gen. Spanheim, Hist. Job, cap. iv. Bochart, &c. Uz, was Edom. Vid. Lament. iv. 21; Numb. xxxiv. 8; Josh. xv. 12; Jerem. xxv. 20. Lowth's Præl. Post. xxxii. and notes. Wesley's Diss. xxix. Hodges conceives Job and his friends to have lived somewhere between Chaldæa and Judæa. Some place him in Arabia Deserta. All the country between Egypt and the Euphrates was called East, with respect to Egypt; and the Jews who there adopted the expression, afterwards used it absolutely, without reference to their change of

situation. Vid. Mede, fol. p. 467, and Matt. ii. 1. If Moses were the author of this part, he might in Midian, which is to the west, properly call Edom the south.

\* The crown mentioned in xix. 9, is only a figurative expression for prosperity. Job and his friends are in the Greek called sovereigns; that is, great men.

† Some Talmudists have asserted, that Job was born in the very year of Jacob's descent into Egypt, and that he died in the year of the Exodus: a conceit founded on a supposition, that as the camels and oxen were restored twofold to Job, so the years of his life were doubled; and that as he lived one hundred and forty years after his affliction, so he lived seventy years before it. Vid. Bava Bathra. The Rabbins suppose that Moses alludes to the death of Job when he says of the Gentiles, that their defence is departed from them." Vid. Numb. xiv. 9.

‡ Spanheim Hist. Job, cap. vi. p. 106.

and forty-five years; in which case Job might be six or seven generations removed from Nahor. And since he survived his restoration to prosperity one hundred and forty years, he may be supposed to have lived at least during part of the time that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.\* As the age of man in that period did not usually exceed two hundred or two hundred and twenty years,<sup>7</sup> Job was probably overwhelmed in calamities in the prime and vigour of his life; when, if possessed of the greatest fortitude to sustain his afflictions, he was also endued with the liveliest sensibility to feel them. How long his sufferings may have lasted is uncertain: the seven years for which some contend, would have been a longer period than can be admitted. It required not such a continuance of time to demonstrate his faith and unshaken confidence: and God delights not in unnecessary severity. But from a consideration of particulars, it will be evident that less than a year cannot be assigned for the duration of his distress; and this is agreeable to the general Hebrew calculations.

In assigning this period to Job and his friends, we suppose them to have flourished before, or about the time of Moses; and the sentiments and religious opinions which are maintained in their discourse, are in general such as were consistent with the information that obtained before the Mosaic dispensation.<sup>8</sup> Job appears to have worshipped God in the manner of the patriarchs, before the priesthood was confined to Aaron; and in the detail of his piety he affords a transcript of those primitive principles which he might have derived from Abraham and Nahor. He and his friends seem to have been acquainted with the rules of traditional religion,<sup>9</sup> as collected from occasional revelations to the patriarchs, together with the deductions of that conscience which was "a law to the Gentiles."<sup>b</sup> But it must also be observed, that they sometimes display a greater knowledge of important truths than was consistent with the general notions that must have prevailed in their time. All of Abraham's descendants, indeed, who were contemporary with Job, may be supposed to have been acquainted with the attributes of God,

\* Grot. Præf. Diodat. Argum. in Job.

<sup>7</sup> Few of Job's supposed contemporaries lived to so great a length of years; but Job was blessed with a long life. He is by some supposed to have died about A. M. 2449.

<sup>8</sup> When Elihu reckons up the modes of revelation, he takes no account of the Mosaic.

<sup>9</sup> Peters's Critical Dissert. on Job, p. 151.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. ii. 14, and Tertull. cap. 2.

and with the use of sacrifice.<sup>c</sup> They might, from tradition, have collected some knowledge of the fall of angels,<sup>d</sup> of the creation, of original sin,<sup>e</sup> and even of a promised Messiah. Yet still there will remain some particulars of which they were informed, that appear to be above the general information which the Gentiles possessed; and therefore we may assent to an opinion which is maintained by many, both Jewish and Christian writers,<sup>f</sup> that Job and his friends were enlightened by a prophetic spirit, as certainly some few persons among the Gentiles were;<sup>g</sup> and the conviction that Job was to be considered as a patriarchal prophet, was probably the inducement which influenced the Jews to admit his work into the canon of their scripture, if we suppose it to have been written by himself, and not to have been compiled by an inspired author of their own nation.

Job and his friends were unquestionably distinguished by extraordinary marks of God's favour; and we are authorized by the book to consider them as sometimes favoured by divine revelations. Eliphaz received instruction "from the visions of the night,"<sup>h</sup> and heard the voice of a spirit, in secret still whispers, like the "still small voice" which Elijah heard.<sup>i</sup> Elihu also felt a divine power;<sup>k</sup> but Job himself appears to have been invested with peculiar dignity, and he enjoyed pre-eminent distinctions above the Gentile prophets. God spoke to him "out of the whirlwind;"<sup>l</sup> and it has been supposed, from the fifth verse of the forty-second chapter, that he beheld the manifestation of the divine presence; as, perhaps, in a glorious cloud, for so the Seventy understood it. He undoubtedly, in many places, speaks by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit; and expresses himself concerning the doctrine of gratuitous justification,<sup>m</sup> and of a future state, with a clearness and information that were evidently the result of prophetic apprehension. We

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xlii. 8.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. iv. 18.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xii. 16; xiv. 4; xv. 14; xxv. 4; xxvi. 13; xxxi. 33.

<sup>f</sup> Patrick's Appendix to his Paraphrase. St. Austin calls Job "Eximius Prophetarum."

<sup>g</sup> As Balaam, whom the Jews conceived to have been the same person with Elihu.

<sup>h</sup> Job iv. 13, 16. Hence R. Sol. Jarchi was led to remark, that the Shechinah was upon Eliphaz.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Kings xix. 12.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. xxxii. 8, 18; xxxiii. 15, 16.

The name of Elihu, which signifies "He is my God," and other circumstances, have led some writers to consider him as a representative of the Messiah; but it must detract from the dignity of his character, to find that he condemns with too much severity, and even misstates the sentiments of Job.

<sup>l</sup> So the Spirit descended on the apostles at the feast of Pentecost, "suddenly, with a rushing mighty wind."

<sup>m</sup> Chap. ix. 2, 3; xxv. 4. Hodges's Inquiry into the Design of the Book of Job.

can, indeed, attribute the precise and emphatic declaration contained in the nineteenth chapter to nothing but immediate revelation from God; and must, agreeably to the opinion of the most judicious writers, ancient and modern, consider it as an evident profession of faith in a Redeemer,<sup>2</sup> and of entire confidence in a resurrection and future judgment.<sup>3</sup>

Having observed thus much with respect to the period in which Job may be supposed to have lived, it may with more facility be considered at what time, and by whom, his history should seem likely to have been written. Upon this subject, it is not necessary to enter into an examination of the various arguments produced by different authors, in support of their several opinions; but it may be observed, that some have conceived the book to be the production of Job<sup>4</sup> himself, or of Elihu,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It is not necessary from this expression to conclude, that the whole mystery of the redemption was revealed to Job; but only that he entertained a consolatory assurance of some future personage, who should appear to deliver mankind from the curse of Adam, and to judge the world in righteousness.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xix. 25—29. Some commentators, it is true, consider this passage as expressive of Job's confidence only in a present restoration; which is to restrict the expressions, in a most unauthorized manner, and to interpret scripture upon preconceived notions. Patrick supposes this temporal restoration to be typical of a future resurrection, professing to follow St. Jerom's authority; but in the place alluded to, St. Jerom (or the author of the commentaries under his name) does not confine the words to a figurative prediction. He says absolutely, that Job, in this passage, "resurrectionem futuram prophetat in spiritu," prophesieth in the spirit the future resurrection. And though in other places St. Jerom admits, with all writers, a double sense of scripture, it by no means follows that he does so in this place; where, indeed, only a single sense could be intended, for Job had uniformly declared his despondence as to the present life. St. Jerom likewise, in his epistle to Paulinus, affirms, that Job here prophesies the resurrection of the body in terms as clear and exact as ever were used. "Resurrectionem corporum sic prophetat ut nullus de ea, vel manifestus, vel cautius scripserit." Vid. also, Epist. 61. ad Pammach. This remarkable passage is supposed by the Jews to relate to the restoration of happi-

ness in a future life: and certainly it contains a manifest and direct prophecy of the future resurrection of the body, and of the judgment of the world by Christ: as the solemnity of the introduction, the tenor of Job's discourse worked up to its highest pitch, the replies of his friends, and every expression (as faithfully translated in our Bible) demonstrate. We cannot restrict the prophecy to a confidence in a temporal restoration, without abrogating the obvious sense of the words, and without considering them as utterly extravagant and unmeaning. Wherefore should "they be graven with an iron pen, and with lead in the rock for ever?" How, "after worms should have destroyed his body," could Job "see God in the flesh," except in a future life? Why, lastly, did he mention that his "Redeemer should stand at the latter day upon the earth," and that "his own eyes should behold him," unless to declare his assurance of a future resurrection and judgment? To the unexampled misery of Job, and through him to the rest of mankind, God might vouchsafe the first explicit revelation of a future retributive judgment, and the first distinct view of a spiritual Redeemer. See Peter's Critic. Dissert. on Job.

<sup>4</sup> Orig. cont. Cels. Gregor. Mag. in Job. lib. i. cap. 1. Suidas in Job. Isidor. Hisp. Sixt. Senens. Hottinger, Walton, Bochart, Huet, &c.

<sup>5</sup> Lightfoot supposes Elihu to have been the author, because in the beginning of his discourse he appears to speak in that character; but he is only introduced, as are the other friends, in the first person, for the sake of ornament.

while many have attributed it to Moses,<sup>7</sup> and others to later prophets, as to Solomon<sup>8</sup> and to Isaiah.<sup>9</sup> The most probable opinion is, that it was composed from such memorials as Job himself, or his friends, might have left in the Syriac or Arabic language. The work is written in a style agreeable to the genius of the Arabic language. It is sublime, lofty, compressed, and full of figures and allusive images. It contains, likewise, much of that profound philosophy, and elevated turn of thought, for which the Arabians were as remarkable,<sup>10</sup> as for the dignity and allegorical cast of their language. It may be added, likewise, that some of the images and remarks in this book appear to have been drawn from circumstances peculiar and appropriate to Arabia;<sup>11</sup> and that it has every characteristic of the most venerable antiquity, and all the appearance of an original patriarchal work.<sup>12</sup>

That the book is drawn up in a poetical form, and adorned with poetical embellishments, is no proof that it was not written in great part by Job: for though it be inconsistent with the violence of outrageous passion, or the freedom of animated dialogue, to speak in numbers, yet there is no reason why Job may not be supposed to have amused himself, when restored to ease and prosperity, by recollecting the circumstances of his affliction, and to have described them with metrical arrangement; it being customary in the earlier ages to compose the most important works in some kind of measure;<sup>13</sup> and consistent with our notions of inspiration, to suppose that its suggestions might

<sup>7</sup> Bava Bathra, cap. i. f. 15. Kimchi, Methodius apud Photium. R. Levi Ben. Gerson in Præf. Aben-Ezra ad cap. ii. 11. Huet. Demonst. Evang. Polychron. and Julian. Halicar. ap. Nicæt. in Catena in Job. Hieron. Epist. ad Paul.

<sup>8</sup> Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. ad Exæquat. Harduin in Chron. Vet. Test.

<sup>9</sup> Philo Codercus. Præf. in Job. Scaliger. Grotius. Le Clerc. Warburton attributes it to Ezra, and Garnett to Ezekiel.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Kings iv. 33; Jerem. xlix. 7; Obad. ver. 8; Baruch iii. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Chap. vi. 15—17; xxxvii. 9, 22. Vid. also, chap. ix. 26, where Schultens translates the word פִּיפְיָן, by "naves papyro vel arundine textas;" and supposes it to signify those ships made of cane, or the papyrus, that were used on the Nile. Vid. Lucan. lib. iv. 135, 136.

<sup>12</sup> Grey's Pref. to Job. Origen. cont. Cels. Euseb. and Selden upon Rom. ii. 14. Hottinger Smegna Orient. Job mentions only the most ancient species of idolatry, the worship of the sun and moon. Vid. chap. xxxi. 26, 27, and the most ancient kind of writing, by sculpture. His riches are reckoned by his cattle; and it is by no means clear, that the word *kesitah*, translated a piece of money, ch. xliii. 11, does not mean a *lamb*. Vid. Spanheim, and Calmet in Gen. xxxiii. 19. Or if it mean money, there is no reason to suppose that it might not be in use in the time and country assigned to Job. Compare, also, chap. xliii. 8, with Numb. xxiii. 1. Bishop Lowth considers the style as bearing evident marks of the most remote antiquity. Vid. Prælect. 82.

<sup>13</sup> Isidore Orig. lib. i. 27.

be conveyed in the captivating dress of poetry. How far Job reduced the work towards its present form, cannot be determined; it is contended only, that he left sufficient materials for some Hebrew writer to digest it as it now appears. As the Hebrew and Arabic language are derived from the same origin, both being deduced from Abraham's descendants, among whom the Hebrew was preserved and the Arabic originated, they may well be supposed to approximate towards their source, and to have much resembled each other, as indeed they now do, with great affinity.<sup>a</sup> It is therefore possible, that Job might have written the book in the language in which it now exists;<sup>b</sup> the last verses only being added by some prophet who received it into the Jewish Canon.<sup>c</sup> But if we conceive that the Hebrew language must have differed so much from the Arabic, in the time of Job, that what he wrote must have been translated for the use of the Hebrews, we may suppose it to have been composed by some inspired writer among the Hebrews, who retained those Syriac and Arabic expressions which are interspersed through the work, as appropriate ornaments of the history, and as tending, perhaps, to facilitate the versification. Some critics, indeed, consider these expressions as foreign corruptions introduced into the Jewish language after the captivity, and therefore imagine that the work must have been composed after those of David and Solomon; but what they consider as Chaldaisms, are by others, with more probability, represented to be only Syriac and Arabic expressions.<sup>d</sup>

The book then was probably either written by Job, or composed from materials which he left by some writer who lived

<sup>a</sup> Hunt's *Clavis Pentateuchi*.

<sup>b</sup> All the descendants of Abraham, the Israelites, Idumeans, and Arabs, probably continued long to use the same language, till separation and gradual innovations produced a change. The names of Ishmael's, Keturah's, Esau's, and Job's families, are pure Hebrew.

<sup>c</sup> It is uncertain when the book was received into the Canon. Some think that it was admitted with Solomon's writings by the men of Hezekiah; but probably it was inserted much earlier. In the Hebrew it is placed immediately after the Proverbs; but in the Septuagint, and by St. Jerom, it was placed as in our Bible. Peters suggests, that it might have been presented to Solomon by the queen of Sheba; and

Wesley, on a conjecture as slender, fancies that it might have been procured by Eli-melech and Naomi, when in Moab, which was in Idumæa, and near the spot where he conceives Job to have lived. The place which it holds in the book affords no clue to discover the period of its admission. It was, however, doubtless received before the time of Ezekiel. Vid. Mercer. in Proverbs.

<sup>d</sup> Schultens, *Grey's Job*, p. 12. It has been disputed whether the names of Job's daughters are of Hebrew or Arabic extraction. But as both languages have the same roots, the dispute is idle. The word *Jehovah*, which was known only to the Jews, might have been applied to the Deity by the compiler or translator.

soon after the period of the history herein described. They who dispute this antiquity, maintain that, besides the pretended Chaldaisms which have been before represented as Arabic and Syriac expressions, they discover some passages in the book which are imitations of particulars in the works of David and of Solomon: but if the coincidences produced in support of this assertion be not accidental, they prove nothing; since there is equal reason to suppose, that David and Solomon might have borrowed from Job, as other prophets certainly did:<sup>d</sup> such imitations of expressions for the communication of similar sentiments being customary among the sacred writers.

If, however, we admit, as some have contended, that the book contains allusions to the Mosaic laws, and also to circumstances and events of the Jewish history, and that these allusions are not merely such as refer to particulars with which Job might be acquainted,<sup>e</sup> nor consist in expressions that Moses, if the compiler or translator of the book, might have introduced,<sup>f</sup> supposing him to have composed it after the delivery of the Law; though such allusions cannot be allowed to invalidate the antiquity which is here attributed to Job himself, or to disprove that he might have furnished the chief materials for the work, they certainly will prove that it was composed in its present form, long after the period in which the history must have occurred, and that it was written or translated by an author later than Moses. As a matter of opinion, however, it may be observed, that no such allusions do appear as should influence us to reject the pretensions of Job, or of Moses;<sup>g</sup> none certainly that should incline us to believe that the book was not written long before the captivity;<sup>h</sup> since of the pretended allusions to

<sup>d</sup> Huet. Prop. iv. passim.

<sup>e</sup> The sentiments in chap. xvii. 5; xxi. 19; xxii. 6; xxiv. 7, 9, 10; xxxi. 9, 10, 28, produced by Warburton and others, as allusions to the law, which escaped the author, might surely be general remarks. All the supposed allusions to the flood, and other particulars described in Genesis, only prove that Job was acquainted with those traditions, which the descendants of Abraham must have known without the Mosaic account. Job might have heard, likewise, of the miracles in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, if we suppose him to refer to them in chap. xxxviii. 15; ix. 7, 8; xii. 15; xxvi. 12; as likewise of the wandering of the

Israelites in the wilderness, and of some other contemporary events, at which he is imagined (though perhaps without sufficient reason) to hint. Vid. chap. xii. 24; xxxi. 24; xxix. 25.

<sup>f</sup> The expressions in chap. xx. 17; xxii. 22; xxix. 46; xv. 17, 18, might be general, or introduced by Moses. The nineteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter may apply to Noah and his sons. Vid. Peters's Dissert. on Job, part i. sect. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Huet. Prop. iv. in Job.

<sup>h</sup> The passage in chap. xxxiii. 15—26, has been imagined to be descriptive of God's proceedings with Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx; 2 Chron. xxxii; as that in chap. xxxv. 8.

the regal history of the Jews, none are so evident as to justify any conclusion to the contrary; and there appears, indeed, to be no sufficient reason, notwithstanding every passage has been critically analyzed for that purpose, to suppose that the book was not written or translated, nearer the period of the history which it describes.

The opinion, indeed, most anciently and generally entertained was, that it was composed by Moses, who might have collected the information which it contained in the land of Midian;<sup>i</sup> and no objection to this opinion can be drawn from the place which is assigned to the book in the Bible, as no attention appears to have been paid to chronology in this arrangement.

The book, however, whether written originally in the Arabic, or in the Hebrew language, whether composed or translated by Moses, or any subsequent prophet, is unquestionably to be considered as an inspired work, since it was certainly in the Jewish Canon. It is not, indeed, particularly mentioned by Josephus; because the history which it contains was totally unconnected with the Hebrew affairs, of which he professed exclusively to treat.<sup>k</sup> It was, however, included in the catalogue of twenty-two books, which he assigned as the number contained in the sacred list.<sup>l</sup> It is cited as scriptural by the apostles;<sup>m</sup> and was universally received as canonical by all the fathers, councils, and churches.<sup>n</sup>

12, has been supposed to coincide with the account of the punishment of Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13; so likewise the denunciation in chap. xxxiv. 20, has been represented as allusive to the sudden destruction of Sennacherib's army, 2 Kings xix. 35. But these passages of Job contain only general descriptions of God's judgments, that might easily be drawn to apply to any instance; and the last might rather be supposed to refer to the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, Exod. xii. 29. The pretended resemblance between the writing of Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 10—17, and the lamentation of Job, chap. vii. 1—8, is only a casual similarity in the complaints of misery. It must have been the true spirit of theory that could draw any argument from a comparison between the description of Job's friends, chap. xxx. 1—8, and the account of the Cutheans and Samaritans in Nehemiah iv. 1—4; or that could fancy that the representation of Satan's appearance, Job i. 6, &c. was designed on the model of Zechariah's vision,

Zech. iii. 1—5. See other resemblances, as fanciful or accidental, in Warburton's and Garnett's allegories.

<sup>i</sup> Origen. cont. Cels. lib. vi. and in Job. Some have conceived that Moses produced it to console the Israelites under the hardships of their Egyptian bondage. Vid. Origen. Com. Bava Bathra, cap. 1. Julian. Halicar. ap. Nicæt. The book contains some passages that resemble the hymn of Moses. Compare chap. xxix. 2—6, with Deut. xxxii. 7—14. Grey's Præf. ad Lib. Job. and Answ. to Warburton. But if Moses were the author, he probably wrote it in the wilderness. No argument can be drawn from the supposed resemblance, or difference of style, between the book of Job and the writings of Moses, as the subject affords such scope for fancy, and such opposite opinions have been entertained on the subject.

<sup>k</sup> Proem. Antiq. Jud.

<sup>l</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 19; James v. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Gregor. Præf. in Job.



Though the book of Job is by no means to be considered as a drama written with fictitious contrivance, or as resembling in its construction any of those Grecian compositions which it preceded so long, it may still be represented as so far dramatic, as the parties are introduced speaking with great fidelity of character, and as it deviates from strict historical accuracy for the sake of effect. It is a complete, though peculiar work; and regular in its subject and the distribution of its parts.<sup>o</sup> Mr. Locke justly pronounces it to be a perfect poem: the two first chapters containing a prose argument, which he conceives (though without sufficient reason) to have been added by the compiler; as also the naming of the several speakers, the want of which leaves the Canticles in great obscurity. The interlocutory parts of the book appear to be written in a loose kind of metre. Many of Job's discourses are strict and perfect elegies.<sup>p</sup> St. Jerom maintained, that the book is written, from the third verse of the third chapter to the sixth verse of the forty-second chapter, in hexameter verses, with some occasional variations, according to the idiom of the language.<sup>q</sup> Of this, however, there are no sufficient indications. The conclusion, which relates the final prosperity and death of Job, must have been added by the compiler.

The many excellent qualities of Job have rendered him to all ages an illustrious example of righteousness. Eusebius has justly remarked, that he was so distinguished for wisdom, as to have found out, by divine grace, a conduct not unsuitable to the evangelical doctrine of our Saviour; and it appears from the passage, which in the Septuagint is annexed to this book,<sup>r</sup> that the reverence which the Jews entertained for his character had given rise to a tradition, by no means incredible, according to the opinion of Theophanes, that Job was one of those saints who rose out from their graves at the resurrection of Christ; a tradition which, if unsupported by any authority, may be still considered as bearing a merited testimony to his superior righteousness.<sup>s</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Lowth's *Prael. Poet.* xxxiii.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. iii, vi, vii, x, xii, xvii, xix, xxix, xxx.

<sup>q</sup> Lowth's *Prælect.* xiv. and Shuckford's *Connect.* vol. ii. ch. 9. Hieron. *Præf.* in *Lib. Job.*

<sup>r</sup> The addition in the Septuagint runs thus: γεγραπται δε αυτον παλιν αναστησεσθαι, μεθ' ου αν ανιστησιν ο κυριος. The author of which must have believed that

Job describes his assurance of a future resurrection in this book, as particularly in the contested passage; for where else in the Old Testament is it written that Job should rise again?

<sup>s</sup> The book of Job, it is said, was read in the ancient church on fast days and at Easter, Job being considered as a figure of Christ. *Vid.* Origen. in *Job.*

To form a perfect notion of the great excellence of Job's character, we must contemplate him in every vicissitude of his eventful life, and consider his conduct under every temptation of hazardous prosperity or aggravated distress. We must judge of him, not from the unguarded expressions which his sufferings occasionally provoked,<sup>a</sup> but from the deliberate strains of his piety, and his patient submission to the divine will, under every possible affliction but the pangs of guilt and the terrors of despair. If the mistaken severity of his friends sometimes provoked him to transgress the decency of an humble and modest doubt of his own innocence, yet reproof and recollection instantly called him to a confession of unworthiness, and to a becoming resignation to the divine decrees.<sup>x</sup> It was, indeed, in vindication of his own character, that he displayed the fair description of his life, eminently distinguished as it was for integrity and benevolence; and it has been a want of sufficient attention to the scope of the dialogue, and to the firm principles to which Job, notwithstanding his occasional impatience, ultimately adheres, that has caused such strange misconceptions as have been entertained with respect to his character<sup>y</sup> and discourse. To obviate, however, all erroneous objections to an example which the sacred writers have considered as excellent,<sup>z</sup> and to preclude false notions concerning sentiments represented as consistent with the divine wisdom,<sup>a</sup> it is necessary to advert to the provocations which Job had received, and to the complicated distress that disconcerted his mind and irritated his passions. His friends, who appear to have visited him with charitable intentions,<sup>b</sup> did in reality only aggravate his misfortunes; for having taken up a common, but mistaken notion, that prosperity and afflictions were dealt out in this life according to the deserts of men,<sup>c</sup> they accuse him of having merited his extraordinary misfortunes by some concealed guilt;<sup>d</sup> and are led on by the heat of contention to "vex his soul by their reproaches, and to break him in pieces with words." Job, solicitous to refute the charge, and to vindicate the ways of Providence, affirms, on the contrary, that adversity is no proof of divine wrath, but

<sup>a</sup> Chap. vi. 26.

<sup>x</sup> Chap. viii. 20; xxxiv. 31, 32; xl. 4, 6; xlii. 3, 4.

<sup>y</sup> Garnett and Warburton.

<sup>z</sup> Ezek. xiv. 14; James v. 11. Vid. xxii. 5.

<sup>a</sup> Chrysost. Hom. v. ad Pop. Antioch.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. ii. 11—13.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. iv. 7, 8.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. iv. 7, 8, 9; viii. 13; xviii. 21;

often designed as a trial.\* That in this life the good and the bad indiscriminately flourish, and often perish in promiscuous destruction; and that, consequently, there must be some period for judgment and equal retribution, for which the wicked are reserved.<sup>2</sup> With respect to himself, he disclaims all fear from reflecting on his past conduct; and then describes, with somewhat too much of pride and confidence, the excellency of those virtues with which he had "arrayed" his prosperity. With an impatience, likewise, that his sufferings, great as they were, could not justify, he professes a thorough despondence and disregard with respect to the present life, earnestly wishes<sup>b</sup> for death, and appeals to the decisions of a future judgment for justification.<sup>1</sup> For this assumption, and for this impatience, he is justly censured by Elihu; whose "wrath was kindled against Job, because he justified himself rather than God." Elihu, however, reprehends him with rather too much harshness, and in some measure misrepresents his sentiments.<sup>k</sup> Yet inasmuch as Elihu had rested the equity of the divine dispensations on the acknowledged attributes of God, he had reasoned justly as far as he had proceeded; and therefore, perhaps, is only tacitly<sup>l</sup> censured by the Deity, when God pronounces that "Job had spoken the thing that was right." God even pursues the argument of Elihu, and, in a style of inimitable majesty, proclaims his own uncontrolled power, and unfathomable wisdom, to the discountenancing of human knowledge. After the most awful and impressive representation of his own glorious works and attributes,<sup>m</sup> and after some reprehension of Job for his arrogant profession of innocence, the Almighty condemns the false reasoning of the three friends, and ratifies the conclusion which Job had made with respect to a future judgment.<sup>n</sup>

\* Chap. vii. 18; xxiii. 10.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ix. 22—24; xii. 6; xxi. 7—15.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxi. 30; xxvi. 6; xxvii. 8, 9, 19; xxxi. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. vi. 8—11; vii. 7; ix. 21; x. 1; xvi. 22; xvii. 11—10. These passages fully prove, that Job did not look forward to any temporal restoration; of which he declares also the improbability, and laments only that he should not live to see his reputation vindicated. Vid. chap. xiv. 7—14; vii. 8—10; x. 21, 22. *Peters's Desert on Job*, part ii. sect. 4. *Scott's Version of Job*, Appendix ii.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xiii. 15—19; xiv. 12—15; xvi.

19; xvii. 15; xxiii. 3—10; xxvi. 6; xxx. 23, 24; xxxi. 14; all consistently with chap. xix. 25—29.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xxxiii. 8, 9; xxxiv. 5, 9, 35.

<sup>l</sup> Some have conceived that the opening of God's speech was addressed as a reproof to Elihu, though the substance of the answer was designed for Job.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. xl. 8, 10.

<sup>n</sup> Job had spoken right, by having recourse to the arrangements of a future judgment. If the divine justice did not rest on this foundation, it must have executed its decrees in the present life, as the friends of Job maintained. God does not

Such is the scope of the discourse, which finely unfolds God's designs in dealing out afflictions to mankind;° which, when it first appeared, must have conveyed truths that unassisted reason had not learned; and have been well calculated to refute the absurd notions which then began to rise concerning the two independent principles of good and evil.¶ When the book was received into the Jewish Canon, it must likewise have been well adapted to counteract any erroneous conceptions that might have been formed from a consideration of the temporal promises of the Law: which though they covenanted present reward to the Hebrew nation, considered as a community, by no means assured to individuals a just and exact remuneration in the present life.¶ The book likewise admirably serves to prove, that the power of temptation, allowed to evil spirits, is restricted in merciful consideration of human weakness. It exhibits, in an interesting history, the vicissitudes of human affairs. It illustrates the danger of contention, the ingratitude and baseness of common friendship,† the vigilant care of Providence, and the necessity of resignation to the divine will. Through the whole work we discover religious instruction shining forth amidst the venerable simplicity of ancient manners. It everywhere abounds with the noblest sentiments of piety, uttered with the spirit of inspired conviction. It is a work unrivalled for the magnificence of its language, and for the beautiful and sublime images which it presents.¶ In the wonderful speech of the Deity, every line delineates his attributes, every sentence opens a picture of some grand object in creation‡ characterized by its most striking features. Add to this, that its prophetic parts reflect much light

condescend to explain the equity of his own counsels, any farther than by approving the convictions of Job; this was never questioned in the controversy, but defended on both sides, though on different principles.

° Job's character was fully proved and perfected by this trial, and the pride and impatience of his temper corrected.

¶ Use and Intent of Prophecy, p. 207.

¶ This is evident from the relations of sacred history, from the complaints of the psalmist, and from the sufferings and denunciations of the prophets.

† Job xlii. 11.

¶ The book, in some of its beauties of imagery and description, has been compared with, and justly preferred to the works of Homer. Vid. Wealey's Diss. vi. ex Gnom.

Homer. Jacob du Port. Burke on the Sublime, p. ii. sect. 4, 5.

‡ Various have been the conjectures concerning the behemoth and the leviathan, which are so forcibly described in this book. The former is by some supposed to have been the elephant, by others, the hippopotamus; the latter is usually represented to have been the crocodile. But as the descriptions exceed the character of all animals now known, they have been conceived to contain some mystery. It is one design of scripture to convince mankind of ignorance; and difficulties, while they exercise sagacity, inculcate the useful lesson of humility. Vid. Bochart Hierozoicon. lib. v. c. 25.

on the economy of God's moral government, and every admirer of sacred antiquity, every inquirer after religious instruction, will seriously rejoice, that the enraptured sentence of Job<sup>a</sup> is realized to a more effectual and unforeseen accomplishment; that while the memorable records of antiquity have mouldered from the rock, the prophetic assurance and sentiments of Job are graven in scriptures, that no time shall alter, no changes shall efface.

### OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

THE book of Psalms, which in the Hebrew is entitled *Sepher Tehilleth*,<sup>a</sup> that is, the book of Hymns, or Praises of the Lord, contains the productions of different writers.<sup>b</sup> These productions are called, however, the Psalms of David, because a great part of them was composed by him, who, for his peculiarly excellent spirit, was distinguished by the title of "the Psalmist."<sup>c</sup> Some of them were perhaps penned before, and some after the time of David; but all of them by persons under the influence of the Holy Ghost, since all were judged worthy to be inserted into the canon of sacred writ. Ezra probably collected them into one book, and placed them in the order which they now preserve, after they had been previously collected in part.<sup>d</sup> It appears that the hundred and fifty psalms therein contained were selected from a much greater number, which, it may be presumed, were not suggested by the Holy Spirit. The Levites were, indeed, enjoined to preserve in the temple<sup>e</sup> all such hymns as might be composed in honour of God; and of these, doubtless, there must have been a large number; but such only could be

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xix. 23.

<sup>b</sup> In the New Testament it is called by Christ and his apostles, *Βιβλος ψαλμων*. Luke xx. 42; Acts i. 20. The word Psalter is derived from *ψαλτηριον*, psaltery, a musical instrument, styled Nabal in Hebrew. It was strung, and made of wood in the style of a harp, and in the shape of a Greek delta, Δ. Vid. 1 Kings x. 12. Athen. lib. iv. cap. 23. and Calmet's Diss. sur les Instrum.

<sup>b</sup> Hieron. ad Cyprian. and Sophron. Hilar. Præf. in Psal. Genebr. in Psal. i.

R. David Kimchi.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. xxix. 25—28. They were so collected in the time of Christ. Vid. Luke xx. 42. The second psalm is cited by St. Paul in the order in which it now stands, Acts xiii. 33. Vid. Athan. in Synop. tom. ii. p. 86. Hilar. Prol. in Lib. Ezra iii. 10, 11; and Proleg. in Psalm. Euseb. ad Psal. lxxxvi.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. c. 1. and lib. v. c. 1.

admitted into the Canon as were evidently inspired compositions; and we may judge of the scrupulous severity with which they were examined, since the numerous hymns of Solomon were rejected; and even, as it is said, some of David's himself were thought unentitled to insertion.<sup>f</sup> The authority of those, however, which we now possess, is established, not only by their rank among the sacred writings,<sup>g</sup> and by the unvaried testimony of every age, but likewise by many intrinsic proofs of inspiration. Not only do they breathe through every part a divine spirit of eloquence, but they contain numberless illustrious prophecies that were remarkably accomplished, and that are frequently appealed to by the evangelical writers. The sacred character of the whole book is established by the testimony of our Saviour and his apostles; who, in various parts of the New Testament, appropriate the predictions of the Psalms as obviously apposite to the circumstances of their lives, and as intentionally preconcerted to describe them. Yet, as Dr. Allix justly remarks, though the sacred writers have fixed the sense of near fifty psalms,<sup>h</sup> they have by no means cited all that they might have cited, but have only furnished a key to their hearers, making applications incidentally as opportunities occurred.

David has, by the later Jews, been reckoned among the Hagiographi;<sup>i</sup> not being considered by them as a prophet any more than Daniel, because he lived differently from the prophets, and amidst the magnificence of a court. He was supposed, however, by them, to have prophesied by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, without any exterior impulse, but from some internal influence urging, and enabling him to speak and utter instructions, on divine as well as human subjects, with more than his wonted powers, and in a style superior to that of the productions of human abilities. But the prophetic character of David is established on much higher authority, and the importance and clearness of his predictions demonstrate his title

<sup>f</sup> The prophets were not always empowered to write by the suggestion of the spirit; though St. Ambrose thought that David did always possess the gift of prophecy. Vid. Præf. in Psalm i; 1 Sam. xvi. 13.

<sup>g</sup> They are cited as the Law. John x. 34; xii. 34.

<sup>h</sup> New Testament, passim.

<sup>i</sup> R. Albo, Maam. iii. c. 10. Kinchi

Madmah Sillim, vol. ii. The Jewish gradations of prophecy are often very fancifully determined; but David must be pronounced a prophet by the Jewish rule, since he is a true prophet who is not deceived in foretelling future events. Vid. Maimon. de Fundam. Legis, cap. 10. §. 2. Deut. xviii. 32; Jer. xxviii. 9. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 45.

to the highest rank among the prophets.<sup>k</sup> Many attempts have been made to ascertain precisely which psalms were derived from David's pen, as likewise to discover the authors of the others. Some are said to have been composed by Moses; and some were written in or after the captivity.<sup>l</sup> It is necessary to refer to the commentators at large for various opinions upon this subject; and without dilating, to canvass the date and author of each individual psalm, or to specify the circumstances that occasioned its production, it may be briefly observed, that the Talmudists<sup>m</sup> and Masoretic writers admit, as authors of the Psalms, Adam, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, the sons of Korah, David, Solomon, Asaph, Jeduthun and Ethan; and that Calmet, after a judicious investigation of particulars, has adopted nearly the following arrangement, if we consider them as distributed in the Hebrew, and in our translation.

Under the first head are twelve psalms, of which the chronology is uncertain; viz. i. iv, v, viii, xix, lxxxi, xc, xci, xcix, cx, cxxxix, cxlv. The first of these was probably composed by David, or Ezra; the eighty-first is attributed to Asaph,<sup>n</sup> the ninetieth to Moses, and the hundred and tenth to David. The authors of the others are unknown, though some of them are inscribed to David.

Under the second head are included the psalms which were composed by David during the persecution carried on against him by Saul, or other enemies: these are in number twenty; viz. vii, xi, xvi, xvii, xviii, xxii, xxxi, xxxiv, xxxv, lii, liv, lvi, lvii, lviii, lix, lxiv, cix, cxl, cxli, cxlii.

Under the third head are placed such as David composed on different occasions, after his accession to the throne: these, which amount to forty-four, are as follows; ii, vi, ix, xii, xx, xxi, xxiii, xxiv, xxviii, xxix, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, xli, li, lx, lxi, lxii, lxiii, lxv, lxviii, lxix, lxx, lxxxvi, xc, xcvi, ci, ciii, civ, cv, cvi, cviii, cxviii, cxix, cxx, cxxi, cxxii, cxxiv, cxxxi, cxxxiii, cxliii, cxliv.

The fourth head contains those which were written by David

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. xxi. 1; xxiii. 2; 2 Chron. xxix. 25; Nehem. xii. 24; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Matt. xiii. 35; xxii. 43; xxvii. 35; Mark xii. 36; Acts i. 16; ii. 30; iv. 25; Heb. iii. 7.

<sup>l</sup> Lightfoot, Chron. of Old Test. Maius (Econ. Vet. Test. Hammond's, Patrick's,

and Horne's Commentaries.

<sup>m</sup> Bava Bathra, cap. 1. Kimchi, &c.

<sup>n</sup> This was probably designed to be sung in the temple upon the feast of trumpets; as also at the feast of tabernacles.

during the rebellion of Absalom, amounting to six; which are iii, xlii, xliii, lv, lxxi, lxxxiv.

The fifth head includes those written from the death of Absalom to the captivity; these, which appear to be ten, are xxx, xlv, lxxii, lxxiv, lxxvi, lxxviii, lxxix, lxxxii, lxxxiii, cxxxii. Of these, probably, David composed the thirtieth, the seventy-second, and possibly the seventy-eighth. The seventy-sixth seems likely to have been produced after the miraculous deliverance from the Assyrian army, in the days of Hezekiah.

The sixth head comprehends the psalms composed during the distresses and captivities of the church; these were written chiefly by Asaph and Korah, and their descendants. They may be reckoned thirty in number, and are x, xiii, xiv, xv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxxvi, xxxvii, xliv, xlix, l, liii, lxvii, lxxiii, lxxv, lxxvii, lxxx, lxxxviii, lxxxix, xcii, xciii, xciv, cii, cxv, cxxiii, cxxv, cxxix, cxxx, cxxxvii.

To the last head are assigned those hymns of joy and thanksgiving which were written, as well after other deliverances as upon the release from the Babylonish captivity, and at the building and dedication of the temple. These, which are twenty-eight, are xlvi, xlvii, xlviii, lxvi, lxxxv, lxxxvii, xcvi, xcvi, c, cvii, cxv, cxii, cxiii, cxiv, cxvi, cxvii, cxxvi, cxxvii, cxxviii, cxxxii, cxxxiv, cxxxv, cxxxvi, cxxxviii, cxlvi, cxlvii, cxlviii, cxlix, cl.

According to Calmet's account, from which this in some respects varies, only forty-five psalms are positively assigned to David, though probably many more should be ascribed to him. It is, however, of less consequence to determine precisely by whom the Holy Spirit delivered these oracles, since we have indubitable evidence of the sacred character of the whole book, for it is collectively cited in scripture,<sup>o</sup> and is prophetic in almost every part;<sup>p</sup> and several of those persons who are supposed to have contributed to the composition of the work are expressly represented as prophets in scripture.<sup>q</sup>

The name of David is prefixed to about seventy-three; and

<sup>o</sup> The evangelical writers cite the psalms in general under the name of David.

<sup>p</sup> Guthrie Theolog. Proph. p. 98. Brentius ad 2 Jam. xxiii. 26.

<sup>q</sup> Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, supposed authors of some of the psalms, are in

scripture called seers, and said to have prophesied. Vide 2 Chron. xxix. 30; xxxv. 15; 1 Chron. xxv. 1—5. Vide also, 1 Kings iv. 80, 81, where Ethan (whom some consider as the author of Psal. lxxxviii. and lxxxix.) is spoken of as eminent for wisdom.



many persons have collected from the last verse of the seventy-second psalm, which reports that "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," that David's hymns do there conclude; and if we consider that this psalm was probably produced on the establishment of Solomon on the throne of his father, it is not unlikely that it contains the last effusions of David's prophetic spirit; but as his compositions are not all placed together, many which followed in the order of the book may have been written by him; and we may suppose him to have been the author of at least all those which are not particularly assigned to others, nor consistent with his time.\* The Psalms are certainly not arranged with any regard to chronology,† and many which follow the seventy-second in the order of the book, are inscribed with the name of David. It must be observed, however, that the titles prefixed to the psalms, some of which are not in the Hebrew manuscripts, are often of very questionable authority; and sometimes undoubtedly not of equal antiquity with the text, being possibly affixed as conjectural. They were not always designed to point out the author, but often apply to the musicians‡ appointed to set them to music. They likewise sometimes appear to be only terms of instruments,§ or directions for the choice of tunes.¶ But it must be confessed, that upon this subject the opinions are so various and conjectural, that nothing satisfactory can be offered, any more than upon the word *Selah*,‡ which so often occurs.

Many fanciful divisions of this book have been made. The Jews, at some uncertain period, divided it into five sections,

\* In the prospect of the prosperity of his son's government, David, on the strength of divine promises, breaks out into an enraptured description of the duration, extent, and character of the kingdom of Christ. Vid. ver. 7, 11, 12, 17.

† St. Peter cites the second psalm as David's, though it is not inscribed to him; and others which have no title were undoubtedly written by David. Comp. Psal. xcvi. 7, 8, with Heb. iv. 7; Psalm xcvi, with 1 Chron. xvi. 7, &c.; Psal. cv, with 1 Chron. xvi. 8; Psal. cvi. 47, 48, with 1 Chron. xvi. 35, 36. On the other hand, some which have no title were not written by David, as cxxxvii, which was not written till the Babylonish captivity.

‡ Hieron. in Jerem. xxv.

§ Some of the names prefixed to the Psalms are assigned to the musicians whom David appointed. Vid. 1 Chron. xv. 16—22; xvi. 7. The word *Lametzach* is supposed to mean, "to the leader of the band." It is derived from *Mnatzeach*, which signifies Overseer.

¶ As, perhaps, Nehiloth, Sheminith, Gitith, Michtam, Aijelet Shehar, &c. Vid. Geirus ad Psal. v. Michaelis, &c.

‡ As Neginoth. Vid. Burney's Hist. Mus. vol. i. p. 235. Harmer's Observations on Passages in Scripture, vol. ii. ch. 2. observ. 3.

§ *Selah* is translated in the Septuagint *διαπαυσα*, a pause in singing, or a change in tune. Vid. Hieron. Epist. ad Marcell. and Calmet Dissert. sur *Selah*.

probably in imitation of the division of the Pentateuch.<sup>a</sup> The four first books of this division terminate with the word Amen, the fifth with Hallelujah. Our present order of the Psalms is, perhaps, that in which they were sung in the temple,<sup>b</sup> and this may account for the occasional repetitions.

Moses may be considered as the first composer of sacred hymns;<sup>c</sup> all nations seem afterwards to have adopted this mode of expressing their religious sentiments, and to have employed hymns in celebrating the praises of their respective deities,<sup>d</sup> on an idea derived, perhaps, from revealed truth, that they were acceptable to the divine nature.

The composition of sacred hymns was carried to great excellence by succeeding prophets, but was improved to its highest perfection under David; who, if he did not first introduce, certainly established the custom of singing them in public service,<sup>e</sup> with alternate interchange of verse, as in our cathedral service.<sup>f</sup> David was, indeed, a great patron of sacred music;<sup>g</sup> he introduced many new instruments and improvements in this spiritual part of the Jewish worship, which was superinduced over that of sacrifice.<sup>h</sup> The practice of psalmody must have received some interruption from the suspension of the temple service during the captivity.<sup>i</sup> It was however restored, with less splendour, by Ezra;<sup>k</sup> and continued till it received the sanction of Christ and his apostles, who themselves recommended the custom by their precept and example.<sup>l</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Madrasah Sillim. fol. 2. vol. i. Hieron. Præf. in Psalm. juxt. Heb. Verit. Hilar. Prol. in Psalm. Huet assigns this division to the time of the Maccabees. Vid. Prop. iv. in Psalm. Gregor. Nyss. in Psalm. lib. i. c. 5; lib. ii. c. 11; 2 Macc. ii. 13, 14.

<sup>b</sup> Euthym. Prol. in Psalm. Comp. Psalms xiv. and liii.

<sup>c</sup> Exod. xv; Deut. xxxii.

<sup>d</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. ii. c. 17. Pharmut. de Nat. Deor. Targ. in Cent. i. l. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. Porphyry de Abstin. lib. iv. §. 8. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. lib. iv. c. 17.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. vi. 31; xvi. 6, 7; Eccles. xlvii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> Ezra iii. 11.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. xiv. 42; xxiii. 5; xxv. 1; 2 Chron. vii. 6; xxix. 26; and Joseph. Ant. lib. vii.

<sup>h</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xxvii. c. 14. Codurc, Caten. in Psalm. Præp. p. 10.

<sup>i</sup> Psalm cxxxvii.

<sup>k</sup> Ezra iii. 11; Nehem. xii. 24, 31, 38, 40.

<sup>l</sup> Matth. xxvi. 30; 1 Cor. xiv. 15; Ephes. v. 19; Col. iii. 16; Rev. xiv. 2, 3. Vid. Calmet's Preface, Bossuet, Hammond, Allix, &c. All vocal and instrumental performers were excluded from the Jewish synagogues after the destruction of Jerusalem. The little singing now used is of modern introduction. The Jews, indeed, consider it as improper to indulge in such expression of joy before the advent of their expected Messiah. The German Jews, however, entertain different notions, and have a musical establishment. They have, likewise, some melodies, supposed to be very ancient; but it is thought that the ancient diatonic notes are preserved more in the psalmody of our church than in the Jewish synagogues.

The hymn which our Saviour sung with his disciples at the conclusion of the last supper, is generally supposed to have consisted of the psalms that are contained between the hundred and thirteenth and the hundred and eighteenth inclusive.<sup>m</sup> This was called by the Jews the great hallel, or hymn, and was usually sung by them at the celebration of the passover. Christ also exclaimed, in his solemn invocation on God from the cross, in the complaints of the twenty-second psalm,<sup>n</sup> and breathed out his last sentiments of expiring piety in the words of David.<sup>o</sup> "No tongue of man or angel," says Dr. Hammond, "can convey an higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright." The Christian church has therefore, by divine appointment, adopted the Psalms as a part of its service, and chosen from its first institution to celebrate the praises of God in the language of scripture;<sup>p</sup> and these sacred hymns are indeed admirably calculated for every purpose of devotion.

These expressions and descriptions of the Psalms may seem to some persons to have been appropriate and peculiar to the Jewish circumstances; and David, indeed, employs figures and allusions applicable to the old dispensation. But as in recording temporal deliverances and blessings vouchsafed to the Jews, we commemorate spiritual advantages thereby signified, we use the Psalms with the greatest propriety in our church. We need, as an elegant commentator has observed, but substitute the Messiah for David, the Gospel for the Law, and the church

<sup>m</sup> Buxtorf. *Lex. Talmud.* הלל. Col. vi. 13. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 354, 444.

<sup>n</sup> Comp. Matt. xxvii. 46, with Psa. xxii.

1.

<sup>o</sup> Comp. Luke xxiii. 46, with Psa. xxxi.

5.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. xiv. 15; Ephes. v. 19; Colos. iii. 16; James v. 13. *Constit. Apost. lib. ii. c. 57.* Euseb. *Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 33.* Theod. *Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 24.* August. *Conf. lib. ix. c. 6. §. 2. lib. x. c. 33. §. 2.* Plin. *Epist. lib. x. epist. 97.* Tertul. *Apol. c. 2. p. 3. c. 39. p. 36.* Fabric. *Bib. Græc. vol. v. c. 1.* The practice of psalm-singing, as used in our choir, is derived probably from the ancient alternate chanting of the Jews, (*Exra iii. 11; Nehem. xii. 24.*) authorized by the apostles, and adopted into the earliest Christian churches. It was certainly instituted at Antioch, between A. D. 347 and 356, by Flavianus and Diodorus; who divided the choir into two

parts, which sang alternately. Singing was soon afterwards introduced into the Western church by St. Ambrose; and adopted with improvements by Gregory the Great, who established the grave Gregorian chant which now prevails in the Romish church. Choral music was brought into England by the companions of Austin the monk, A. D. 596, and first established at Canterbury. Objections were often made in this country to church music, but it was approved by the compilers of King Edward's Liturgy, and soon after was composed the formula that now regulates (with little variation) the choral service, which, though occasionally suspended till the restoration of Charles the Second, has since been uniformly continued. Vid. Mart. Gerbert. *Music. Sac. Bedford's Temple Music.* Hawkins's *Hist. of Music, vol. i. and ii.* Burney's *Hist. of Music, vol. i. p. 154, &c.*

of Christ for the church of Israel. We need but consider the ceremonies and sacrifices of the Law as the emblems of spiritual service, of which every part hath its correspondent figure, and we appropriate the Psalms to our own use, as the noblest treasure of inspired wisdom.<sup>9</sup> They finely illustrate the connection which subsisted between the two covenants, and shed an evangelical light on the Mosaic dispensation by unveiling its inward radiance. The veneration for them has in all ages of the church been considerable. The fathers assure us, that in the earlier times the whole book of Psalms was generally learnt by heart,<sup>r</sup> and that the ministers of every gradation were expected to be able to repeat them from memory; that psalmody was everywhere a constant attendant at meals and in business; that it enlivened the social hours, and softened the fatigues of life. The Psalms have, indeed, as lord Clarendon observes, been ever thought to contain something extraordinary for the instruction and reformation of mankind.<sup>s</sup>

Numberless are the testimonies that might be produced in praise of these admirable compositions, which contain, indeed, a complete epitome of the history, doctrines, and instructions of the Old Testament;<sup>t</sup> delivered with every variety of style that may encourage attention, and framed with an elegance of construction superior far to the finest models in which pagan antiquity hath inclosed its mythology. These invaluable scriptures are daily repeated without weariness, though their beauties are often overlooked in familiar and habitual perusal. As hymns immediately addressed to the Deity, they reduce righteousness to practice: and while we acquire the sentiments, we perform the offices of piety; as while we supplicate for the blessings, we celebrate the memorial of former mercies.

Here, likewise, while in the exercise of devotion, faith is enlivened by the display of prophecy. David, in the spirit of inspiration, uttered his oracles with the most lively and exact description. He expressed the whole scheme of man's redemp-

<sup>9</sup> Bp. Horne's Preface to Com. on the Psalms.

<sup>r</sup> "Pueri modulantur domi, viri foro circumferunt," says an ancient writer. Vid. Basil, et Ambrose Præf. in Psalm.

<sup>s</sup> Horne's Preface. It is remarkable, that this book of Psalms is exactly the kind of work which Plato wished to see for the

instruction of youth, but conceived it impossible to execute, as above the power of human abilities. *Toutro de θεου, η θειου τιμος, αν ελη:* "but this work must be the work of a god, or of some divine person."

<sup>t</sup> Luther called the Psalms a small Bible. The Psalter was one of the first books printed after the discovery of the art.

tion: the incarnation,<sup>a</sup> the passion, the resurrection,<sup>z</sup> and ascension of the Son of God, rather as a witness than as a prophet. As an eminent type of his descendant, he is often led, in the retrospect of the circumstances of his own life, to speak of those of Christ: while he is describing his own enemies and sufferings, the spirit enlargeth his sentiments, and swelleth out his expressions to a proportion adapted to the character of the Messiah. Hence even the personal sufferings of Christ are described with minute and accurate fidelity; and in the anticipated scene of prophecy we behold him pictured on the cross, with every attendant circumstance of mockery and horror, even to the "parting of his garments," and to the "casting lots for his vesture."<sup>y</sup>

David, apprized that the Messiah should spring from his own immediate family,<sup>z</sup> looked forward with peculiar interest to his character and afflictions. In the foreknowledge of those sufferings which Christ should experience from his "familiar friends," and from the numerous adversaries of his church, David speaks with the highest indignation against those enemies who prefigured the foes of Christ; and imprecates, or predicts, the severest vengeance against them.<sup>a</sup> So signal a representative of Christ, indeed, was David considered by the sacred writers, that our Saviour is often expressly distinguished in scripture by his name;<sup>b</sup> and the Jews themselves perceived that the Messiah and his kingdom were shadowed out as capital objects in the descriptions of the psalmist. Sensible that what David uttered, as often not applicable to his own person and history,<sup>c</sup> must have had reference to some future character, they transcribed whole passages from them into their prayers, for the

<sup>a</sup> Psal. ii. 8; Acts xiii. 33. Talmud Sucah, cap. 5. Aben-Ezra. R. Kimchi.

<sup>z</sup> Psal. xvi. 9—11.

<sup>y</sup> Psal. xxii. 16—18, compared with Matth. xxvii. 35. Burnet's 10th and 11th Sermons in Boyle's Lectures.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 12; Psal. cxxxii. 11, 18.

<sup>b</sup> The severity with which David inveighs against the wicked, has been erroneously considered as inconsistent with the spirit of true religion. The passages, however, which are objected to on this score, are either prophetic threats, or general denunciations of God's wrath against sin, as it were, personified. It is the spirit, rather than David, which utters its imprecations

against the unrighteous enemies of the church. Forgiveness and mercy towards the person of his own enemies were distinguished parts of David's character, of which we see very beautiful proofs in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, 10; xxvi. 7—13; 2 Sam. i. 17—27; xix. 16—23. He cursed only those whom God instructed him to curse; and the church, in its public service, joins in these curses, as a religious society, and consistently with the spirit of charity.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. liil. 3; Jerem. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Hos. iii. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Psal. xvi. 10; xxii. 16—18; lxxii; and Justin Martyr, Dial. i.

speedy coming of the great object of their hopes; though, with that blindness that characterizes their conduct with the marks of glaring inconsistency, they deny that these spiritual allusions are applicable to the person of our Saviour, and therefore still pray, in the words of the psalmist, for the arrival of the Messiah.<sup>d</sup>

Josephus asserts,<sup>e</sup> and most of the ancient writers maintain, that the psalms were composed in metre. They have undoubtedly a peculiar conformation of sentences, and a measured distribution of parts. Many of them are elegiac, and most of David's are of the lyric kind. There is no sufficient reason, however, to believe, as some writers have imagined, that they were written in rhyme, or in any of the Grecian measures. Some of them are acrostic; and though the regulations of the Hebrew measure are now lost, there can be no doubt, from their harmonious modulation, that they were written with some kind of metrical order, and they must have been composed in accommodation to the measure to which they were set.<sup>f</sup> The Masoretic writers have marked them in a manner different from the other sacred writings.<sup>g</sup>

The Hebrew copies and the Septuagint version of this book contain the same number of psalms; only the Septuagint translators have, for some reason which does not appear, thrown the ninth and tenth into one,<sup>h</sup> as also the hundred and fourteenth and the hundred and fifteenth; and have divided the hundred and sixteenth and the hundred and forty-seventh each into two. In the Syriac<sup>i</sup> and Arabic versions, indeed, and also in most copies of the Septuagint, as well as in an Anglo-Saxon version, there is annexed to the hundred and fifty canonical psalms, an additional hymn, which is entitled "a Psalm of thanksgiving of David, when he had vanquished Goliath."

<sup>d</sup> Chandler's Defence, ch. 3. sect. 2. Comp. Psal. xxxii. with 13th, 16th, 18th, and other prayers. Hosan Rabba.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. vii. c. 10. Hieron. Epist. ad Paulin.

<sup>f</sup> It is probable, that the Psalms were originally divided into verses terminating with the conclusion of the sense, though many of the Jews maintain, that the Masorites introduced the distinction. Vid. Buxtorf. Com. Masoret. p. 38.

<sup>g</sup> Some persons suppose, that the points were at first musical characters; and, it is said, that they still serve, not only to mark

the accentuation in reading, but also to regulate the melody in singing the prophecies; and that as to high and low, as well as to long and short notes. Vid. Burney's Hist. of Music, vol. i. p. 251.

<sup>h</sup> So that the Romanists, who use St. Jerom's translation, reckon one behind us from the xth to the cxivth, and two from thence to the cxvith, and again one from thence to the cxlvith, from whence they continue to agree with us.

<sup>i</sup> It is said in the Syriac, that some add twelve psalms, which however are there rejected as without authority.

This, though admitted by some as authentic,<sup>k</sup> was probably (as it is not in the Hebrew) a spurious work of some Hellenistical Jew; who might have compiled it out of the writings of David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. The version of the Psalms in our Bible, which was made by the translators employed under James the First, is posterior to that printed in our Prayer-books, which was executed in 1539.<sup>l</sup> This last, as very excellent, and familiarized by custom, was retained in the liturgy; though, as translated chiefly from the Septuagint, with some variation in conformity to the Hebrew, corrupted by the Masoretic points, it does not so exactly correspond with the original as does that in our Bibles.<sup>m</sup>

David was the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of that family to which God's covenant was made. He was born about A. M. 2920, and lived seventy years, during forty of which he was in possession of the throne of Israel;<sup>n</sup> being raised by God from an humble to a conspicuous station, that the genealogy of the Messiah might be displayed, and ascertained with more clearness and distinction.<sup>o</sup> He was eminently distinguished for every great and amiable quality. The particulars of his interesting life are displayed with peculiar minuteness in the sacred history; and many of his psalms are so characteristic of the circumstances under which they were composed, that there cannot be a more engaging task, than that of tracing their connection with the events of his history,<sup>p</sup> and of discovering the occasions on which they were severally produced, in the feeling and descriptive sentiments which they contain. If in the successive scenes of his life, we behold him active in the exercise

<sup>k</sup> Athan. in Synop.

<sup>l</sup> Introduction, p. 20. This was Tyn-dal's and Coverdale's translation, corrected by Tonstal and Heath. In this, the fourteenth psalm contains eleven verses; whereas in the Hebrew, and in our Bible, it contains but seven, (or rather eight.) The three verses are, however, genuine, though lost from the Hebrew, for they are in the Septuagint, and are cited by St. Paul. Vid. Rom. iii. 13—18.

<sup>m</sup> Where the translators of the version published in our Prayer-books have varied from the Septuagint, and followed the Hebrew Masoretic copies, the Hebrew text, if read without the points, would be as consistent with the Septuagint, and

other ancient versions, as it is with the translation in our Bible. In the instances, then, where the authors of the version in the Liturgy have varied, in compliance with the Masoretic authority, they have generally erred. Vid. Dr. Brett, and Johnson, at end of Holy David.

<sup>n</sup> He reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years, being anointed long before he came into possession of the throne. Vid. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2; and Chandler.

<sup>o</sup> The word David implies "beloved." Vid. 1 Sam. xiii. 14; and xvi. 18. Bp. Porteus's Sermon on David's character.

<sup>p</sup> Delany's Life of David.

of those virtues which his piety produced, we here contemplate him in a no less attractive point of view. In this book we find him a sincere servant of God, divested of all the pride of royalty; pouring out the emotions of his soul, and unfolding his pious sentiment in every vicissitude of condition. At one time, we have the prayers of distress; at another, the praises and exultation of triumph. Hence are the Psalms admirably adapted to all circumstances of life, and serve alike for the indulgence of joy, or the soothing of sorrow; they chase away despondence and affliction, and furnish gladness with the strains of holy and religious rapture.

## OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE Proverbs, as we are informed at the beginning, and in other parts of the book,<sup>a</sup> were written by Solomon, the son of David; a man, as the sacred writings assure us, peculiarly endued with divine wisdom.<sup>b</sup> Whatever ideas of his superior understanding we may be led to form by the particulars recorded of his judgment and attainments, we shall find them amply justified on perusing the works which remain in testimony of his abilities. This enlightened monarch, being desirous of employing the wisdom which he had received to the advantage of mankind, produced several works for their instruction. Of these, however, three only were admitted into the canon of the sacred writ by Ezra; the others being either not designed for religious instruction, or so mutilated by time and accident, as to have been judged imperfect. The book of Proverbs, that of Ecclesiastes, and that of the Song of Solomon, are all that remain of him, who is related to have spoken "three thousand proverbs;"<sup>c</sup> whose "songs were a thousand and five;" and who "spake of trees, from

<sup>a</sup> Vid. chap. i. 15; xxv. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. 1 Kings iii. 12; iv. 29—31; xi. 9; 2 Chron. i. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. 1 Kings iv. 32. Josephus (*Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.*) magnifies the account of scripture to three thousand books of proverbs; and St. Jerom as erroneously conceives, that these three thousand proverbs are contained in the present book; but we

must admit that many of the number have perished. Some have supposed, that the physical books of Solomon were extant in the days of Alexander, and were translated by means of an interpreter into the works of Aristotle and Theophrastes. Vid. *Juchasin. Eusebius* (as cited by *Anastasius*) says that king Hezekiah suppressed them, because abused by the people.



the cedar that is in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" who "spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes." If, however, many valuable writings of Solomon have perished, we have reason to be grateful for what still remains. Of his proverbs and songs the most excellent have been providentially preserved; and as we possess his doctrinal and moral works, we have no right to murmur at the loss of his physical and philosophical productions.

This book of Proverbs contains the maxims of long experience, framed by one who was well calculated, by his rare qualities and endowments, to draw just lessons from a comprehensive survey of human life. Solomon judiciously sums up his precepts in brief sentences, which are well contrived for popular instruction.<sup>d</sup> The wisdom, indeed, of all ages, from the highest antiquity, hath chosen to compress its lessons into compendious sentences, which were peculiarly adapted to the simplicity of earlier times; which are readily conceived and easily retained; and which circulate in society as useful principles, to be unfolded and applied as occasion may require. The inspired son of David had the power of giving peculiar poignancy and weight to this style of writing, and his works have been as it were the storehouse from which posterity hath drawn its best maxims.<sup>e</sup> His Proverbs are so justly founded on principles of human nature, and so adapted to the permanent interests of man, that they agree with the manners of every age; and may be affirmed as rules for the direction of our conduct in every condition and rank of life, however varied in its complexion, or diversified by circumstances.<sup>f</sup> Subsequent moralists have, in their discourses on ecumenical prudence, done little more than dilate on the precepts, and comment on the wisdom of Solomon. Grotius, extensive as were his own powers, was unable to conceive that the book of Proverbs could be the work of one man, and sup-

<sup>d</sup> The Proverbs of Solomon are called in the Hebrew "Meshalim," from מְשָׁל, Meshel, *dominatus est*. The word may be translated *κρυφαῖα δοξαί, sententiae maxime ratae*, authoritative maxims, elevated precepts. Vid. Job xxvii. l. Maius Vet. Test. p. 838. Bacon de Augm. Scient. They are to be considered as general maxims, and not as universally and invariably applicable, or as always true in a strict sense without any exceptions.

<sup>e</sup> Many of the sacred writers who followed Solomon borrowed his thoughts and expressions; and many heathen writers are indebted to him for their brightest sentiments. Vid. Huët. Prop. iv; where imitations are produced from Theognis, Sophocles, Euripides, Anaxilaus, Plato, Horace, and Menander.

<sup>f</sup> St. Basil says of this book, that it is *ὄλος διδασκαλία βίου*, "an universal instruction for the government of life."

poses it to have been a collection of the finest proverbs of the age, made in the same manner as those published by some of the emperors at Constantinople, and perfected from various collections under Hezekiah.<sup>g</sup> But this opinion, founded on some rabbinical accounts, can deserve but little regard. The work might, perhaps, compose part of the three thousand proverbs which Solomon is described to have uttered, being probably digested as far as the twenty-fifth chapter by that monarch himself, and afterwards received into the Canon with some additions.

The book may be considered under five divisions. The first part, which is a kind of preface, extends to the tenth chapter. This contains general cautions and exhortations from a teacher to his pupil, delivered in very various and elegant language; duly connected in its parts, illustrated with beautiful descriptions, decorated with all the ornaments of poetical composition, and well contrived, as an engaging introduction, to awaken and interest the attention.

The second part extends from the beginning of the tenth chapter to the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second, and contains what may strictly and properly be called proverbs, given in unconnected general sentences<sup>h</sup> with much neatness and simplicity;<sup>i</sup> adapted to the instruction of youth, and probably more immediately designed by Solomon for the improvement of his son.<sup>k</sup> These are truly, to use his own comparison, "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

In the third part, which contains what is included between the sixteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter and the twenty-fifth chapter, the tutor is supposed, for a more lively effect, to address his pupil as present; he drops the sententious style of proverbs, and communicates exhortations in a more continued and connected strain.

The proverbs which are included between the twenty-fifth

<sup>g</sup> Grotius Præf. in Prov.

<sup>h</sup> The general scope of the discourse, however, must be remembered, even in the explication of detached sentiments.

<sup>i</sup> The proverbs generally consist of two sentences, joined in a kind of antithesis; the second being sometimes a reduplication, sometimes an explanation, and sometimes an opposition in the sense to the first. This

style of composition produces great beauties in many other parts of scripture, where it is employed for poetical arrangement. Vid. Lowth's Prælect. xix.

<sup>k</sup> Rehoboam; though the phrase "my son" is only a term of general application. Vid. Hebrews, chap. xii. 3. Michael Præf. in Lib.

and thirtieth chapters, and which constitute the fourth part, are supposed to have been selected from a much greater number by the men of Hezekiah; that is, by the prophets whom he employed to restore the service and the writings of the church, as Eliakim, and Joah, and Shebnah, and probably Hosea, Micah, and even Isaiah,<sup>1</sup> who all flourished in the reign of that monarch, and doubtless cooperated with his endeavours to re-establish true religion among the Jews. These proverbs, indeed, appear to have been selected by some collectors after the time of Solomon, as they repeat some which he had previously introduced in the former part of the book.<sup>m</sup>

The fifth part contains the prudent admonitions which Agur, the son of Jakeh, delivered to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal; these are included in the thirtieth chapter. It contains also the precepts which the mother of Lemuel delivered to her son, as described in the thirty-first chapter.

Concerning these persons whose works are annexed to those of Solomon, commentators have entertained various opinions. The original words which describe Agur as the author of the thirtieth chapter, might be differently translated;<sup>n</sup> but admitting the present construction as most natural and just, we may observe, that the generality of the fathers and ancient commentators have supposed, that under the name of Agur, Solomon describes himself, though no satisfactory reason can be assigned for his assuming this name.<sup>o</sup> Others, upon very insufficient grounds, conjecture that Agur and Lemuel were interlocutors with Solomon; the book has no appearance of dialogue, nor is there any interchange of person: it is more probable, that though the book was designed principally to contain the sayings of Solomon, others might be added by the men of Hezekiah; and Agur might have been an inspired writer,<sup>p</sup> whose moral and

<sup>1</sup> Vid. R. Moses Kimchi.

<sup>m</sup> Comp. chap. xxv. 24, with xxi. 9; xxvi. 13, with xxii. 13; xxvi. 15, with xxix. 24; xxvi. 22, with xviii. 8, &c.

<sup>n</sup> They might be translated, the words of the collector. In the Septuagint, where this chapter is placed immediately after the twenty-fourth, we read instead of the first verse, *τα δε λεγει ο ανηρ τοις πιστευουσι Θεω: και πανομαι*: "Thus speaketh the man to those who believe in God, and I cease."

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Lowth's xviiiith Prælect. and Calmet.

<sup>p</sup> The second and third verses, though they tend, as well as the eighth, to prove that the chapter was not written by Solomon, yet by no means invalidate the author's claim to inspiration, who here describes himself as devoid of understanding before he received the influx of divine wisdom. In the Septuagint, the third verse expresses a sense directly contrary, *Θεος δεδιδαχε με σοφιαν και γγνωσιν αγιων εγνωκα*: "God hath taught me wisdom, and I have learnt the knowledge of the saints."

proverbial sentences (for such is the import of the word *massa*, rendered prophecy)<sup>q</sup> were joined with those of the wise man, because of the conformity of their matter. So likewise the dignity of the book is not affected, if we suppose the last chapter to have been written by a different hand; and admit the mother of Lemuel to have been a Jewish woman, married to some neighbouring prince; or Abiah, the daughter of the high-priest Zechariah, and mother of king Hezekiah; since, in any case, it must be considered as the production of an inspired writer, or it would not have been received into the canon of scripture. But it was perhaps meant, that by Lemuel we should understand Solomon; for the word which signifies one belonging to God, might have been given unto him as descriptive of his character, since to Solomon, God had expressly declared that he would be a father.<sup>r</sup>

Dr. Delany, who was a strenuous advocate for this opinion, declares that he took great pains to examine the objections that have been alleged against it, and assures us that they are such as readers of the best understanding would be little obliged to him for retailing, or refuting. One of the chief objections, indeed, rather confirms what it was intended to destroy. The mother of Lemuel thrice calls her son, Bar, a word nowhere else used throughout the Old Testament, except in the twelfth verse of the second psalm; but this rather proves that Lemuel must have been designed to imply Solomon, because his father is the only person who uses the word.<sup>s</sup> Dr. Delany then conceives that the mother of Lemuel was Bathsheba,<sup>t</sup> and that the commendation annexed was designed for her, and he vindicates her character as deserving the eulogium. Should some circumstances in the description, however, be judged inapplicable to her, there is no reason why we should not conceive a general character to have been intended. It appears, then, upon a collective consideration, that the greatest part of the book was composed, and perhaps digested, by Solomon himself; that some additions

<sup>q</sup> מַסָּא. Prov. xxx. 1; xxxi. 1.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. R. Nathan. Prov. iv. 3, 4.

<sup>s</sup> 2 Sam. vii. 14.

<sup>t</sup> בַּר. Bar, in the Chaldee, signifies a son. David might have used it in that sense as well as Bathsheba in this book; for we know not how early foreign expressions (if it be one) might have been adopted

into the Hebrew language.

<sup>u</sup> Vid. Delany's *Life of David*, book iv. chap. 21. and Calmet.

<sup>v</sup> Vid. also Bedford, p. 607. Calmet and Locke, who are of the same opinion. Prov. iv. 3. Bathsheba is by some supposed to have been endued with the spirit of prophecy. Vide chap. xxxi. 1.

were made, principally from the works of Solomon, by the men of Hezekiah; and that the whole was arranged into its present form, and admitted into the Canon by Ezra. It is often cited by the evangelical writers; and the work, as it now stands, contains an invaluable compendium of instructions. It is supposed to have been the production of Solomon when arrived at maturity of life; when his mind had multiplied its stores, and been enlarged by long observation and experience. It was probably written before the book of Ecclesiastes, for it seems to be therein mentioned.\*

Solomon was born about A. M. 2971. He succeeded David about eighteen years after, and enjoyed a prosperous reign of near forty years.\* Under his government, the kingdom was remarkable for its well regulated economy, and its extensive commerce. It was so enlarged by his conquests and prudent management, that "he reigned over," or made tributary, "all the kings from the river (Euphrates) even to the land of the Philistines and the borders of Egypt."<sup>b</sup> Illustrious men were attracted from all parts by his fame for wisdom and magnificence.<sup>c</sup> The son of Sirach said of him, that he was "a flood filled with understanding, that his soul covered the whole earth, and that he filled it with dark parables."<sup>d</sup> The high reputation, indeed, which he enjoyed, occasioned many spurious writings to pass under the sanction of his name; as the Psalter, as it is called, of Solomon, which consists of eighteen Greek psalms, and which was probably the work of some Hellenistical Jew,<sup>e</sup> who might have compiled it from the writings of David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.<sup>f</sup> Another book, likewise, entitled the Cure of Diseases, mentioned by Kimchi; the Contradictions of Solomon, condemned by pope Gelasius; and his Testament, cited by M. Gaumin; with five

\* Vid. Matt. xv. 4; Luke xiv. 10; Rom. xii. 16, 17, 20; 1 Thessa. v. 15; 1 Pet. iv. 8; v. 5; James iv. 6, &c. passim.

<sup>a</sup> Eccles. xii. 9.

<sup>b</sup> The name of Solomon is analogous to Pacific, and is happily descriptive of the peaceful prosperity which he enjoyed. The rabbins consider it as appellative.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. ix. 26.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings x. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Eccles. xlvii. 14, 15. The ancients prided themselves much on the knowledge of parables and proverbs. Vid. Prov. i. 6; Wisd. viii. 8; Eccles. i. 25; vi. 35; xxix. 1—3.

<sup>f</sup> The Hellenistical Jews were Jews dispersed in foreign countries, who spoke the Greek language.

<sup>g</sup> This Psalter, which, like most of the Hellenistical works, is full of Hebraisms, was copied from an ancient Greek manuscript in the Augsburg library by Andrea Scotto, and published with a Latin version by John Lewis de la Cerda. Vid. Calmet. Pref. Gen. sur les Pseaumes. These Psalms appear, from the index at the end of the New Testament, to have been formerly in the Alexandrian manuscript, though they have been lost or torn from thence.

other books, mentioned by Alfred the Great in his *Mirror of Astrology*; and four named by Trithemenus, which savour of magical invention, are probably all spurious; as well as the letters which he is said to have written to Hiram, and Hiram's answers, though Josephus considers these last as authentic.<sup>c</sup> The magical writings that were attributed to Solomon, were so assigned in consequence of an idea which prevailed in the East, that Solomon was conversant with magic: an idea derived, perhaps, from the fame of those experiments which his physical knowledge might have enabled him to display, but which, however obtained, certainly prevailed; for we learn from Josephus,<sup>b</sup> that many persons, when charged with the practice of magic, endeavoured to justify themselves, by accusing Solomon of using charms against diseases, and of forming conjurations to drive away demons. Josephus relates, also, that one named Eleazar drove away several demons, in the presence of Vespasian, by means of a ring, in which was enclosed a root, marked, as was said, by Solomon; and by pronouncing the name of that monarch: and, amidst the superstitious notions that long afterwards continued to delude the Eastern nations, we find such imaginary influence over evil spirits ascribed to the name of Solomon.

The Septuagint and other versions of this book differ occasionally from the Hebrew original, and contain indeed more proverbs, some of which are to be found also in the book of Ecclesiasticus. The order likewise of the poetical book is different in the Septuagint<sup>i</sup> and in some manuscripts, where the metrical books run thus—Psalms, Job, and Proverbs.

## OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES; OR, THE PREACHER.

THIS book was unquestionably the production of Solomon, who, for the great excellency of his instructions, was emphatically styled "the Preacher." It is said by the Jews to have been

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. cap. 2. Josephus grounds the authenticity of these letters on Jewish and Tyrian records; but besides other suspicious circumstances, Hiram is represented as speaking of Tyre as an island; whereas old Tyre, which

was contemporary with his period, was situated on the continent.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. viii. cap. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Codex Alexand. Vid. Grabe in Prolog. cap. 1. §. 2. Melito apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 26, &c.

written by him, upon his awakening to repentance,<sup>a</sup> after he had been seduced in the decline of life to idolatry and sin; and if this be true, it affords valuable proofs of the sincerity with which he regretted his departure from righteousness. Some, however, have ascribed the work to Isaiah.<sup>b</sup> The Talmudists pretend that Hezekiah was the author of it;<sup>c</sup> and Grotius, upon some vague conjectures, conceives that it was composed by order of Zerubbabel.<sup>d</sup> But we shall be convinced that it should be assigned to Solomon, if we consider that the author styles himself "the son of David, the king in Jerusalem;" and that he describes his wisdom, his riches, his writings, and his works, in a manner applicable only to Solomon;<sup>e</sup> as also that the book is attributed to him both by Jewish and Christian tradition. The foreign expressions, if they really be such, which induced Grotius to consider the book as a production subsequent to the Babylonish captivity, might have been acquired by Solomon in his intercourse and connection with foreign women.<sup>f</sup> But the style of the work must have often occasioned the introduction of unusual words.<sup>g</sup> The later Jews are said to have been desirous of excluding it from the Canon,<sup>h</sup> from some contradiction and improprieties which they fancied to exist, by not considering the scope and design of the author: but when they observed the excellent conclusion, and its consistency with the law, they allowed its pretensions. There can, indeed, be no doubt of its title to an admission: Solomon was eminently distinguished by the illumination of the divine spirit, and had even twice witnessed the divine presence.<sup>i</sup> The tendency of the book is excellent, when rightly understood; and Solomon speaks in it with great clearness of the revealed truths of a future life, and universal judgment.

<sup>a</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41. Hieron. in Eccles. i. 12. Vid. also chap. ii. 10; vii. 26.

<sup>b</sup> R. Moses Kimchi. R. Gedaliah in Schalsch Hakkab. fol. 66.

<sup>c</sup> Bava Bathra, c. 1. f. 15. The Talmudists suppose Hezekiah to have produced, or compiled, the three books of Solomon, as likewise the book of Isaiah. Vid. Peters's Pref. to Dissert. on Job, 8vo. edit.

<sup>d</sup> Grot. in Eccles.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. i. 1, 12, 16; ii. 4—10: vii. 25—28; viii. 16; xii. 9.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Kings xi. 12.

<sup>g</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. c. 67.

Of the words produced as foreign by Grotius, all are now allowed to be genuine Hebrew, except two: viii. 1, שֶׁשֶׁן, x. 8, צֶמֶח, which were, perhaps, Arabic or Chaldaic expressions in use in the time of Solomon. Vid. Calovius.

<sup>h</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. p. ii. c. 28. Madraah Cohel. s. 14. Aben-Ezra, Eccles. vii. 4. Hieron. in Eccles. xii. 12. Gemar in Pirke Abboth, f. l. col. 1. Some absurdly imagined, that Solomon maintained the eternity of the world, in ch. i. 4.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Kings iii. 5; ix. 2; xi. 9.

The book is in the Hebrew denominated "Cohelah," a word which signifies one who speaks in public;<sup>k</sup> and which, indeed, is properly translated by the Greek word Ecclesiastes,<sup>l</sup> or, the Preacher. Solomon, as Mr. Desvoeux has remarked, seems here to speak in a character similar to that of the sophists among the Greeks: not, indeed, of the sophists when degenerated into subtle and quibbling wranglers; but of the sophists who, in the dignity of their primitive character, blended philosophy and rhetoric;<sup>m</sup> and made pleasure subservient to instruction, by conveying wisdom with eloquence. Though Solomon is not hereby to be considered as having harangued, like the common orators of his time, yet, as there can be no doubt that he often publicly instructed his own people, and even strangers, who were drawn by his reputation for wisdom to his court,<sup>n</sup> it is not improbable that this discourse was first delivered in public; and, indeed, some passages have been produced from the book in support of this opinion.<sup>o</sup>

The main scope and tendency of the book have been variously represented. Mr. Desvoeux, after an accurate discussion of the different opinions, has pronounced it to be a philosophical discourse,<sup>p</sup> written in a rhetorical style, and occasionally interspersed with verses.<sup>q</sup> It may be considered as a kind of inquiry into the chief good; an inquiry conducted on sound principles, and terminating in a conclusion which all, on mature reflection, will approve. The great object of Solomon appears to have been, from a comprehensive consideration of the circumstances of human life, to demonstrate the vanity of all secular pursuits. He endeavours to illustrate, by a just estimate, the insufficiency of earthly enjoyment; not with design to excite in us a disgust at life,<sup>r</sup> but to influence us to prepare for that state where there is no vanity.<sup>s</sup> With this view, the Preacher affirms, that man's labour, as far as it has respect only to present objects, is vain

<sup>k</sup> Some say, that the word Cohelah means a collector. In the Ethiopic tongue it implies a circle, or company of men.

<sup>l</sup> Ἐκκλησιαστής. The Hebrew word has, however, a feminine termination in respect to wisdom, personified, as it were, in Solomon.

<sup>m</sup> Philostrat. ap. Muret. in Defin. ii. Ciceron. Orat. c. 19.

<sup>n</sup> Mercer. Præf. in Eccles.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xii. 9, 12. Gregor. Mag. lib. iv. Dial. c. 4.

<sup>p</sup> Desvoeux Philosophical and Critical Essays on Eccles.

<sup>q</sup> The Jews do not admit that Ecclesiastes should be considered as a poetical work.

<sup>r</sup> The Manichæans, not considering that human pursuits are only so far vain as they terminate in a present object, maintained the existence of an evil principle.

<sup>s</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xx. c. 3. Hieron. Prol. in Eccles.



and unprofitable;† that however prosperous and flattering circumstances may appear, yet, as he could from experience assert, neither knowledge, nor pleasure, nor magnificence, nor greatness, nor uncontrolled indulgence, can satisfy the desires of man;‡ that the solicitude with which some men toil and heap up possessions for descendants, often unworthy, is especial vexation; that it is better far to derive such enjoyment from the gifts of Providence, as they were designed to furnish, by being rendered subservient to good actions:‡ Solomon proceeds to observe, that in this life, “iniquity usurps the place of righteousness;” that man appears in some respects to have “no pre-eminence above the beast” that perishes; and that the consideration of these circumstances may at first sight lead to wrong conclusions, concerning the value of life; but that God should not be hastily arraigned, for that “he that is higher than the highest, regardeth.” That even here, those who “pervert judgment” are not satisfied by abundance, “but that the sleep of the labouring man is sweet.”‡ That though the hearts of men be encouraged in evil by the delay of God’s sentence, and though the days of the sinner may be prolonged on earth, yet that, finally, it shall be well only with them who fear God.\* Solomon then sums up his exhortations to good deeds, and to a remembrance of the Creator in the days of youth, “or ever the silver cord of life be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken;”‡ when “the dust shall return to the earth, and the spirit unto God who gave it.” And the inspired teacher bids us “hear the conclusion of the whole matter;” which is, “to fear God, and to keep his command-

† Compare Eccles. i. 2, with Persius, Sat. i. 1.

‡ Gregor. Nyssen. Hom. i. in Eccles. tom. i. p. 375. Salen. Dial. in Eccles. Bib. Patav. in Eccles. tom. i. col. 147. Castal. Pref. in Eccles. Collyer’s Sacred Interp. vol. i. p. 339. Prior’s Solomon.

\* Chap. iii. 12. Solomon recommends a moderate enjoyment of the good gifts of Providence, and thinks such enjoyment more reasonable than an inordinate pursuit after riches, or than those labours from which no advantage should result to ourselves. Vid. Eccles. ii. 24; viii. 15; ix. 7—9; Acts xiv. 17; 1 Tim. iv. 1—4. Drusius in Eccles. i. 1. Geier. Prol. in Eccles. Horace Carm. lib. ii. ode ii. 1—4. And Wells’s Help to the Understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

‡ Chap. iii—vi.

\* Chap. viii. 11—13.

‡ Chap. xii. 5, 6. By the silver cord of which Solomon speaks in this figurative description of old age, some understand the humours of the body, which are, as it were, *the thread of life*. But the most judicious writers consider it as an elegant expression for the spinal marrow, with the nerves arising from it, and the filaments, fibres, and tendons that proceed from them. This white cord is loosened (or shrunk up) when it is no longer full of spirits. The golden bowl is supposed to mean the pia mater. This membrane, which covers the brain, is of a yellowish colour. For farther explanation of this beautiful allegory, consult commentators, and Smith’s *Ἠθροκομία Βασιλικῆ*.

ments, for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”<sup>b</sup>

In the course of his discussion of this subject, Solomon deviates into some remarks incidentally suggested, in order to preclude objections, and to prevent false conclusions. It is therefore necessary always to keep in mind the purport and design of the discourse, which is carried on, not in a chain of regular deductions and logical consequences, but in a popular and desultory manner; and the connection of the reasoning is often kept up by almost imperceptible links. It is necessary, also, to examine what Solomon states as his first doubts and hasty thoughts, corrected by his cooler judgment; and to distinguish what he says for himself, from what he urges in an assumed character; for though the book be not, as some have imagined,<sup>c</sup> a dialogue between a pious person and one of Sadducee principles, yet in the course of the work the Preacher starts and answers objections; takes up the probable opinions, as it were, of an encircling crowd; and sometimes admits, by way of concession, what he afterwards proves to be false.<sup>d</sup> We must be careful, therefore, not to extend those principles which Solomon grants, beyond their due bounds, nor to understand them in a different sense from that in which they are admitted by him. From want of due consideration of these circumstances and laws, the senti-

<sup>b</sup> De Sacy Avertis. sur l'Eccles. De Launey, sur l'Eccles. c. xii. 15. Harduin Paraph. sur l'Eccles. Witsii Præf. Miscel. Sac. c. 18. §. 36, 37. The whole force of Solomon's reasoning rests on the doctrine of a future judgment, as maintained in chap. xii. 13, 14; and before, in chap. iii. 17; vii. 1, 12; xi. 9. He had admitted that, as to this life, there was but “one event to the righteous and to the wicked,” ch. ix. 1—3. The seven following verses in the ninth chapter are sometimes supposed to be spoken in the assumed character of an Epicurean. Compare chap. ix. 4—10, with Wisd. ii. 1—11. But Solomon might, consistently with the scope of his own discourse, maintain that the only hope of man is during life, and that, in this respect, the most wretched being, a *living dog*, is better than the greatest monarch, a *dead lion*; for the living having the prospect of death, may prepare for it; but the dead have no more opportunity of purchasing a reward; that the gratification of their passions is then

perished, and that they have no more a portion on earth. Hence Solomon proceeds to exhort to a discreet enjoyment, and to active exertion, for that wisdom would find no employment in the grave: that in this life there is no equal distribution, and that the time of departure from it is uncertain. Solomon concludes the chapter with a lively illustration of the final advantage and deliverance to be produced by humble wisdom, however overlooked and despised in the present life. Vid. chap. ix. 4—18.

<sup>c</sup> Sentimens de quelques Theolog. sur l'Hist. Crit. du P. R. Simon, Amstel. 1682, lett. xii. 272. F. Yeard's Paraphrase on Eccles. Lond. 1701. Some writers maintain, that all these passages which are considered as objectionable, will admit of a good sense in consistency with Solomon's discourse.

<sup>d</sup> Castal. Præf. in Eccles. Not. Philol. Adv. Script. Loc. in Eccles. iii. Dubardin. Reflect. Moral, sur l'Eccles. Gregor. Mag. Dial. iv. c. 4.

ments of Solomon have often been perverted to countenance false and pernicious opinions; \* and from want of attention to the design of the book, as here described, some writers have had recourse to very extraordinary means of reconciling particular passages with the main scope and pious conclusion of the work. Hence, to vindicate it from any imputations of bad tendency, Olympiodorus maintained, that Solomon speaks only of natural things in the book, though he intersperses a few moral sentiments; and St. Austin endeavours to explain it by having recourse to allegory; but such solutions are not worthy of much attention; and what has been already said will sufficiently account for all difficulties that may occur in considering the work. We need but recollect, that the style of the book is particularly obscure and vague, though unornamented and prosaic; that the question itself is embarrassed with difficulties; and that the desultory mode of argument is liable to be mistaken, where various opinions are introduced; and when the author diversifies his character, without accurately discriminating his serious from his ironical remarks, or objections from his answers. It must however be wilful delusion, or perverse sophistry, which selects partial extracts for the encouragement of sin, where the dispassionate and rational inquirer after truth will find true wisdom and deliberate piety.

## OF THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

THE Talmudists have attributed this book to Hezekiah; \* other writers have, with as little reason, assigned it to Isaiah; and others to Ezra. There are, however, no grounds that should influence us to reject the authority of the Hebrew title, <sup>b</sup> which ascribes it to Solomon; and, indeed, it is now almost universally allowed to have been the epithalamium, or marriage song, of that monarch, <sup>c</sup> composed on the celebration of his nuptials with a very beautiful woman, called Shulamite, the daughter, as hath

\* Witsius Miscel. Sac. tom. i. p. 213, 226. B. Gerherd. in Exeges. Loc. de Scrip. p. 156. and Præf. in Com. tom. iii. f. 231. Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 24.

<sup>a</sup> Bava Bathra. R. Moeses Kimchi.

<sup>b</sup> The Chaldee Paraphrase hath this title, "The Songs and Hymns which Solomon

the Prophet, the King of Israel, uttered in the spirit of Prophecy before the Lord."

<sup>c</sup> Chap. i. 4; ii. 16; iii. 4, 7, 11. Vid. also, chap. viii. 5, where Michaelis, instead of "thy mother brought thee forth," reads, "thy mother betrothed thee." Vid. Not. in Lowth's Prælect. 30.

been supposed, of Pharaoh, and the favourite and distinguished wife of Solomon.<sup>d</sup>

Solomon was eminently skilful in the composition of songs, and he is related to have produced above a thousand ;<sup>e</sup> of which number, probably, this only was attributed to the suggestion of the Sacred Spirit, for this only has escaped the waste of time,<sup>f</sup> by being preserved in the consecrated volume of the scriptures, into which it was received as unquestionably authentic ; and it has since been uniformly considered as canonical by the Christian church.

The royal author appears, in the typical spirit of his time, to have designed to render a ceremonial appointment descriptive of a spiritual concern ; and bishop Lowth has judiciously determined, that the song is a mystical allegory ; of that sort which induces a more sublime sense on historical truths, and which, by the description of human events, shadows out divine circumstances.<sup>g</sup> The sacred writers were, by God's condescension, authorized to illustrate his strict and intimate relation to the church by the figure of a marriage ; and the emblem must have been strikingly becoming, and expressive to the conceptions of the Jews, since they annexed ideas of peculiar mystery to this ap-

<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings iii. 1, 7 ; ix. 16—24 ; Cant. vi. 13. Cornel. a Lapid. Prol. c. 1. Light-foot's Chron. &c. p. 5. Harmer's Com. p. 27—44. Some imagine the bride to have been a Tyrian woman ; others a native of Jerusalem. Vid. ch. iii. 4—10 ; viii. 5. It is objected to the opinion of her being the daughter of Pharaoh, that the bride's mother is mentioned as at the court of Solomon, ch. iii. 4 ; viii. 2, 5 ; and that she speaks of a sister unprovided for, ch. viii. 8 ; and of the possession of a vineyard as her portion, ch. viii. 12 ; vid. Dr. Percy's new Translat. of Sol. Song. Harmer, however, supposes a former wife of Solomon to speak in the first instances ; and that the vineyard mentioned was Gezer, which Pharaoh is said, in 1 Kings ix. 16, 17, to have "given for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife." The bride calls herself black, though she represents her darkness as the consequence of exposure to the sun ; and Volney maintains, from a passage in Herodotus, and his own observation, that the ancient Egyptians were black. Voyage en Syrie et Egypt, vol. i. p. 175. If a Gentile woman, she was more appositely a figure of the Gentile church ; and Patrick

has elegantly remarked, that as the word *sechora* denotes that duskiess which precedes the morning dawn, it may figuratively represent the Gentile darkness which dispersed before the rising of the Gospel light. The word Shulamite is, perhaps, derived from that of Solomon. Vid. R. Jonathan in Talkut. ad l. Raam iii. fol. 28. col. 3.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings iv. 32 ; Eccles. xlvii. 17. In the Septuagint, they are said have been five thousand.

<sup>f</sup> Except, perhaps, some received into the book of Psalms, as possibly the cxxviii, cxxviii, and cxxii. Vid. Patrick.

<sup>g</sup> Lowth's Præl. Poet. 31. Some have conceived it to be entirely spiritual. Vid. Calov. p. 12, 53. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. vii. cap. 20. Bernard Serm. i. in Cant. p. 748. Glass. Philol. Sac. lib. v. cap. 20. But it apparently had a reference to an actual marriage. The book is full of elegant allusions to the circumstances of the marriage ceremony among the Jews. There are some particulars which apply only to the literal sense, as there are others which correspond only with the figurative interpretation.

pointment, and imagined that the marriage union was a counterpart representation of some original pattern in heaven. Hence was it celebrated among them with very peculiar ceremonies and solemnity; with every thing that could give dignity and importance to its rites.<sup>h</sup> Solomon, therefore, in celebrating the circumstances of his marriage, was naturally led, by a chain of correspondent reflections, to consider that spiritual connection which it was often employed to symbolize; and the idea must have been more forcibly suggested to him, as he was at this period preparing to build a temple to God, and thereby to furnish a visible representation of the Hebrew church.

If this account be admitted, there is no reason why we should not suppose that the Holy Spirit might have assisted Solomon to render this spiritual allegory prophetic of that future connection which was to subsist with more immediate intercourse between Christ and the church, which he should personally consecrate as his bride. If the predominant idea which operated on the mind of Solomon, were only that affinity which at all times was supposed to subsist between God and the Hebrew church, yet as that church was itself the type of a more perfect establishment, the descriptive representation of Solomon had necessarily a prophetic character; and the Sacred Spirit seems to have often suggested allusions and expressions more adapted to the second, than to the first establishment. Whether the song, however, were typically or directly prophetic, it is unquestionable that this elegant composition had a predictive, as well as a figurative character. The whole of it is a thin veil of allegory thrown over a spiritual alliance; and we discover everywhere, through the transparent types of Solomon and his bride, the characters of Christ and his personified church, portrayed with those graces and embellishments which are most lovely and engaging to the human eye.

This spiritual allegory, thus worked up by Solomon to its highest perfection, was very consistent with the prophetic style, which was accustomed to predict evangelical blessings by such parabolical figures; and Solomon was more immediately furnished with a pattern for this allusive representation by the author of the forty-fifth psalm, who describes, in a compendious

<sup>h</sup> Cudworth's *Tipheret*, and *Malcuth* and *Patrick's Preface*. Selden. *Uxor. Heb.* Buxtorf. &c.

allegory, the same future connection between Christ and his church.<sup>1</sup>

It was the want of sufficient attention to his character in the Song of Solomon, which is, perhaps, the most figurative part of scripture, that first induced the rabbinical writers to dispute its authority, in contradiction to the sentiments of the earlier Jews, who never questioned its title to a place in the Canon.<sup>2</sup> It must likewise have been a perverse disregard to its spiritual import, which has occasioned even some Christian authors to consider it with a very unbecoming and irreverent freedom.<sup>3</sup> It has been weakly objected, by those who would invalidate its pretensions, that the name of God is not mentioned throughout the work; but this observation must have arisen from want of reflection on the design of the author, which was to adumbrate divine instruction, and not directly to inculcate what other parts of scripture so forcibly describe. There is, in fact, no reason to question its pretensions to be considered as an inspired book, since it was indisputably in the Hebrew Canon; and is seemingly referred to, if not absolutely cited by Christ and his apostles,<sup>4</sup> who, as well as the sacred writers of the Old Testament,<sup>5</sup> take up its ideas, and pursue its allegory.<sup>6</sup>

But though the work be certainly an allegorical representation, it must be confessed that many learned men, in an unrestrained eagerness to explain the song, even in its minutest and most obscure particulars, have too far indulged their imaginations; and by endeavouring too nicely to reconcile the literal with the spiritual sense, have been led beyond the boundaries which a reverence for the sacred writings should ever prescribe. The ideas which the inspired writers furnish concerning the mystical relation between Christ and his church, though well ac-

<sup>1</sup> The forty-fifth psalm was possibly written on the occasion of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh.

<sup>2</sup> Though not expressly mentioned by Philo or Josephus, it must have been one of the twenty-two books reckoned as canonical by the latter. It was in the earliest catalogues of the sacred books received by the Christian church, in that of Melito, in his letter written to Onesimus about A. D. 140, and in Origen's catalogue. Vid. Euseb. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 26; lib. vi. cap. 25; and in the Canon received by the council of Laodicea, can. 59.

<sup>3</sup> As Grotius, and even the learned

Michaelis, who has certainly given too much scope to fancy in his remarks on this book. Vid. Not. in Lowth's *Prælect.* 30.

<sup>4</sup> Comp. Cant. iv. 7, with Ephes. v. 27; Cant. viii. 11, with Matt. xxi. 33; Cant. i. 4, with John vi. 44; Cant. v. 2, with Rev. iii. 20; Cant. vii. 1, with Isaiah lii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah liv. 5; lxi. 10; lxxii. 4, 5; Ezek. xvi. and xxiii; Hos. ii. 16, 19, and Prophets, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. ix. 15; xxii. 2, 25; John iii. 29; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Gal. iv. 22—31; Ephes. v. 23—27; Rev. xix. 7; xxii. 17.

commodated to our apprehensions, by the allusion of a marriage union, are too general to illustrate every particular contained in this poem; which may be supposed to have been intentionally decorated with some ornaments appropriate to the literal construction. When the general analogy is obvious, we are not always to expect minute resemblance, and should not be too curious in seeking for obscure and recondite allusions. The Jews prudently forbade their children to read it till their judgment was matured,<sup>p</sup> lest in the fervour of youth they should give too wide a scope to fancy, and interpret to a bad sense the spiritual ideas of Solomon. The book, though placed last in order of his works, appears to have been written by that monarch in his youth; in the full warmth of a luxuriant imagination.<sup>q</sup> Solomon, in the glow of an inspired fancy, and unsuspecting of misconception, or deliberate perversion, describes God and his church, with their respective attributes and graces, under colourings, familiar and agreeable to mankind; and exhibits their ardent affection under the authorized figures of earthly love. No similitude, indeed, could be chosen so elegant and apposite for the illustration of this intimate and spiritual alliance, as the marriage union, if considered in the chaste simplicity of its first institution, or under the interesting circumstances with which it was established among the Jews.<sup>r</sup>

Those who imagine that Solomon has introduced into this hymeneal song some ideas inconsistent with the refinement of a spiritual allegory, do not sufficiently consider that the strongest affections of the mind, if properly directed, are chaste and honourable. The reciprocal description of the bridegroom and bride, and the impassioned language in which they express their mutual attachment, are compatible with the strictest purity of conception; and they are employed to represent respectively, spiritual perfections, and spiritual passions, with the greatest propriety. The figures and expressions of Solomon have, indeed, lost their original dignity and decorum, because they have in later times been often abused to a fulsome and depraved sense. The judicious reader will, however, carefully discriminate be-

<sup>p</sup> And the same restriction prevailed in the primitive Christian church. Vid. Origen. Præf. in Cant. Hieron. in Ezek. Theodor. Oper. tom. i. p. 198. Wolf. Bib. Hebr. p. 126.

<sup>q</sup> Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter towards the beginning of his reign. Vid. 1 Kings iii. 11.

<sup>r</sup> Calmet, Dissert. sur les Mariages des Hebreux.

tween the genuine import of language, and its perverted application. The sentiments, likewise, of Solomon, were unquestionably chastened with that reserve and delicacy which, among the Jews, was attached to the consideration of the marriage union; and the book does not appear to contain any allusions offensive to that character of the institution which rendered it an apt representation of the sacred connection.

This book may be considered, as to its form, as a dramatical poem,<sup>a</sup> of the pastoral kind. There is a succession of time, and a change of place, to different parts of the palace and royal gardens. The personages introduced as speakers, are the bridegroom and bride, with their respective attendants, together, as some suppose, with the sister of the bride;<sup>b</sup> and, if the ingenious theory of Harmer be admitted, the first and degraded wife of Solomon,<sup>c</sup> whom he considers as the figure of the Jewish church. There is certainly an interchange of dialogue, carried on in a wild and digressive manner, and the speeches are characteristic, and adapted to the persons with appropriate elegance. The companions of the bride compose a kind of chorus, which seems to bear some resemblance to that which afterwards obtained in the Grecian tragedy.<sup>d</sup> Solomon and his queen sometimes speak in assumed characters, and represent themselves in fictitious circumstances. They descend, as it were, from the throne; and adopt, with the pastoral dress, that simplicity of style which is favourable to the communication of their sentiments.<sup>e</sup> The style, however, is not more simple than

<sup>a</sup> Origen. ap. Hieron. tom. vii. fol. 63. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. cxxxi. p. 503.

<sup>b</sup> If the bride herself be considered as the figure of the Christian church, the sister may be supposed to represent any younger church rising under its protection. The bridegroom, when consulted upon what should be done for this sister, gives a figurative account of the measures which should be taken to preserve her purity and safety. Some attribute the tenth verse to the bride; and some to the sister, professing to have derived strength from the countenance of the bridegroom. Vid. chap. viii. 8—10.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. ii. 5; iii. 1. Harm. Com. p. 44, &c.

<sup>d</sup> The original chorus of the Greeks, which was the foundation on which their drama was built, was an institution of a religious character; and it might possibly have been derived from an intimation of some sacred appointment among the Jews,

whose singers in the temple service composed a sort of chorus.

<sup>e</sup> This book was certainly known to Theocritus, who was a contemporary with the Septuagint translators; and who might have been made acquainted with it by Ptolemy Philadelphus, whose patronage and regard for literature the poet celebrates. It is evident that many expressions, images, and sentiments, in the *Idyllia*, are copied from the sacred poem. Comp. Cant. i. 9, with Theoc. xviii. 30; Cant. vi. 10, with Theoc. xviii. 26; Cant. iv. 11, with Theoc. xx. 26, 27; Cant. iv. 15, with Theoc. i. 7, 8; Cant. ii. 15, with Theoc. i. 48, 49; Cant. i. 7, with Theoc. ii. 69; Cant. v. 2, with Theoc. ii. 127; Cant. viii. 6, 7, with Theoc. ii. 133, 134, and Theoc. vii. 56; Cant. ii. 8, 9, with Theoc. viii. 88, 89; Cant. viii. 7, with Theoc. xxiii. 25, 26. Vid. Wesley in Job, diss. iv.



elegant. The poem, indeed, abounds throughout with beauties, and presents everywhere a delightful and romantic display of nature,\* painted at its most interesting season with all the enthusiasm of poetry, and described with every ornament that an inventive fancy could furnish. The images that embellish it are chiefly drawn from that state of pastoral life in which the Jews were much occupied; and to which Solomon, mindful of his father's condition, must have looked with peculiar fondness. It is justly entitled "a song of songs," or most excellent song, as superior to any composition that an uninspired writer could ever have produced; a song which, if properly understood, must tend to purify the mind, and to elevate the affections from earthly to heavenly things. The book is certainly composed with metrical arrangement. The Jews admit its title to be considered as a poem, though not, indeed, on account of its structure or measure, but because they regard it as a parable, which, according to Abarbanel, constitutes one species of the canticle or song.<sup>a</sup>

There have been many different divisions of the book: some conceive that it naturally breaks out into seven parts; and the learned Bossuet has observed, that it describes the seven days which the nuptial ceremony<sup>b</sup> (as, indeed, almost all solemnities among the Jews) lasted, during which time select virgins attended the bride, as the bridegroom was accompanied by his chosen friends.<sup>c</sup>

Bossuet's distribution of the work is as follows.<sup>d</sup>

The first day,	chap. i.	—	ii.	6.
second day,	chap. ii.	7.	—	17.
third day,	chap. iii.	—	v.	1.
fourth day,	chap. v.	2.	—	vi. 9.
fifth day,	chap. vi.	10.	—	vii. 11.
sixth day,	chap. vii.	12.	—	viii. 3.
seventh day,	chap. viii.	4.	—	14.

\* Harmer, from a consideration of the scenery here described, supposes the marriage to have been celebrated in the spring, when "the tender grape" began to appear, towards the latter end of April. See Com. p. 154, 155.

<sup>a</sup> The Masoretic writers, who seem to have been but little acquainted with the nature of the ancient Hebrew measure, admitted that the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job

were metrical, and marked them particularly as such. But other books, equally metrical, as the Canticles and the Lamentations, they noted with prosaic accentuation; and the Jews consider these books as prosaic compositions. Vid. Mantissa. Dias. ad Lib. Coari, p. 413.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. xxix. 27; Judg. xiv. 15, 17; Tobit viii. 19, 20.

<sup>c</sup> Cant. i. 4; ii. 7; v. 1; Judg. xiv. 11;

Bossuet supposes the seventh day to be the sabbath, because the bridegroom is not represented as going out to his usual occupations. This division is at least probable, as it throws some light on the book. Some have conceived,\* that these periods are figurative of seven analogous and correspondent ages, that may be supposed to extend from Christ to the end of the world: which is a very unauthorized conjecture, and justly rejected by the most judicious commentätors.

### GENERAL PREFACE TO THE PROPHETS.

THE second of those great divisions under which the Jews classed the books of the Old Testament was that of the Prophets.<sup>a</sup> This, as has been before observed,<sup>b</sup> comprehended originally thirteen books; but the Talmudical doctors,<sup>c</sup> rejecting Ruth, Job, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles, as hagiographical, reckon only eight prophetic books; calling those of Joshua, of Judges, of Samuel, and of Kings, the Four Books of the Former Prophets; and those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve lesser prophets, (comprised in one,) as the Four Books of the Later Prophets: by which means they deprive some books of a rank to which they are entitled; and by parting Ruth, Nehemiah, and Lamentations from the books to which they were severally united, enlarge the catalogue of their canonical books. As the rabbinical notions concerning the degrees of inspiration cannot be allowed to affect the dignity of any of the sacred writings,<sup>d</sup> and as the pretensions of every book are severally considered in a separate chapter, it is unnecessary to examine the propriety of such an arrangement in this preface; in which it is designed to treat, in a general way, of the character of the prophets, and of the nature and evidence of that inspiration under the influence of which they wrote.<sup>e</sup>

Psal. xlv. 14; Matt. ix. 15; xxv. 1; John iii. 29. The friends of the bridegroom may be considered as the representatives of angels, prophets, and apostles; and the friends of the bride are figurative, perhaps, of the followers of the church. They are called the daughters of Jerusalem.

<sup>d</sup> Bossuet's *Præf. et Con. in Cant. and New Trans. of Solomon's Song*; the learn-

ed author of which characterizes the seven days by a different division.

<sup>a</sup> As Cocceius.

<sup>b</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>c</sup> *Introduct.* p. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Bava Bathra, c. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Glassius *Disput.* 1. in *Psalm.* cx.

<sup>f</sup> *Introduction,* p. 6.

The prophets were those illustrious persons who were raised up by God among the Israelites, as the ministers of his dispensations. They flourished in a continued succession for above a thousand years;<sup>f</sup> all cooperating in the same designs, and conspiring in one spirit to deliver the same doctrines, and to prophesy concerning the same future blessings. Moses, the first and greatest of the prophets, having established God's first covenant, those who followed him were employed in explaining its nature, in opening its spiritual meaning, in instructing the Jews, and in preparing them for the reception of that second dispensation which it prefigured.<sup>g</sup> Their pretensions to be considered as God's appointed servants, were demonstrated by the unimpeachable integrity of their characters, by the intrinsic excellence and tendency of their instruction,<sup>h</sup> and by the disinterested zeal and undaunted fortitude<sup>i</sup> with which they persevered in their great designs. These were still farther confirmed by the miraculous proofs which they displayed of divine support,<sup>k</sup> and by the immediate completion of many less important predictions which they uttered.<sup>l</sup> Such were the credentials of their exalted character, which the prophets furnished to their contemporaries; and we, who, having lived to witness the appearance of the second dispensation, can look back to the connection which subsisted between the two covenants, have received additional evidence of the inspiration of the prophets in the attestations of our Saviour and his apostles,<sup>m</sup> and in the retrospect of a germinant and gradually maturing scheme of prophecy, connected in all its parts, and ratified in the accomplishment of its great object, the advent of the Messiah. We have still farther incontrovertible proof of their divine appointment, in the numerous prophecies which in these later days are fulfilled, and still under our own eyes continue to receive their completion.

Though many persons are mentioned in scripture as prophets, and the Talmudists reckon up fifty-five<sup>n</sup> whom they conceive to

<sup>f</sup> Luke i. 70; reckoning from Moses to Malachi.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. xi. 13; 1 Macc. iv. 46. Coari. Mam. iii. §. 39. Massech. Sotah, cap. ult. Maimon. Bartiner. Gem. Sanh. cap. 1. §. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. xiii. 1—3.

<sup>i</sup> Origen. cont. Cels. lib. viii. p. 336. edit. Cant.

<sup>k</sup> Josh. x. 13; 1 Sam. xii. 18; 2 Kings

i. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 8.

<sup>l</sup> Deut. xviii. 22; 1 Sam. ix. 6; 1 Kings xiii. 3; Isaiah xlii. 9; Jerem. xxviii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 33.

<sup>m</sup> Luke i. 70; xviii. 31; Acts vii. 42; xxiv. 14; Rom. xvi. 26; Ephes. ii. 20; 2 Pet. i. 21.

<sup>n</sup> Including seven prophetesses. Vid. Gem. Masa. Megil.

have been entitled to this distinction, we are concerned only with those whose books have been admitted into the Canon; who are eminently styled Prophets,<sup>o</sup> as they were unquestionably inspired with the knowledge of future events; whose writings have been preserved for the permanent advantage of the church, as descriptive of the economy of the divine government, as fraught with the lessons of revealed wisdom, and as bearing incontestible evidence to the truth and pretensions of the Christian religion.

The nature and character of that inspiration by which the prophets were enabled to communicate divine instructions and predictions, has been the subject of much disquisition. With respect to the mode by which the Holy Spirit might operate on the understanding of its agents, when employed in the composition of sacred writ, we can form no precise ideas, as we have no acquired experience to assist our conceptions; we can judge of it only by its effects, for of the invisible agency of a divine power we can have no adequate apprehension. There is cause, however, to suppose that the Spirit operated chiefly on the reasoning faculties of the mind, however the imagination might be kindled by its influence. It appears rather to have enlightened the intellect than to have inflamed the fancy.<sup>p</sup> The prophets themselves, as men neither visionary nor enthusiastic in their previous character, as not acting under the bias of any gloomy or superstitious notions, could not have been liable to be deceived by the delusions of a clouded or intemperate imagination.<sup>q</sup> They must themselves, by the strong effects of divine impulse, have been sensible of a supernatural control, and they must have been capable of deciding on its character by the clear and distinct impressions which they received. They must have been convinced of their own inspiration by the discoveries of an enlightened mind, as well as by that spontaneous and unwonted facility with which they delivered their important convictions.

As to the extent of this inspiration, and whether we are to

<sup>o</sup> Προφητης, *propheta*, from προ-φατος, a προφημι, "to foretell." The sacred writers applied the word נָבִיא, Nabia, with great latitude, as well to false prophets, as to those idolatrous priests whom they called prophets of the grove. Vide 1 Kings xviii. 19, 22. It appears, likewise, to have been sometimes used in the same loose sense as

προφητης is employed by St. Paul synonymously with the Latin word *vates*, "a musician," or "poet." Vid. 1 Tit. i. 12. Selden. de Diis Syris Syntag. ii. c. 3. Maimon. More Nevoch, p. iii. c. 29.

<sup>p</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch, p. ii. c. 36.

<sup>q</sup> Geom. Schab. Zohar. col. 408.

consider it as general or restricted, it must be remarked, that as it would be absurd to suppose that the Spirit guided the prophets only by occasional and desultory starts, and partially enlightened them by imperfect communications, so we cannot but admit them to have been uniformly under its influence; and, in consequence, to have been invariably preserved from deception and error, when engaged in the composition of the sacred books. The Spirit did not certainly deprive them of the use of their faculties, so as to render them the mere instruments of conveying the voice of God, but it superintended and guided them in the exercise of their own understandings; sometimes instructing them by immediate revelation, and sometimes directing them in the communication of that knowledge which they had derived from the ordinary sources of intelligence.<sup>†</sup>

We are authorized, it is true, in the scripture, to conclude that the Holy Ghost (who, in his appropriate character, was more immediately an agent in communicating inspiration)<sup>‡</sup> did, indeed, “speak by the prophets;” but we are not, therefore, to consider the spirit of inspiration as one person of the ever-glorious Trinity, dictating to the sacred writers every sentence and expression of scripture, but rather as a gift of God, a divine influence which opened their understandings to a discernment of the will of God. This miraculous power may be represented to our conceptions, as to its effects, under different points of view; it may be described, first, as analogous to a light shining on the minds of the prophets, and dispersing those mists which the corruption of human nature had engendered; which enabled them to read those natural principles that were originally engraven on the mind; which awakened their faculties to a more lively perception of truth, and assisted their reason to act as free from prejudice and restraint. It must be considered still farther, as instructing them, by an influx of divine knowledge, in those truths which could be obtained only by immediate information from God; or, under one collective description, it may be represented as guiding and conducting the prophets, by various means, to the knowledge of all truth, human and divine. When they wrote historically, there could be no necessity for a revelation of those events of which the knowledge might be obtained

<sup>†</sup> Secker's first Sermon on the Inspiration of Scripture.

<sup>‡</sup> Mark xii. 36; Acts i. 16; xviii. 25; Heb. iii. 7; ix. 8; 2 Pet. i. 21.

by their own observation and inquiries.<sup>1</sup> They recorded what they themselves had seen, or, on some occasions, what they had received from unquestionable documents or credible witnesses, the Spirit indeed bearing testimony. The prophets generally take care themselves to inform us what they derived immediately from God, and to distinguish what they speak in their own characters as recording historical events, or even as reasoning from the doctrines which had been revealed unto them. Still, however, it is not inconsistent to maintain, that they wrote under the influence of uniform inspiration; that is, they were uniformly guided by a divine spirit, which enabled them by various means of intelligence to discover truth; and to select and record with sincerity what might be consistent with their designs. And whenever they communicate divine instruction concerning the attributes and designs of God, describing particulars which could not be the objects of human sagacity or memory, they must have derived their knowledge by positive revelation from above.<sup>4</sup>

Divine revelations were obtained by various ways: for without dilating on the internal irradiation above mentioned, and without following the Jewish writers<sup>2</sup> in their distinctions concerning the different degrees of inspiration which assisted the authors in the composition of the prophetic or hagiographical books respectively,<sup>7</sup> we may observe, in agreement with the accounts of scripture, that though the divine revelations were all equally infallible, yet that a greater degree of illumination was imparted to some persons than to others;<sup>2</sup> and that this conferred a proportionate dignity on the prophet so favoured. The more important communications were likewise sometimes furnished with more conspicuous evidence of revelation, as the dispensation imparted to Moses was introduced with a corre-

<sup>1</sup> The prophets were, however, sometimes enabled to describe past events by immediate revelation; and the word *prophecy* is applied to the discovery of past circumstances obtained by supernatural means. Vid. 1 Sam. ix. 20; 2 Kings v. 25, 26; Matt. xxvi. 6. Huet. Defn. ix. Witaius de Prophet. lib. i. cap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Stackhouse's Preface to the Hist. of Bible, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> The most learned Jews admit three degrees of inspiration: 1. The Gradus Mosaicus; 2. That which is peculiarly

called Prophecy, and which was obtained by dreams and visions; and, 3. That which they call Ruach Hakkodesh, by which they suppose the Hagiographi to have been inspired. The Jewish notions, however, though sometimes just, are generally very fanciful. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch, p. ii. c. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Abarbin. in Esiiah, c. iv. Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xii. 8; Deut. xxxiv. 10; 2 Kings ii. 9; Heb. i. 1.

spondent display, and superior solemnity. The predictions of Moses were not more certainly fulfilled than those uttered by Isaiah; yet is the former personage positively declared in scripture to have been honoured by an higher revelation, in the expression of having conversed with God "face to face,"<sup>a</sup> than was Isaiah, or any subsequent prophet, whose illumination was obtained from dreams or visions.

The revelations which are related in scripture to have been communicated to the patriarchs, sometimes without any specification of an intermediate agent, and sometimes by the ministry of angels, have been frequently supposed to have been conveyed in dreams and visions, without any actual appearance. But certainly some of the relations respecting these cannot but be understood in a real and historical sense; as that, for instance, in which God is described as having addressed Adam in Paradise,<sup>b</sup> and that in which the angels are represented to have appeared to, and to have conversed with Abraham;<sup>c</sup> in both of which, as well as in some other cases,<sup>d</sup> it must be admitted that the absolute appearance of some divine personage, the Deity, or his angelical representative, is intended in a strict and positive sense; as it should seem, likewise, that God sometimes addressed his servants by a voice from heaven,<sup>e</sup> without any visible manifestation of himself or his angel.

When communications were obtained from an absolute converse with the Deity, every particular contained in them must have been precisely and distinctly revealed; and hence the in-

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. iii. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xviii; also Gen. xvii. 1—3. It is probable, that wherever God is said to have appeared, it is to be understood that he appeared by some messenger, the representative of the divine Majesty, and authorized to speak in God's name; this may be collected from John i. 18, and v. 37. Vid. Gen. xvi. 7, 13; xxii. 1, 11; Judges vi. 11—23, and other places, where the Lord and the Angel are words interchangeably used. Vid. August. de Trinit. c. 11. It was universally believed in the ancient church, that all those divine appearances described in the Old Testament, whether actual or in vision, were made by the Logos, or second person of the Trinity. Comp. Isaiah vi. 1, with John xii. 41. Vid. Bull's Defens. Fid. Nic. c. 1. sect. 1. The

ancient Jews, likewise, supposed that the intended Messiah appeared as the representative of Jehovah. Vid. Allix. Judg. of Jew. Church, c. 13, 14, 15. Justin. Mart. Dialog. 249—266, 408. edit. Thrilb.

<sup>d</sup> Numb. xxii. 22—35.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. xxii. 11; Exod. xx. 22; Deut. iv. 12. This mode of revelation was called by the Jews בַּת קוֹל, *Bath Col*, *Filia Vocis*, the daughter voice, or daughter of a voice, because when a voice or thunder came out of heaven, another voice came out of it. It is by them supposed to have succeeded prophecy, and to have conveyed instruction after the death of Malachi. It certainly distinguished the dawn of the Gospel dispensation. Vid. Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5; John xii. 28, 29. Pirke R. Eliezer, c. 44. Joseph. Archæol. lib. xiii. c. 18; and Light-foot in Matt. iii. 17.

structions imparted to Moses were so remarkably perspicuous and explicit. No succeeding prophet under the Jewish dispensation could, indeed, boast of so intimate and unreserved a correspondence with the Deity as that illustrious legislator enjoyed; though unquestionably some were favoured with divine revelations imparted by the ministry of angels, who seem, from the accounts of scripture, absolutely to have appeared and conversed with them,<sup>f</sup> notwithstanding the Jewish writers consider all these relations as descriptive of visionary representations; maintaining that God comprehended in his address to Aaron and Miriam, every mode of revelation by which he designed to enlighten the prophets that should succeed to Moses.<sup>g</sup>

The institution of the Urim and Thummim, which was coeval with the time of Moses,<sup>h</sup> furnished the means of obtaining divine information to his contemporaries, as well as to Joshua and others who succeeded him, till the building of the temple, or possibly till the captivity.<sup>i</sup> As we know not in what manner this mysterious ornament contributed to procure divine instruction—whether, as some have supposed, it furnished intelligence by the brilliancy and configuration of its inscribed characters, or whether, as is most probable, it was the consecrated means appointed for the attainment of answers by an audible voice<sup>k</sup>—we are still certain, from the nature and verity of that information, as given upon important occasions, that, like all other modes of divine revelation under the Jewish economy, it was clear and perspicuous. As far as it was designed to instruct the people in public concerns, it conveyed precise directions; and its predictions of future prosperity or punishment were delivered, not like those of the pagan oracles, in ambiguous and equivocal language, but in appropriate and express declarations. It is certain, also, that independently of those communications which the high-priest obtained by the Urim and Thummim, God did furnish instruction to others by an articulate voice, which proceeded from between the two cherubims above the mercy-seat in

<sup>f</sup> Joshua v. 13—15; Judges xiii. 3, 13—20; Job xxxviii. 1.

<sup>g</sup> Numb. xii. 6. Maimon. More Nevoch, p. ii. c. 41.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. xxviii. 33; Numb. xxvii. 21. Mede's Discourse xxxv.

<sup>i</sup> It is uncertain when the consultation by the Urim and Thummim ceased. Some

think that it was appropriate to theocracy; some imagine that it stopped after the building of the temple. It continued, possibly, till the destruction of the temple, and it was expected to revive after the captivity, (Ezra ii. 36; Nehem. vii. 65,) though probably it did not.

<sup>k</sup> Judges i. 1; 2 Sam. v. 23, 24.



the tabernacle,<sup>l</sup> in a manner allusive, possibly, to the circumstance of God's speaking by angels.

The other modes by which God vouchsafed to reveal his instructions to the prophets, were those of dreams and visions.<sup>m</sup> With respect to dreams, they were sometimes imparted as admonitions from God to persons who had no title to the prophetic character.<sup>n</sup> In these cases they were doubtless less distinct in their impression, and rather calculated to strike and amaze, than to enlighten the mind. Those who received them either waited their explication in the event, or applied for their interpretation to persons who were endued with a portion of the divine spirit; and the power of explaining dreams appears to have been an eminent characteristic of the prophets.<sup>o</sup>

The dreams which revealed future scenes to the imaginations of the prophets were doubtless very forcible, and evidently predictive. They are supposed by the Jews to have been introduced by the immediate efficiency of an angel, who either addressed the prophets by a voice, or pictured narrative circumstances to their minds: but however it might vary in its circumstances, this mode of communication by dreams must have always conveyed very distinct impressions. When no voice was heard, and information was to be collected from some parabolical scenes, the dreams were probably characterized by a lively and regular succession of objects, and by an accurate display of intelligible particulars. They must have excited respect, as differing widely from the wild and indeterminate fancies, the vague and incoherent images that constitute ordinary dreams.

In visions, which the Jews considered as a mode of instruction superior to dreams,<sup>p</sup> the prophet was convinced of his subjection to a divine power by the miraculous suspension of his common faculties; for though on these occasions the inspired person was awake, his senses were entranced,<sup>q</sup> and insensible to all external objects; or so far enraptured, as to be alive only to impressions from extatic representations.<sup>r</sup> He was likewise

<sup>l</sup> Exod. xxv. 22; Levit. i. 1; Numb. vii. 89; ix. 9; 1 Sam. iii. 3—21.

<sup>m</sup> It is remarkable, that Homer enumerates three modes of obtaining divine communications, which correspond with those appointed for the conveyance of revelations to God's selected people. Vid. *Iliad*. lib. i. 62, 63.

<sup>n</sup> Maimon. *More Nevoch*, par. ii. c. 41.

Philo Judæ. *περι του θεοπροφητου ειναι τους ονειρους*. Gemarists in Barachoth. c. 9. Gen. xl; Dan. iv.

<sup>o</sup> Jerem. xxiii. 28.

<sup>p</sup> Maim. *More Nevoch*, par. ii. cap. 45; and Bayley's *Essay on Inspiration*.

<sup>q</sup> Numb. xxiv. 16.

<sup>r</sup> Isaiah vi. 1; Ezek. xl. 2; Dan. viii. 17, 18; x. 8; Acts x. 11.

often certified, as in dreams, by distinct admonitions of some particulars readily ascertained, and enabled to foresee some circumstances which immediately came to pass.

In all the cases here described, the prophets could not, without doubting the clearest and most palpable evidence, distrust the truth of the revelations which they received; and with respect to us, we have ample reason, from a collective consideration of their writings, to be convinced that their inspiration was accompanied with sufficient characters to distinguish it from the dreams of enthusiasm, or the visions of fancy.<sup>5</sup> The accomplishment of their predictions, and the purity of their doctrines, are indeed irrefragable proofs of their divine appointment to prophesy, and to instruct mankind.

Upon all occasions on which the prophets are related to have been favoured with an intimation of the divine will, we find that they betrayed no symptoms of a credulous or heated imagination. Cautious and deliberate in their examination of miraculous revelations, they appear to have hesitated at first as doubtful of their reality; and often required a sign, or some additional evidence, to ratify the commission which they received, and to authorize their reliance on the divine support in its execution. This calm and rational temper, which rendered the prophets distrustful of their own senses if singly addressed, and solicitous to scrutinize the reality of every appearance, however miraculous in its circumstances, demonstrates clearly that they were not the dupes of their own fancy; and that they expected no reverence for their commission, unless characterized with the sanctions and authority of divine appointment; and very striking marks of this disposition were displayed by the prophets, as may be instanced in the case of Moses,<sup>6</sup> in that of Samuel,<sup>7</sup> and in that of Jonah.<sup>8</sup>

Under the immediate influence of the impressions which the prophets received from these communications, they appear to have executed their commission by uttering their instructions with a divine enthusiasm. Enraptured by the effects of that inspiration which had enlightened their minds, and urged by the efficacy of a controlling power,<sup>9</sup> they delivered their predictions in an animated and impressive manner, and often with some

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Hurd's fourth Introd. Sermon on Prophecy. Smith's Discourse. Jer. xxiii. 28.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. iii. and iv.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Sam. iii.

<sup>8</sup> Jonah i.

<sup>9</sup> Isa. xxi. 3; Jerem. xx. 9; Dan. x. 8; Amos iii. 8.

bodily actions and gestures.\* These naturally accompanied an earnest delivery of important convictions; and, as restricted in consistency with the dignity and venerable deportment of the prophets, they were very different from those frenzied and extravagant gesticulations by which impostors have sought to recommend and enforce their fantastic rhapsodies.\*

The word prophecy is often used in scripture to signify the singing of praises to God in hymns doubtless of inspired excellence, and occasionally animated with predictions of futurity.<sup>b</sup> The spirit of prophecy, in this sense of the word, appears sometimes, by God's permission, to have communicated itself to those who heard others prophesy, the divine afflatus being conveyed by a kind of sympathy and harmonious affection.<sup>c</sup> The prophets who were educated in those schools of which the institution is attributed to Samuel,<sup>d</sup> were principally employed in this spiritual service; and thus, by being exercised in habits of piety, and duly attuned and sanctified for the reception of the divine spirit, they seem to have been often favoured and enlightened by its suggestions. The more remarkable prophecies, however, which referred to distant periods, which received their accomplishment in after-ages, and still continue to excite our admiration, were delivered by persons often indeed selected from these schools, but evidently endued with a larger portion of the spirit, and more eminently distinguished by the marks of divine favour.

Such were the principal, if not the only modes by which God vouchsafed to reveal himself to the prophets; always, we have seen, in a manner consistent with the greatness of his attributes, and with the dignity of the prophetic character: and all those communications which in scripture are said to have been derived from God without any particular description<sup>e</sup> of the

\* Numb. xxiv. 4, 16; Ezek. iii. 14; Habakkuk iii. 16. R. Albo, lib. iii. c. 10. Smith's Disc.

<sup>a</sup> Chrysost. Homil. xxix. in 1 Cor. Hieron. Præf. in Nahum. and Proleg. in Habac. Lucan, lib. v. Schol. in Plutum. Aristoph. Æneid, lib. vi. Plato in Timæum. Jamb. de Myst. sect. 3. c. 9. Epiphan. adv. Hær. l. ii. a. l. c. 3. p. 404.

<sup>b</sup> Hammond on Luke i. 67. Numb. xi. 25. The Chaldee Paraphrast translates כְּבִיָּא, "praising God." 1 Chron. xxv. 1.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5—10; xix. 20—24. Smith's Disc. on Prophecy. And Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 18. p. 225.

<sup>d</sup> Preface to the second book of Samuel.

<sup>e</sup> As when we are told, "Thus saith the Lord;" or, "The word of the Lord came;" which is sometimes applied to persons not endued with the prophetic character. These expressions import only, that the instruction was conveyed by the means then appointed, whether by angel, urim, prophet, or dream. Vid. Gen. xxii. 1, with Calmet.

manner in which they were conveyed, must be understood to have been received by one of those channels which have been here pointed out.

The prophets, as might be expected from the distinguished marks of divine approbation which they received, seem to have been singularly qualified for the sacred ministry. It is not meant to include in this consideration those persons of condemned or ambiguous character, who are represented in scripture as compelled occasionally to give utterance to the suggestions of the Sacred Spirit; but confining ourselves to a contemplation of those who are declared to have been appointed servants of God, and whose inspired writings still continue to instruct mankind, it may be affirmed, that in the long and illustrious succession from Moses to Malachi, not one appears who was not entitled to considerable reverence by the display of great and extraordinary virtues.<sup>f</sup> Employed in the exalted office of teaching and reforming mankind, they appear to have been animated with a becoming and correspondent zeal. No unworthy passions nor disingenuous motives were permitted to interfere with their great designs. Not, indeed, that they were always directed by the guidance of the spirit to undeviating propriety of life, since it is manifest that they sometimes acted as unassisted men subject to error; but notwithstanding those failings which their own ingenuous confessions have unveiled, it appears, that in general their passions were controlled in subjection to those perfect laws which they taught, and that the strength of their convictions rendered them insensible to secular attractions. When not immediately employed in the discharge of their sacred office, they lived sequestered from the world in religious communities,<sup>g</sup> or wandered "in deserts, in mountains, and in caves of the earth," distinguished by their apparel and by the general simplicity of their style of life.<sup>h</sup> They were the esta-

Joshua i. 1; 1 Kings iii. 11; Jer. i. 2—4; Hosea i. 1, &c. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. 41.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Pet. i. 21. The Hebrew doctors collect this general rule from a consideration of the characters of the prophets, that the spirit of prophecy never rested upon any but a holy and wise man, one whose passions were allayed. Vid. R. Albo Maam. iii. c. 36. Porta Moësis in Pocock's Works. Abarbin. Præf. in xii. Prophet. Maimon.

More Nevoch, par. ii. c. 36. Vid. also, Origen. cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 336. edit. Cantab. Gem. Pesac. c. 6. The rule, however, is not universally true. Vid. Numb. xxiv.

<sup>g</sup> There were schools of the prophets at Jerusalem, Bethel, Jericho, Ramah, and Gilgal. Vid. 2 Kings xxii. 14; 2 Kings ii. 5; 1 Sam. xix. 20; 2 Kings iv. 38.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings i. 8; iv. 10, 38; vi. 1; Isa. xx. 2; Matt. iii. 4; Heb. xi. 38; Rev. xi. 3.

blished 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 revelations by prayer; <sup>l</sup> for we are not to suppose that they were invariably empowered to prophesy by any permanent or perpetual inspiration. <sup>k</sup> These illustrious personages were likewise as well the types as the harbingers of that greater Prophet whom they foretold; and in the general outline of their character, as well as in particular events of their lives, they prefigured to the Jews the future Teacher of mankind. Like him, also, they laboured, by every exertion, to instruct and reclaim; reproving and threatening the sinful, however exalted in rank, or encircled by power, with such fearless confidence and sincerity, as often excited respect. The most intemperate princes were sometimes compelled unwillingly to hear and to obey their directions, <sup>l</sup> though often so incensed by their rebuke, as to resent it by the severest persecutions. Then it was that the prophets evinced the integrity of their characters, by zealously encountering oppression, hatred, and death, in the cause of religion. Then it was that they firmly supported "trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about, destitute, afflicted, tormented;" <sup>m</sup> evil entreated for those virtues of which the memorial should flourish to posterity, and martyred for righteousness, which, whenever resentment should subside, it would be deemed honourable to reverence. <sup>n</sup>

The manner in which the prophets published their predictions, was either by uttering them aloud in some public place, or by affixing them on the gates of the temple, <sup>o</sup> where they might be

<sup>l</sup> Jerem. xxxiii. 3.

<sup>k</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch, pars ii. cap. 36. and 45. Moses and (as some say) David were supposed to be exceptions to this remark, and to have been perpetually inspired.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Kings xii. 21—24; xiii. 2—6; xx. 42, 43; xxi. 27; 2 Chron. xxviii. 9—14.

<sup>m</sup> Heb. xi. 36, et seq.; James v. 10.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xxiii. 27—29.

<sup>o</sup> Jer. vii. 2; iii. 10. Howel, lib. vi. p. 167.

generally seen and read. Upon some important occasions, when it was necessary to rouse the fears of a disobedient people, and to recall them to repentance, the prophets, as objects of universal attention, appear to have walked about publicly in sackcloth, and with every external mark of humiliation and sorrow. They then adopted extraordinary modes of expressing their convictions of impending wrath, and endeavoured to awaken the apprehensions of their country by the most striking illustration of threatened punishment. Thus Jeremiah made bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck,<sup>p</sup> strongly to intimate the subjection that God would bring on the nations whom Nebuchadnezzar should subdue. Isaiah likewise walked naked, that is, without the rough garment of the prophet,<sup>q</sup> and barefoot,<sup>r</sup> as a sign of the distress that awaited the Egyptians. So Jeremiah broke the potter's vessel,<sup>s</sup> and Ezekiel publicly removed his household goods from the city,<sup>t</sup> more forcibly to represent by these actions some correspondent calamities ready to fall on nations obnoxious to God's wrath; this mode of expressing important circumstances by action being customary and familiar among all Eastern nations.

The conduct of the prophets upon these occasions must be considered with reflection on the importance of their ministry, and with great allowance for difference of manners in their time; and then will this mode of prophesying by actions appear to have been not only very striking and impressive, but strictly agreeable to the design and decorum of the prophetic character. It has, however, been strenuously maintained, that many actions attributed to the prophets, and even some of those which have

<sup>p</sup> Jerem. xxvii. It is clear, from the account in the next chapter, that Jeremiah put the yoke on his own neck. Vid. chap. xxxviii. 10. So also, 1 Kings xxii. 11; Acts xxi. 11. But, as to send bonds and yokes may imply only figuratively to predict captivity, it is not necessary to suppose that Jeremiah literally sent yokes and bonds to all the kings enumerated in the account, but only that he foretold their fate; perhaps illustrating his prophecy by some significant tokens. Vid. Mede's Comm. on Apocal. part i. p. 470. Waterland's Tracts on Jerem. xxvii. 23.

<sup>q</sup> Isa. xx. Harmer's Observat. vol. iv. p. 402. John xxi. 7. Origen. cont. Cels. lib. vii. p. 356.

<sup>r</sup> It is said in the text, three years,

which means at intervals during that time. Some think that we should understand three days; a year being sometimes placed in prophetic language for a day. Others maintain, that the Hebrew text, agreeably to the Masoretic punctuation, applies the three years not to Isaiah's walking, but to the calamity thereby foreshewn; and the Seventy, St. Jerom, and our old English versions adopt this construction. Others, lastly, consider the account as the narrative of a transaction in vision, or as a parable related by Isaiah.

<sup>s</sup> Jerem. xix.

<sup>t</sup> Ezek. xii. 7, compared with 2 Kings xxv. 4. 5, where the accomplishment of this typical prophecy is related. Vid. also, Ezek. xxxvii. 16—20.

been here represented as real, were not actually performed; and that many of these accounts should be considered as parables related by the prophets; or as descriptive of transactions in vision, intended strongly to impress the imagination of the prophets, and to inform them symbolically of those things in which they were to instruct the people." So very positive have been the sentiments on both sides, of those who have supported these opposite opinions, that it would be presumptuous to decide on the subject. The prophets themselves sometimes inform us only of certain commands which they received, without explaining whether they understood them as figurative instructions to be described to the people, or whether they literally obeyed them. This appears in the account given by Ezekiel, in which he informs us, that he was directed to make a mimic portraiture of a siege, and to continue a great length of time lying on his side; as also in that in which he declares himself to have been commanded to shave and to consume his hair.\* The nature of these injunctions seems to import only some figurative instructions given and obeyed in vision.<sup>7</sup> At other times, the prophets describe not merely the precept, but the transaction, with particulars so minutely and circumstantially detailed, that we might be led to admit a positive historical sense, did not the difficulties and inadequate advantage of an actual performance tend to demonstrate that the scene must have been fictitious. Thus, however circumstantial be the relation of Jeremiah relative to his concealment of the girdle, it is difficult to conceive that God should command the prophet to take two such long journeys<sup>8</sup>

\* Where it is said, that "the hand of the Lord was upon the prophet," or "the word of the Lord came unto him," it is generally thought that a vision is described; and where the instruction of the prophet only was designed, the transaction was probably confined to the scene of the prophet's imagination. Vid. Gen. xv. 4, 5; Jerem. i. 11, 13; xviii. 1—4; xxiv. 1—4; Ezek. iii. 22—27; viii; xxxvii.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel iv. and v.

<sup>8</sup> It is not positively asserted that these injunctions were not literally executed, but that probably they never were, since Ezekiel does not profess actually to have performed them; and the nature of the thing seems to prove, that they were acted only in the imagination of the prophet. But if the historical sense be received, it certainly may

be vindicated from all objections. Ezekiel might have been miraculously enabled to bear the fatigue of lying so long on his side; and the objection of Maimonides to the reality of the second transaction is frivolous, for though it was unlawful for the priest to shave, (vid. Levit. xxv. 5; Ezek. xlv. 20.) the law might certainly be dispensed with, by God's command; and, as uncustomary, it must have been more remarkable as a sign. The portraiture of the siege, as represented by the prophet, whether it were real or visionary, was descriptive of the circumstances that occurred at the taking of Jerusalem. Compare Ezek. 1—3, with Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Jerem. xiii. "Absit," says Maimonides, in a spirit of hasty and indignant piety, "ut Deus Prophetas suos stultis vel Ebris

merely for the purpose of this typical illustration.<sup>a</sup> Nor was it possible, without miracles multiplied for a purpose which might as well have been effected by a prophetic vision, that Jeremiah should make the various nations which he enumerates drink of the cup of fury, which he professed to have received at God's hand.<sup>b</sup> These transactions, if performed in vision, might be described by the prophets as signs and intimations to those whom they addressed. The people would not indeed be so strongly affected thereby, as if they had really witnessed the performance of these actions; and it must be added, that where the circumstances do not absolutely authorize us to suppose that the prophet speaks of transactions in vision, and where the action might reasonably and advantageously to the prophet's designs be literally performed, it is more consistent with the rules that should be observed in the interpretation of scripture, to admit a literal and positive construction.<sup>c</sup>

It is now necessary to consider more immediately the writings of the prophets. It is probable, from the variety of style observable in these, that the Holy Spirit suggested in general only the matter, and not the words, to the prophets;<sup>d</sup> and this idea is confirmed, when we reflect that our Saviour and his apostles cited in general more according to the sense than to the letter of scripture,<sup>e</sup> and commonly from the Septuagint version, at least when it did not differ from the Hebrew original. Moses is by some supposed to have been an exception in this particular, and to have received the very words and phrases in which the communications that he obtained are described.<sup>f</sup> But this remark must at least be confined to the decalogue, of which the laws

*similes reddat.*" But this judicious writer appears to judge too precipitately, and contrary to the opinion of his countrymen, where he determines that, whenever these actions are represented by way of parable or similitude, they must be understood as visionary transactions. Vid. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. 46. Hieron. Procem. in Osee. Stillingfleet's Letter to a Deist, p. 131.

<sup>a</sup> From Jerusalem to the Euphrates was about two hundred leagues. Bochart conceives, that as the initial letter of names and places is often dropped, the Hebrew word *parath*, may stand for Ephrath, or Ephrathah, which was Bethlehem, about six miles from Jerusalem. Vid. Bochart. Oper. Post. p. 956.

<sup>b</sup> Jerem. xxv. 15—20. This might be

a direction to the prophet, instructing him figuratively to predict God's anger; and the prophet may be supposed to have obeyed it in a figurative sense.

<sup>c</sup> Witsius Miscel. vol. i. p. 94. Carpzov. Introd. par. iii. p. 50. Pocock on Hosea, ch. i. 2. Smith's Disc. on Prophecy, ch. 6. Jenkins's Reasonab. vol. ii. p. 50. Lake-macher Observ. Philol. vol. ii. p. 70. Waterland's Tracts. Warburt. Div. Legat. lib. iv. sect. 4.

<sup>d</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 29. Origen. Epist. ad African.

<sup>e</sup> Abarbanel in Jer. xlix.

<sup>f</sup> Bishop Hurd on Prophecy. Holden's Paraphrase on Isaiah. Lowth on Isaiah. Whitty's Preface to Com. Gem. Sanhed.



were graven on the tablets by God himself; and even in the recapitulation of these in Moab, Moses varies a little in the expressions, to intimate, probably, that the sense, and not the letter, is the important object of attention. Upon all occasions, however, when the prophets were addressed by an audible voice, doubtless they recollected by divine assistance every word and expression in which the revealed instructions were conveyed. Where they collected their information from the representation of hieroglyphical circumstances in dreams and visions, they were probably left to express in their own language the things which they had beheld. And hence is the style of every prophet more or less conspicuous, according to the nature and clearness of the revelation imparted to him,<sup>a</sup> and likewise characterized with peculiar discriminations resulting from education, and particular intercourse and habits of life. It cannot however be denied, that sometimes the prophets were instructed in the very expressions which they should use;<sup>b</sup> and when writing under the influence of that inspiration which dictated whatever was conducive to the promotion of God's designs, they delivered both sentiments and expressions of which they themselves understood not always the full importance and extent.<sup>1</sup> Sensible of the predominating power,<sup>2</sup> they communicated their divine intelligence as the Spirit gave utterance; conveying prophecies of which neither they nor their hearers, probably, perceived the full scope, nor foresaw distinctly the spiritual accomplishment; writing for the advantage of those that were to come after, and to furnish evidence in support of a future dispensation.

The great object of prophecy was, as has been before observed, a description of the Messiah and of his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> These were gradually unfolded by successive prophets, in predictions more and more distinct. They were at first held forth in general promises; they were afterwards described by figures, and shadowed out under types and allusive institutions; as well as clearly foretold in the full lustre of descriptive prophecy. A

<sup>a</sup> Zachary's, Ezekiel's, and Daniel's prophecies are sometimes obscure, from the multitude of images represented to their imaginations in vision. Vid. R. Albo, cap. 10.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. viii. 13, 14, 26, 27; xii. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12; 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Jerem. xx. 9; Esek. iii. 14.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxvi. 56; Luke i. 70; xviii. 31; xxiv. 44; John i. 45; Acts iii. 18, 24; x. 43; xiii. 27; xv. 15; xxviii. 23; 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Maimon. in Sanh. R. Solomon Jarchi, in Zechar. ix. Lowman on Prophecy.

complete explication of the scripture types would require more compass than can be here allowed. It may however be observed, by way of general illustration, that the remarkable personages under the old dispensation were sometimes, in the description of their characters and in the events of their lives,<sup>m</sup> the representatives of the future dispensers of evangelical blessings, as Moses and David were unquestionably types of Christ.<sup>n</sup> Persons likewise were sometimes descriptive of things, as Sarah and Hagar were allegorical figures of the two covenants.<sup>o</sup> And on the other hand, things were used to symbolize persons, as the brazen serpent and the paschal lamb<sup>p</sup> were signs of our healing and spotless Redeemer. And so, lastly, ceremonial appointments and legal circumstances were pre-ordained, as significant of gospel institutions.<sup>q</sup>

Hence it was that many of the descriptions of the prophets had a twofold character: bearing often an immediate reference to present circumstances, and yet being in their nature predictive of future occurrences. What they reported of the type was often in a more signal manner applicable to the thing typified; <sup>r</sup> what they spoke literally of present, was figuratively descriptive of future particulars; <sup>s</sup> and what was applied in a figurative sense to existing persons, was often actually characteristic of their distant archetypes.<sup>t</sup> Many passages, then, in the Old Testament, which in their first aspect appear to be historical, are in fact prophetic, and they are so cited in the New Testament, not by way of ordinary accommodation, or casual coincidence, but as intentionally predictive, as having a double sense, a literal and mystical interpretation.<sup>u</sup>

This mode of wrapping up religious truths in allegory, was practised by all nations.<sup>v</sup> It was familiar to the Jews, and agreeable to their ideas of the nature of the scriptures.<sup>w</sup> It

<sup>m</sup> Matt. xii. 40.

<sup>n</sup> Ezek. xxxiv. 23. Vid. also, Matt. xi. 14; Heb. vi. 20; vii. 1—3.

<sup>o</sup> Gal. iv. 22—31, and Rom. ix. 8—13.

<sup>p</sup> John iii. 14. Comp. also, Exod. xii. 46, with John xix. 36.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. x. 1—11; Heb. viii. 5; ix; x; 1 Pet. iii. 20, 22. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. viii. c. 10. Lowth's Preface to Comm. on Prophets. Lowth's Preface to Isaiah. Vid. also the Accounts of Exodus and Leviticus.

<sup>r</sup> Psalm xxi. 4, 5, 6; xl. 1, 7—10; Canticles; Lament. iii. 1—30; Psal. lxi. 9,

comp. with John xiii. 18; Dan. xi. 36, 37.

<sup>s</sup> Psalms and Prophets, passim.

<sup>t</sup> Psalm xxii. 16—18, &c.

<sup>u</sup> Comp. Hosea xi. 1, with Matt. ii. 15.

<sup>v</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v.

<sup>w</sup> Psalm cxix. 18; Ecclus. xlviii. 10;

and Mede's Disc. c. 25. Acts viii. 34. Maimon. More Nevoch, part ii. c. 43. R. David Kimchi on Hosea l. 4. in Bemidbar Rab. in Voisin on Pug. f. p. 154. M. B. Israelis, spes Israelis, sect. 25. Philo de Vit. Contem. p. 893. Joseph. Antiq. lib. iii. cap. 9. Origen. c. Cels. lib. ii. p. 59. Chandler's Def. sect. 5. ch. 3.

gives, likewise, great interest and importance to the sacred book; in the perusal of which the diligent are daily recompensed by the discovery of more admirable contrivance and unexpected beauties; the intimate analogy which was concerted between the Jewish and the Christian church rendering this figurative display strikingly proper and curious.

Besides those historical passages of which the covert allusions were explained by the interpretation of the gospel writers, who were enlightened by the Spirit to unfold the mysteries of scripture, the prophets often uttered positive predictions, which, in consequence of the correspondence established between the two dispensations, were descriptive of a double event, however they might be themselves ignorant of the full extent of those prophecies which they delivered. For instance, their promises of present success and deliverances were often significant of distant benefits, and secular consolations conveyed assurances of evangelical blessings.\* Thus their prophecies received completion in a first and secondary view. As being, in part, signs to excite confidence, they had an immediate accomplishment, but were afterwards fulfilled in a more illustrious sense;† the prophets being inspired by the suggestions of the Spirit, to use expressions magnificent enough to include the substance in the description of the figure. That many of the prophecies in the Old Testament were direct, and singly and exclusively applicable to and accomplished in our Saviour, is certain;‡ and that some passages from the Old Testament are cited only by way of accommodation to circumstances described in the New, is perhaps equally true.§ But that this typical kind of prophecy was likewise employed, is evident, as well from the interpretation of the passages above referred to, as from the application of many other parts of scripture by the sacred writers, and, indeed, from their express declarations.¶

\* 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14, comp. with Heb. i. 5. Pensees de Pascal, sect. 10, 14.

† 1 Kings xlii. 2, 3; Isaiah vii. 14; and Matt. i. 22. Comp. Dan. ix. 27, and xii. 7, with 1 Macc. i. 54, and Matt. xxiv. 15. Vitringa Obser. Sac. lib. vi. cap. 20, &c. Glassii Philo. Sac. lib. ii. Witalii Miscel. Sac. tom. i. lib. iii. cap. 8. and lib. ii. disc. 1, 2. Econ. Fœd. lib. iv. c. 6—10. Sixt. Senen. in Bib. Sanct. Cunsus Rep. Heb. Jenkins's Reason. Pensees de Pascal, c. 15. n. 13. Jackson's Works, vol. ii. b. 7. sect. 2.

‡ Gen. xlix. 10; Psal. xlii; xlv; Isaiah lii; liii; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Micah v. 2; Zechar. ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1. Origen. cont. Cels. lib. i. p. 39.

§ Comp. Exod. xvi. 18, with 2 Cor. viii. 15. Many passages, however, supposed accidentally to correspond, seem to have been designedly prophetic. Comp. Isaiah xxix. 13, with Matt. xv. 7, 8; Isaiah vi. 9, with Matt. xiii. 14; Psal. lxxii. 2, with Matt. xiii. 35; Jerem. xxxi. 15, with Matt. ii. 17.

¶ Hos. xii. 10; 1 Cor. x. 11; Heb. ix;

It requires much attention to comprehend the full import and extent of this typical dispensation, and the chief obscurities which prevail in the sacred writings are to be attributed to the double character of prophecy.\* To unravel this, is, however, an interesting and instructive study, though an admiration of the spiritual meaning should never lead us to disregard or undervalue the first and evident signification; for many great men have been so dazzled by their discoveries in this mode of explication, as to be hurried into wild and extravagant excess; as is evident from the writings of Origen<sup>f</sup> and St. Jerom,<sup>g</sup> as also from the commentaries of St. Austin, who acknowledges<sup>h</sup> that he had too far indulged in the fancies of an exuberant imagination, declaring that the other parts of scripture are the best commentaries. The apostles and the evangelists are, indeed, the best expositors; but where these infallible guides have led the way, we need not hesitate to follow their steps by the light of clear reason and just analogy.

It is this double character of prophecy which occasions those unexpected transitions and sudden interchange of circumstance so observable in the prophetic books. Hence different predictions are sometimes blended and mixed together;<sup>i</sup> 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 to keep alive the expectations of the Jews. Hence was it the character of the prophetic spirit to be rapid in its descriptions, and regardless of the order

x; Gal. iii. 24. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. v. p. 140. Hilar. in Psal. lxxiii. n. 2, 3. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. iii. c. 9. Waterland's Preface to Scrip. Vindic. and Lancaster's Abridg. of Daubus.

<sup>f</sup> Pfeiffer Hermenent. Sac. p. 633. Chand. Def. sect. 1. Lowth's Vindic. of Old and New Test.

<sup>g</sup> Origen was a scholar of Clemens Alexandrinus, who derived his taste for allegory from the works of Philo the Jew. Vid. Phot. Cod. 105. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. cap. 19. Hieron. Epist. ad Mag. Smallbrooke's Answer to Woolston, vol. i. p. 93.

<sup>h</sup> He professes, in the fervour of youthful

fancy, to have spiritualized Obadiah, before he understood it, and prefers his historical explications as a work *Maturæ Senectutis*. Vid. Proem. in Abdiam.

<sup>i</sup> August. Retract. vol. i. cap. 18. He contended for a fourfold sense of scripture. Vid. Glasii Philol. ii. p. 255, et seq. Vitringa Observ. Sac. Bib. vi. c. 20.

<sup>j</sup> As those which refer to the first and second restoration of the Jews, and to the first and second coming of Christ; the prophets taking occasion from the description of near, to launch out into that of distant circumstances, as did our Saviour in his famous prophecy. Vid. Matt. xxiv. Vid. Preface to Isaiah.

of history; to pass with quick and unexpected celerity from subject to subject, and from period to period. "And we must allow," says Lord Bacon,<sup>k</sup> "for that latitude that is agreeable and familiar to prophecy, which is of the nature of its author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day." The whole of the great scheme must have been at once present to the divine mind; but God described its parts in detail to mankind, in such measures and in such proportions, that the connection of every link was obvious, and its relations apparent in every point of view, till the harmony and entire consistency of the plan were displayed to those who witnessed its perfection in the advent of Christ.

It may be farther observed of prophecy as it appears in the sacred writings, that it was "a light shining in a dark place;"<sup>l</sup> that it was not generally designed to be so clear as to excite an expectation of particular events, or a desire of counteracting foreseen calamities;<sup>m</sup> but that it was intended in the accomplishment of its predictions to demonstrate the wisdom and power of God.<sup>n</sup> It was sufficiently exact in its descriptions to authenticate its pretensions to a divine authority, and to produce, when it came to pass, an acknowledgment of its unerring certainty. 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.<sup>o</sup> Had the period likewise of the Messiah's advent been at first distinctly and precisely revealed, the Jews would have disregarded so distant an hope. Sometimes, however, when occasion required, the predictions of the prophets were positive, and exactly descriptive,<sup>p</sup> and occasionally delivered with an accurate and definite designation of names and times.<sup>q</sup> And though the character and kingdom of Christ were at first held out in general and indeterminate promises, yet so emphatic were

<sup>k</sup> Bacon de Augm. Scient. lib. ii.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Peter i. 19.

<sup>m</sup> Had the Jews certainly known Christ to have been the predicted Messiah, they would not have crucified the Lord of life. Vid. Acts xiii. 27; iii. 17.

<sup>n</sup> Sir Isaac Newton on Dan. p. 251. Hurd on Prophecy, serm. ii. John xiii. 19; xvi. 4. Lowth's Vindication of the Divine Authority of the Old and New Test. p. 171. The prophecies relative to the Messiah must

have appeared very obscure and irreconcilable with each other before the appearance of Christ, as they referred both to his human and divine character, to his earthly sufferings and future exaltation.

<sup>o</sup> Lowth's Vindicat. p. 77.

<sup>p</sup> Numb. xxiv. 17; Isa. ix. 6; Zechar. ix. 9; xi. 12, 13; Dan. ii. 38—45; Mal. i. 1; iii. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Gen. xv. 13; Numb. xiv. 33; Jerem. xxv. 11, 12; Dan. ix. 24, 25; Micah v. 2.

the assurances as the time approached, and so peremptory the limitation of its period, so forcible and particular were the prophecies concerning the Messiah when collected and concentrated into one point of view, that about the era of our Saviour's birth, a very general persuasion of the instant appearance of some great and extraordinary personage prevailed, not only in Judæa, but also in other countries; as is evident from the accounts of various writers, sacred and profane.<sup>3</sup>

It has been very erroneously imagined, that the prophets and inspired writers of the Old Testament took but little pains to instruct the Israelites in the doctrine of a future state; and that in their exhortations and threats, they confined themselves entirely to motives of temporal reward and punishment. And it has been as strangely asserted, that though the Jews thought, with the rest of mankind, that the soul survived the body, yet that they simply concluded that it returned to him who gave it, without any interesting speculations concerning its state of survivorship.<sup>4</sup> But though, as it has been before observed,<sup>5</sup> Moses annexed only temporal sanctions to his laws, (which by no means excluded, but were indeed understood to be figurative of greater promises,<sup>6</sup>) yet the prophets in their addresses to the hopes and fears of their countrymen, unquestionably held out the encouragement of eternal happiness, and the terrors of eternal misery. It is certain also, that the Jews looked anxiously forward to that state of immortality which they expected to inherit, not merely from the general conviction of a future state of existence, which as an obvious truth they in common with all other nations entertained, but from the more positive and particular information that they obtained from revealed accounts; for not to mention that the general denunciations of God's wrath

<sup>3</sup> New Test. passim. Vid. also 1 Macc. iv. 46; xiv. 41; and Preface to the Historical Books, p. 74, note o.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero de Divin. lib. ii. Tacit. Histor. lib. v. Sueton. Vespas. c. 4. Virgil's Eclog. iv. Æneid. vi. 791, et seq. Justin. in Octav. c. 94. Vossius de Sibyl. Orac. c. 4. Cudworth's Intell. Syst. book i. c. 4. Boyle's Lect. vol. ii. c. 516. Nechumias, a Jewish rabbi, is said to have affirmed, about fifty years before the birth of Christ, that the appearance of the Messiah could not be delayed above fifty years; collecting his opinion, probably, from the prophecies of Daniel.

<sup>5</sup> Le Clerc, Warburton, &c. Vid. Div. Legat. book v. sect. 6. p. 476.

<sup>6</sup> Preface to Pentateuch, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. xi. 8—16, 25, 26. Hence it is that Maimonides observes, "Quod ad resurrectionem autem mortuorum, est id fundamentum e fundamentis legis Moëis, quam si quis non credat, non est ipsi in Judæorum Religione sors aut locus;" (vid. Pocock's Porta Moëis, p. 60.) and yet his countrymen considered his testimony as not sufficiently strong, as Maimonides confesses. Vid. also Levit. xviii. 5.

must have been understood to involve declarations of permanent retribution, it is manifest, from numberless passages of scripture, that the prophets directly appealed to those convictions which the people cherished as to a future state; and that they rested on motives of future consideration, as on the strongest arguments to excite obedience.<sup>a</sup> The prophets did not, it is true, so fully insist upon these motives, nor so perfectly reveal the assurance and character of a future judgment, as did our Saviour, who brought life and immortality distinctly to view,<sup>b</sup> and whose Gospel was entirely grounded on those higher sanctions and better promises;<sup>c</sup> but they nevertheless did apply to these cogent motives, and more forcibly so, as that covenant approached to which immortality was annexed as a positive and declared condition.<sup>b</sup>

The Jews could not have believed the translation of Enoch<sup>d</sup> and Elijah,<sup>d</sup> the recompense of the patriarchs,<sup>e</sup> and of their great lawgiver who had no known sepulchre, or the accomplishment of the promises,<sup>f</sup> to their own advantage, without a reliance on

<sup>a</sup> Job xix. 25—29, and Preface to Job; Pa. i. 5; xvi. 11; xxx. 19, 20; 1; lviii. 11; lxxiii. 3—28; lxxxvii. 6; xcvi. 13; cxvi. 15; cxxxiii. 3; Prov. x. 2, 28; xi. 7, 8; xiv. 32; xv. 24; xxi. 16; xxiii. 18; xxiv. 12, comp. with Rom. ii. 6, and Rev. xxii. 12; Eccles. iii. 17, 21; xi. 9; xii. 7, 14; Isa. ii. 17; v. 16; xxv. 8; xxvi. 9, 19; lvii. 1, 2; lviii. 8; lxiv. 4, comp. with 1 Cor. ii. 9; Jerem. xvii. 11, 13; Ezek. xviii; xxxii. 27; Dan. vii. 10, 18; xii. 2, 3, 13; Hosea xiii. 14; Zephan. iii. 8; Zech. iii. 7; Malach. iii. 16, 18; iv. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Christ is said, in our translation, to have "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10; which by no means imports that the doctrine was before unknown, but agreeably to the sense of the original, φωτισαυτος (ωωρ, και αφθαρσιαν, that he rendered life and immortality more clear, or diffused light on that doctrine, as the word φωτισειν signifies in John i. 9; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Ephes. iii. 9, and elsewhere. Vid. Robertson's Clavis Pentateuchi, Præf. p. 19. note\*. Or perhaps the text means, that Christ, having abolished death, opened to us a prospect of immortality, and unfolded the doctrine to the Gentile world, "which sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death." Christ likewise brought life and immortality to light, by annexing them as covenanted rewards to his gospel. Pocock conceives,

that the doctrine of the resurrection was less explicitly laid down in the Law than in the Gospel, because the former was delivered to the posterity of Abraham, who entertained no doubts on the subject; whereas the Gospel was communicated to nations to whom the doctrine was not previously revealed; whence the remark of the Athenian philosophers concerning the preaching of St. Paul. Acts xvii. 18. Vid. Notæ Miscel. in Porta Mosis, c. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. viii. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Bull's Harmon. Apost. c. 10. §. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. v. 24; Heb. xi. 5.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings ii. 11.

<sup>e</sup> The curses denounced against Adam could not be removed from the patriarchs, as was promised by God's covenant, unless by a restoration to the prospect of eternal life; and the Jews must have known that their forefathers were dead, without having received the accomplishment of the promises. Vid. Heb. xi. 39, 40.

<sup>f</sup> The Jews must have perceived that temporal rewards were not allotted to individuals in proportion to their deserts; they must have seen the righteous oppressed, and the wicked triumphant; and therefore in the conviction of God's truth, they must have looked to the completion of his promises and threats in a future life.

the enjoyment of some future state in which they should obtain the consummation of their reward; and those among them whose opinions were grounded on revelation, unquestionably built their faith on the expectation of a future life and judgment; as is evident from many parts of the Old Testament,<sup>a</sup> as well as from express declarations of the evangelical writers in the New;<sup>b</sup> from whatever we can collect concerning their opinions before<sup>1</sup> and after the publication of the Gospel, as well as from that firm confidence in a resurrection and future judgment which they now derive from the promises of Moses and of the prophets,<sup>k</sup> and which many expect in the time of the Messiah.<sup>l</sup>

The language of the prophets is remarkable for its magnificence. Each 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 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

<sup>a</sup> Gen. i. 27; ii. 7; xxxvii. 35; Numb. xxiii. 10; Deut. xiv. 1, 2; xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; xxv. 29; xxviii. 8, 15; 2 Sam. xii. 23; 2 Kings xxii. 20; Psal. xxiii. 4. The passages which seem to favour a contrary opinion, and to import a distrust in a future state, are only opinions stated for refutation, or strong representations of the effects of death, as to the present world. They imply, that by the ordinary laws of nature, or by man's proper force, the dead should not be restored.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xxii. 23, 29—32; Luke xvi. 31; xx. 37, 38; John v. 39; viii. 26; xi. 24; Acts xxiii. 8; xxiv. 14—16; Heb. xi. 10, 16, 35, 39, 40; Luke xiii. 14; and Matt. xiii. 40—43, 51. The Sadducees were distinguished as a sect who denied the resurrection. Acts xxiii. 8.

<sup>1</sup> Wisd. iii. 1, 10, 18, 19; iv. 7; v. 1, 5, 15; viii. 13; Eccles. xlix. 10; 2 Macc. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36; xiv. 46. The

Hebrew notions concerning the Sheol, (the Hades of the Septuagint,) which was the supposed place of departed souls, often mentioned in the Old Testament; concerning the Rephaim, (the giants, or ghosts of dead men, spoken of in Job xxvi. 5, and elsewhere,) and concerning "the gathering of the righteous; the request of Saul to the woman of Endor; and, lastly, the Paradise and the Gehenna, mentioned in the New Testament, all tend to prove, that the Jews, before the coming of Christ, believed the separate existence of the soul, and a future state of reward and punishment.

<sup>k</sup> Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 3. Porta Mosis, p. 52, et seq.; and Pocock's notes, c. 6.

<sup>l</sup> Pocock. Note Miscel in Porta Mosis, c. 6. and Mede's Placita Doct. Hebræ, vol. ii. book 3.



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, it is obvious to remark, that earthly dignities and powers are symbolized by the celestial bodies; the effects of moral evil are shewn 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.<sup>m</sup> This allegorical language being founded on 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 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 circumstance, in a degraded point of view. Hence, likewise, here and there a shade of obscurity.<sup>n</sup> In general, however, the language of scripture, though highly sublime and beautiful, is easy and intelligible to all capacities. The divine truth which it contains is described in the most clear and familiar manner; it assumes, as it were, the dress of mankind, and instructs us with the condescension and familiarity of human converse. Not designed merely for the learned and the wise, it adopts a plain and per-

<sup>m</sup> Newton on Daniel. Jones's Lectures on the Figurative Language of Scripture. Vitringa in Esaiam xxxiv. 4. Lancaster's Abridgment of Daubuz. Mede. Bishop

Hurd's 9th Sermon on Prophecy.

<sup>n</sup> Bundy's Introduction to the Sacred Books.

spicuous language, which has all the graces of simplicity, and all the beauties of unaffected eloquence. In treating of heavenly things, it reveals mysteries to which the human imagination could never have soared; and discloses the attributes and conduct of God in representations analogous to our ideas, without degrading them by any unworthy description.<sup>o</sup> It presents the divine perfections incarnate, as it were, to our apprehensions, by the illustration of familiar images. Thus the human affections and corporeal properties which are ascribed to the Deity in scripture, are level to the notions of the vulgar, and yet are readily understood by enlightened minds to be descriptive only of some correspondent attributes that consist with the excellency of the divine nature; so that when revelation accommodates its language to our restricted intellects, it is with such faithful adherence to the real and essential properties of the Deity, and to the true character of heavenly things, that it is calculated to raise the conceptions, and not to debase the theme.

It remains to be observed, that the greatest part of the prophetic books, as well as those more especially styled poetical, was written in some kind of measure or verse;<sup>p</sup> though the Jews of very early times appear to have been insensible of the existence of any numerical arrangement in them.<sup>q</sup> As the Hebrew has been a dead language for near two thousand years, and as it is destitute of vowels, we can have no power of ascertaining the pronunciation, or even the number of its syllables. The quantity and rhythm of its verse must therefore have entirely perished; and there can be no mode of discovering the rules by which they were governed.<sup>r</sup> That the Hebrew poetry in general, however, was controlled to some kind of

<sup>o</sup> "Lex loquitur lingua filiorum hominum," was a Jewish remark. But it has been observed, that no senses which savour of gross corporeity are ascribed to God, as touching or tasting; it being agreed, says Maimonides, "Deum non compingi cum corporibus per contactum corporalem." Vid. Maimon. par. i. c. 26, 33, 47.

<sup>p</sup> The historical relations interspersed in these books are of course excluded from this remark. So likewise the book of Daniel, which is chiefly narrative, has nothing poetical; nor has that of Jonah, except the prayer, which is an ode. The grave and elevated prophecies of Ezekiel (whom Bishop Lowth has characterized as an orator rather than a poet) seem to reject

metrical arrangement. The odes which are in the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Habakkuk are of a distinct and peculiar species of poetry. Vid. Lowth's *Prælect.* 25—28.

<sup>q</sup> Most of the prophecies in the historical books are unquestionably written in some kind of measure, as those of Noah, Jacob, and Balaam, and the divine hymn of Moses in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy; all of which furnish very beautiful specimens of metrical poetry.

<sup>r</sup> The measure of the modern Jews is very different from that of the sacred writings, and was probably borrowed from the Arabians.

measure is evident, not only from the peculiar selection of unusual expressions and phrases, but also from the artificial arrangement, and regular distribution of many sentences, which run in parallel divisions, and correspond, as it were, in equal periods; but whether this measure resulted from the observance of certain definite numerical feet, or was regulated by the ear, and the harmony of lines of similar cadence, is uncertain.\* The sententious modulation, however, which in consequence obtained, was so strong, as to be transfused, and to predominate in our translation. It is observable, also, that the measure is often varied, and even sometimes in the same poem, but with a propriety which appears from the effect to be always well adapted to the subject. There is nothing inconsistent with the nature of inspiration, to suppose that its suggestions might be conveyed in numbers. The prophets, in the ordinary modes of prophesying, were accustomed to compose their hymns to the sound of some musical instrument;† and there could be but little difficulty in adapting their effusions to a measure which required probably no great restrictions in a language so free and uncontrolled as the Hebrew. The Holy Spirit, likewise, while it quickened the invention of the prophets and fired their fancy, might enable them to observe the established style of composition.

The prophets undoubtedly collected their own prophecies into their present form; though the author of the *Lives of the Prophets*, under the name of Dorotheus, affirms, in a very groundless assertion, that none but David and Daniel did; conceiving that the scribes of the temple received them as they were delivered, without order: but they were indisputably

\* Lowth's *Prælect.* 3, and 19. et *Metriæ Hærianæ Confut.* The learned deny that correspondence and similitude between the Hebrew and the Grecian measures which St. Jerom, on the authority of Josephus and Origen, maintained to exist. Vid. *Prælect.* 18. *Bedford's Temple Music*, c. 6. *Calmet*, &c. The Hebrew language hardly admitted a transportation of words sufficient for the Grecian measures; and it appears evident, that though the language abounds in similar terminations, yet that rhyme was not considered as necessary or ornamental in the Hebrew verse.

† The Jews conceived that music calmed the passions, and prepared the mind for the

reception of the prophetic influence. It is probable that the prophets on these occasions did not usually perform themselves on the musical instruments, but rather accompanied the strains of the minstrel with their voice. Vid. 1 *Sam.* x. 5; 2 *Kings* iii. 15; 1 *Chron.* xxv. 1. Lowth's *Prælect.* Poet. 18, et seq. It has been the practice of all nations to adapt their religious worship to music, which the fabulous accounts of antiquity derived from heaven. *Alting. Hist. Acad. Heb.* p. 23. *And Smidius de Cantu Ecclesæ. Vet. et Nov. Test. Mart. Gilb. de Cantu et Musica Sac. R. David Kimchi in 1 Sam.* x. 5.

composed and published by those prophets whose names they severally bear.\* As their genuine productions, they were received into the Jewish Canon; and were read in the Jewish synagogues after the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the Law was interdicted, and continued so to be to the days of our Saviour, from whose time they continued to be read in the Christian churches.† They are with great propriety received into our churches as illustrating the grand scheme of prophecy, and as replete with the most excellent instruction of every kind. The predictions which they contain were principally accomplished in the appearance of Christ. Some, however, which referred to the dispersion and subsequent state of the Jews, as well as to the condition of other nations, still continue under our own eyes to be fulfilled, and will gradually receive their final and consummate ratification in the restoration of the Jews, in the universal establishment of Christ's kingdom,‡ and in the second advent of our Lord to "judge the world in righteousness."

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

ISAIAH, who was professedly the author of this book, and has been universally so considered, informs us, that he prophesied

\* Isa. xxx. 8; Jerem. xxx. 2; Habak. iii. 2, &c.

† Acts xiii. 15. When the reading of the Law was restored after this persecution, the prophetic books furnished detached passages for a second lesson, selected with reference to the section read from the Law, and read by a different person. The prophecies were read only in the morning service, and never on the Monday or Thursday, which days were appropriated to the Law exclusively.

‡ A final restoration of the Jews, and a spiritual reign of Christ to prevail after that restoration, are supposed to be foretold in scripture, and were believed so to be from the earliest ages of the Christian church. Vid. Deut. xxx. 1—5; Isaiah ii. 1—4; xi; xxx. 18—26; xxxiii. 20—24; xlix. 18—26; li. 3—23; liv. 11—14; lx; lxx. 17—25; Hosea iii. 5; Joel ii. and iii; Amos ix. 11—15; Micah ii. 12;

iv. 3—13; vii. 11—20; Zeph. iii. 8—20; Jerem. iii. 16—18; xvi. 15; xxiii. 3—8; xxx. 3—20; xxxi. 4—14, 35—40; xxxiii. 7—11; Ezek. xx. 40—44; xxviii. 25, 26; xxxiv. 26—29; xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, and xxxix; Dan. vii. 26, 27; Zechar. viii. 7, 8; Rev. xx. and xxi. &c. passim. Vid. also Matt. xx. 21; Acts i. 6; iii. 21. Barnab. Epist. c. 15. Justin Martyr Dialog. cum Tryphon. part ii. p. 315. edit. Thirlb. Iren. L. V. c. 32—36. Tertul. cont. Marcion. l. iii. Eyre's Observat. on Prophecy. Wotton Pref. to Clem. Epist. p. 15. The doctrine of the Millennium may have been carried to an absurd and unwarranted excess; but some of these prophecies, even if figuratively taken, are seemingly too magnificent to be restricted to the effects of the first advent of Christ, and promise at least an effectual and universal establishment of his spiritual influence.

during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, who successively flourished between A. M. 3194 and 3305. He styles himself the son of Amoz; by whom we are not to understand the prophet whose name is spelt Amos,<sup>a</sup> and who was nearly coeval with Isaiah himself. It has been supposed that Isaiah was of the royal blood; and some have maintained that his father Amoz was the son of king Joash, and brother to Uzziah, or Azariah, king of Judah.<sup>b</sup> He certainly was of that tribe, and of noble birth; and the rabbins pretend that his father was a prophet, which they collect from a general rule established among them, that the fathers of the prophets were themselves prophets when their names are mentioned in scripture.<sup>c</sup>

Isaiah was the first of the four great prophets, and is represented to have entered on the prophetic office in the last year of Uzziah's reign, about seven hundred and fifty-eight years before Christ.<sup>d</sup> Some have supposed that he did not live beyond the fifteenth or sixteenth year of Hezekiah's reign;<sup>e</sup> in which case, he prophesied during a space of about forty-five years. But others are of opinion, that he survived Hezekiah, and that he was put to death in the reign of Manasseh. There is, indeed, a Jewish tradition, that he suffered martyrdom by command of that tyrant, in the first year of his reign, about six hundred and ninety-eight years before Christ, being cruelly sawn asunder with a wooden saw. On a supposition of the truth of this relation, we must allow that he prophesied during a space of more than sixty years.<sup>f</sup>

Several of the fathers have, indeed, borne testimony to the tradition;<sup>g</sup> and St. Paul is generally supposed to have referred to it in his epistle to the Hebrews.<sup>h</sup> St. Justin the martyr affirmed, that the Jews had erased the disgraceful circumstance

<sup>a</sup> The prophet's name is spelt אָמוֹז; that of the father of Isaiah, אִיזַי. Vid. Hieron. and Procop. in Esai. i. 1. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. 27. Cyril. Præf. Expos. in Amos.

<sup>b</sup> R. Isa. Abarb. Præf. in Isaiah. Seder Olam Zuta, et in Gemar. Codic. Megil. fol. 10. col. 11. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. ix. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Hieron. in Esai. xxxvii. 2. Epiphanius de Vita et Mort. Prophet. et Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

<sup>d</sup> He was nearly contemporary with

Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Micah.

<sup>e</sup> Aben-Ezra Com. in Isa. i. 1. He certainly lived beyond the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign. Vid. 2 Kings xx. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Jotham reigned sixteen years, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah twenty-nine.

<sup>g</sup> Tertul. Lib. de Patien. cap. 14. Orig. in Matt. et in Epist. ad Jul. African. et Hom. in Isaia. Justin. cum Tryphon. Chrysost. ad Cyriac. Jerom. lib. v. in Esai. August. de Civit. lib. xviii. cap. 24.

<sup>h</sup> Heb. xi. 37; and Pearce on this verse.

from the sacred books; and it is not improbable, that the bold spirit of invective, and the high character by which Isaiah was distinguished, might have irritated a jealous and revengeful monarch to this act of impious barbarity; though the opprobrium of the deed must be much aggravated, if St. Jerom be not mistaken in relating that Manasseh had received the daughter of Isaiah in marriage.<sup>1</sup> It is added, also, that Manasseh endeavoured to justify his cruelty, by pretending that he condemned the prophet for saying, that "he had seen the Lord sitting upon a throne;"<sup>k</sup> contrary, as the tyrant affirmed, to what is said in Exodus, "there is no man shall see me, and live;"<sup>l</sup> thus hypocritically attempting to veil his malice under an appearance of piety. However this may have been, the story was certainly embellished with many fictitious circumstances; as, that the prophet was sawed asunder in a cedar which had opened itself to receive him in his flight, and other particulars fabricated in credulous reverence for his memory. Epiphanius and Dorotheus, who furnish us with this account, add, that he was buried near Jerusalem, under the oak Rogel, near the royal sepulchre, on the river Siloe, at the side of Mount Sion, and that he remained in his tomb to their time; contrary to what others report of his being carried away to Paneada, towards the sources of the Jordan, and from thence to Constantinople, in the thirty-fifth year of Theodosius the Younger, A. D. 442.

The name of Isaiah is, as Vitranga has remarked, in some measure descriptive of his character, since it signifies "the salvation of Jehovah." He has always been considered as a prophet of the highest eminence,<sup>m</sup> and looked up to as the brightest luminary of the Jewish church. He speaks of himself as enlightened by vision; and he has been emphatically styled the Evangelical Prophet,<sup>n</sup> so copiously and clearly does he describe the Messiah, and characterize his kingdom: favoured, as it were, with an intimate view of the gospel state, from the very birth of our Saviour, "to be conceived of a virgin,"<sup>o</sup> to that glorious and

<sup>1</sup> Hieron. in Esai. iii.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. vi. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Exod. xxxiii. 20.

<sup>m</sup> Matt. iv. 14; Rom. x. 16; xxviii. 25; Matt. viii. 17; Luke iv. 17; Acts xxviii. 25; also Vitranga's Proleg. p. 10; 2 Kings xix. 20; xx. 1, 2, et seq.; 2 Chron. xxxii. 20. St. Paul cites his work as part of the Law, 1 Cor. xiv. 21.

<sup>n</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Eaniam, Epist. xvii. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 29. Theod. Præf. in Esai. Holden's Paraphrase of Isaiah. St. Jerom, in his Epistle to Pope Damasus, says, what was figuratively true, that the seraphim who touched Isaiah's lips with fire, conveyed to him the New Testament. Isa. vi. 7.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. vii. 14.

triumphant period, when every Gentile nation shall bring a clean offering to the Lord, and "all flesh shall come to worship" before him.<sup>p</sup> The author of Ecclesiasticus, in his fine and discriminating encomium on the prophets, says of Isaiah, that "he was great and faithful in his vision;" and that "in his time the sun went backward, and he lengthened the king's life. He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at the last."<sup>q</sup> It is certain that Isaiah, in addition to his other prophetic privileges, was invested with the power of performing miracles.<sup>r</sup> Besides those that are ascribed to him in scripture, tradition relates, that he supplied the people besieged under Hezekiah with water from Siloam, while the enemy could not procure it.<sup>s</sup> It is remarkable, that the wife of Isaiah is styled a prophetess;<sup>t</sup> and the rabbins maintain, that she possessed the gift of prophecy. He himself appears to have been raised up as a striking object of veneration among the Jews, and to have regulated his whole conduct in subserviency to his sacred appointment. His sons, likewise, were for types,<sup>u</sup> and figurative pledges of God's assurances; and their names<sup>v</sup> and actions were intended to awaken a religious attention in the persons whom they were commissioned to address and to instruct. Isaiah was animated with the most lively zeal for God's honour and service. He was employed chiefly to preach repentance to Judah; though he occasionally uttered prophecies against the ten tribes, which in his time constituted the separate kingdom of Israel. In the prudent reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, the kingdom of Judah flourished; but in the time of Ahaz, Isaiah had ample subject for reproach, as idolatry was established, even in the temple, and the kingdom nearly ruined by the impiety which the king had introduced and countenanced. In the reign of Hezekiah, his endeavours to reform the people were more successful; and some piety prevailed, till the seduction of Manasseh completed the triumph of idolatry and sin.

There are many historical relations scattered through this

<sup>p</sup> Chap. lxvi. 20, 23.

<sup>q</sup> Ecclus. xlviii. 22, 25. Vid. also Calmet's Præf. and Lowth's Prælect. 21.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Kings xx. 11; 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

<sup>s</sup> Hence, as some have supposed, was the origin of the pool of Siloam. The word Siloam implies "sent." Vid. John ix. 7. Every tradition relative to these interesting

characters is worth recording.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. viii. 3.

<sup>u</sup> Isaiah viii. 18.

<sup>v</sup> Shear Jashub signifies, "a remnant shall return." Mahershalah-hash-bas implies "run swiftly to the spoil." Vid. ch. vii. 3; viii. 1.

book, which illustrate the circumstances and occasions of the prophecies. The prophetic parts are sometimes considered under five divisions. The first part, which extends from the beginning to the thirteenth chapter, contains five discourses immediately addressed to the Jews and Ephraimites; whom the prophet addresses on various subjects, in various tones of exhortation and reproof. The second part, which extends to the twenty-fifth chapter, contains eight discourses, in which the fate of other nations, as of the Babylonians, Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Egyptians, is described. The third part, which terminates with the thirty-sixth chapter, contains God's threats denounced against the disobedient Jews and enemies of the church, interspersed with consolatory promises to encourage those who might deserve God's favour.<sup>7</sup> The fourth part, which begins at the fortieth chapter, where the prophetic strain is resumed, describes in four discourses the manifestation of the Messiah, with many introductory and attendant circumstances. This division ends at the forty-ninth chapter. The fifth part, which concludes the prophecies, describes more particularly the appearance of our Saviour, and the character of his kingdom. The historical part, which begins with the thirty-sixth and terminates with the thirty-ninth chapter,<sup>8</sup> relates the remarkable events of those times in which God employed the ministry of Isaiah.

With respect to chronological arrangement, it must be observed, that the five first chapters appear to relate to the time of Uzziah.<sup>9</sup> The vision described in the sixth chapter must have happened early in the reign of Jotham. The next fifteen chapters contain the prophecies delivered under Ahaz; and the prophecies which follow to the end of the book, were probably uttered under Hezekiah. Some writers, however, have conceived, that the chapters have been accidentally deranged; and it is

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah, as well as Nahum, Haggai, and Zechariah, were deemed consolatory prophets. Vid. *Abarb. Præf. in Isai. fol. 2. col. 1. lib. i.*

<sup>8</sup> The abrupt conclusion of the thirty-eighth chapter leads us to suppose, that these historical chapters relating to Hezekiah were inserted from the second book of Kings, to illustrate the preceding prophecies. *Comp. Isa. xxxvi—xxxix, with 2 Kings xviii. 13; xx. 20.*

<sup>9</sup> Some think that they belong more properly to the reign of Ahaz. Vid. *Taylor's Script. Divin. p. 328*; but the description of the reign of an apostate king would, perhaps, have been still more forcible. Vid. *2 Kings xvi. 3, et seq.* The descriptions are not too strong for the time of Uzziah, whose individual virtues could not entirely reform the kingdom, or restore its prosperity. Vid. *Hieron. Com. in Isai. vi.*



possible that the prophecies were not delivered by the prophet exactly in the order in which they now stand. Others have attributed the dislocations, if there be any, to the men of Hezekiah, who are said to have collected these prophecies.<sup>b</sup>

When Isaiah entered on the prophetic office, a darker scene of things began to arise. As idolatry predominated, and the captivity drew near, plainer declarations of God's future mercies were necessary to keep alive the expectations and confidence of the people. In treating of the captivities and deliverance of the Hebrew nation, the prophet is often led to consider those more important captivities and deliverances which these temporal events foreshewed. Hence, with promises of the first, he blends assurances of final restoration. From the bondage of Israel, he likewise adverts to the bondage under which the Gentile world was held by ignorance and sin; and hence he exhibits, in connected representation, deliverance from particular afflictions, and the general deliverance from sin and death. The present concern is often forgotten in the contemplation of the distant prospect. The prophet passes with rapidity from the first to the second subject, without intimation of the change, or accurate discrimination of their respective circumstances; as, for instance, in the fifty-second chapter, where the prophet, after speaking of the recovery from the Assyrian oppression, suddenly drops the idea of the present redemption, and breaks out into a rapturous description of the gospel salvation which it prefigured.<sup>c</sup>

Among the prophecies of Isaiah which deserve to be particularly noted for their especial perspicuity and striking accomplishment, are those in which he foretold the captivities of Israel and Judah,<sup>d</sup> and described the ruin and desolation of Babylon,<sup>e</sup> Tyre, and other nations. He spoke of Cyrus by name, and of his conquests, above two hundred years before his birth,<sup>f</sup> in predictions which are supposed to have influenced that monarch to release the Jews from captivity,<sup>g</sup> being probably shewn to him

<sup>b</sup> Jacob. Braudingerus in *Annal. Typ. Lib. Proph. Vet. Test.*

<sup>c</sup> *Comp. Isa. lii. 7, with Rom. x. 15; Isa. xi. 10, with Rom. xv. 12. Vid. also, chap. xxxiv, xxxv, xl, xlix. Lowth on ch. lii. 13; and Abarbanel, as quoted by Vitringa, on ch. xlix. 1.*

<sup>d</sup> *Chap. xxxix. 6, 7, comp. with 2 Kings xxiv. 13, and Dan. i. 3.*

<sup>e</sup> *Chap. xiii. 19—22; xiv. 22—24; xlvii. 7, 8; and Lowth Com. and Usser. Ann. ad A. M. 3347. c. xxiii.*

<sup>f</sup> *Chap. xlv. 28; xlv. 1—5. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 1. St. Jerom has remarked, that Xenophon's history is a good comment on the prophecies of Isaiah. Vid. Hieron. ad Esaiam xlv.*

<sup>g</sup> *Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 1. Ezra i. 2.*

by Daniel. But it must be repeated, that his prophecies concerning the Messiah seem almost to anticipate the Gospel history, so clearly do they foreshew the divine character of Christ; <sup>h</sup> his miracles; <sup>i</sup> his peculiar qualities and virtues; <sup>k</sup> his rejection, <sup>l</sup> and sufferings for our sins; <sup>m</sup> his death, burial, <sup>n</sup> and victory over death; <sup>o</sup> and, lastly, his final glory, <sup>p</sup> and the establishment, increase, <sup>q</sup> and perfection of his kingdom; each specifically pointed out, and portrayed with the most striking and discriminating characters. It is impossible, indeed, to reflect on these, and on the whole chain of his illustrious prophecies, and not to be sensible that they furnish the most incontestible evidence in support of Christianity.

The style of Isaiah has been universally admired as the most perfect model of the sublime; it is distinguished for all the magnificence, and for all the sweetness of the Hebrew language. <sup>r</sup> The variety of his images, and the animated warmth of his expressions, characterize him as unequalled in point of eloquence; and if we were desirous of producing a specimen of the dignity and beauties of the scripture language, we should immediately think of having recourse to Isaiah. <sup>t</sup> St. Jerom speaks of him as

<sup>h</sup> Chap. viii. 14, comp. with Matt. i. 18—23, and Luke i. 27—35. Chap. vi. ix. 6; xxxv. 4; xl. 5, 9, 10; xlii. 6—8; lxi. 1; comp. with Luke iv. 18, lxii. 11; lxiii. 1—4.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. xxxv. 5, 6.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xi. 2, 3; xl. 11; xliii. 1—3.

<sup>l</sup> Chap. vi. 9—12, comp. with Mark xiii. 14. Chap. vii. 14, 15; liii. 3.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. l. 6; liii. 4—11. The Ethiopian eunuch appears to have been made a proselyte by St. Philip's explication of this chapter. Vid. Acts viii. 32. The whole of it is so minutely descriptive of Christ's passion, that a famous rabbi, likewise, on reading it, was converted from Judaism. Who, indeed, can resist its evidence?

<sup>n</sup> Chap. liii. 8, 9.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xxv. 8; liii. 10, 12.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. xlix. 7, 22, 23; lii. 13—15; liii. 4, 5.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. ii. 2—4; ix. 7; xlii. 4; xlvi. 13.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. ix. 2, 7; xi. 4—10; xvi. 5; xxix. 18—24; xxxii. 1; xl. 4, 5; xlix. 9—13; li. 3—6; lii. 6—10; lv. 1—3; lix. 16—21; lx; lxi. 1—5; lxxv. 25.

<sup>s</sup> See particularly the triumphant ode in chap. xiv. 4—27, which is inimitably beautiful. Vid. Lowth's Prælect. 28.

<sup>t</sup> The superior eloquence of Isaiah appears remarkably on a comparison of the

eleventh and thirty-fifth chapters of his work, with the fourth Eclogue of Virgil; in which the poet has introduced thoughts, imagery, and diction, strikingly similar, indeed, to those employed by Isaiah, but infinitely inferior as to the effect produced. Virgil is supposed to have borrowed from the predictions of the Cumæan Sibyl that description of the golden age which he represents as ready to commence with the birth of some illustrious personage, (as, perhaps, the expected offspring of Octavia, or of Scribonia.) The ideas, however, were so appropriate to the Messiah and his kingdom, that they must have been derived from a sacred source, though it is not necessary to consider them as the result of immediate inspiration. The Sibylline verses might have been inspired prophecies spread abroad in Greek verse by the Hellenistical Jews. Virgil might have collected ideas with regard to the expected Messiah from the Jews in general, and particularly from Herod, who was about this time at Rome, and whose sons were afterwards received by Pollio on an embassy there. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 13. Or, lastly, the poet, as other learned persons among the Romans, might have had some knowledge of the Septuagint version of the scriptures, since they were inquisitive after all kinds

conversant with every part of science ;" and, indeed, the marks of a cultivated and improved mind are stamped in every page of his book, but these are almost eclipsed by the splendour of his inspired knowledge. In the delivery of his prophecies and instructions, he utters his enraptured strains with an elevation and majesty that unhallowed lips could never have attained.\* From the grand exordium in the first chapter, to the concluding description of the Gospel, to "be brought forth" in wonders, and to terminate in the dispensations of eternity; from first to last, there is one continued display of inspired wisdom, revealing its oracles and precepts for the instruction of mankind. The prophecies of Isaiah were modulated to a kind of rhythm, and they are evidently divided into certain metrical stanzas or lines.†

The Greek version of Isaiah appears to have been made long after that of the Pentateuch: it is a very lax and inaccurate translation, and was probably composed after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.‡

Isaiah, besides this book of prophecies, wrote an account of the actions of Uzziah;§ this has perished, with some other writings of the prophets, which, as probably not written by inspiration, were never admitted into the canon of scripture. Some apocryphal books have likewise been attributed to him; among others, that so often cited by Origen and other fathers, entitled, the Ascension of Isaiah;|| not to mention a later book, called the Vision of Isaiah,¶ which is only a compilation from his works. These are probably attributed to him on as insufficient grounds as the books of Solomon and Job.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

JEREMIAH was the son of Hilkiah—probably not of that Hilkiah

of literature. Vid. Lowth's *Pælect.* 21. Chandler's *Vindic.* ch. 2. sect. 3. and postscript, p. 44; and Cudworth's *Intel. Syst.* c. 4. §. 16.

\* Hieron. *Præf. in Esai.*

† Chap. vi. 6, 7.

‡ Vitringa *Proleg. in Esai.* p. 8. Lowth's *Preface*, and Scaliger's *Animad.* in *Chron. Euseb.*

§ Those of Aquila, Symmachus, and

Theodosion, are now lost.

¶ 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 22. Dr. Kennicott fancies that Isaiah composed the eighty-ninth psalm, on the approach of Resin and Pekah to Jerusalem.

|| Origen in *Matt.* xxiii. et *Epist. ad African.* Hieron. in *Esaiam* lxiv. *Epiphan. Hæres.* 40, and 67.

¶ This was published at Venice. Vid. *Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sac.* in *Isaiah.*

who was high priest in the reign of Josiah,<sup>a</sup> but certainly of sacerdotal extraction—and a native of Anathoth, a village about three miles from Jerusalem, appointed for the priests, in that part of Judæa which was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>b</sup> He was called to the prophetic office nearly at the same time with Zephaniah, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah the son of Amon, A. M. 3376. Like St. John the Baptist and St. Paul, he was even in his mother's womb ordained a prophet to the Jews and other nations.<sup>c</sup> He was not, however, expressly addressed by the word of God till about the fourteenth year of his age; when he diffidently sought to decline the appointment on account of his youth, till influenced by the divine encouragement, he obeyed, and continued to prophesy upwards of forty years, during several successive reigns of the degenerate descendants of Josiah; to whom he fearlessly revealed those marks of the divine vengeance which their fluctuating and rebellious conduct drew on themselves and their country.<sup>d</sup> After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, he was suffered by Nebuchadnezzar to remain and lament the miseries and desolation of Judæa, from whence he sent consolatory assurances to his captive countrymen. He was afterwards, as we are by himself informed, carried, with his disciple Baruch, into Egypt,<sup>e</sup> by Johanan the son of Kareah, who, contrary to his advice and prophetic admonitions, returned from Judæa.

Many circumstances relative to Jeremiah are interspersed in his writings, and many more, which deserve but little credit, have been recorded by the rabbins and other writers.<sup>f</sup> He appears to have been exposed to cruel and unjust persecutions from the Jews, and especially from those of his own village,<sup>g</sup> during his whole life, on account of the zeal and fervour with which he censured their incorrigible sins; and he is sometimes provoked to break out into the most feeling and bitter complaints of the treatment which he received.<sup>h</sup> The author of

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings xxii. 4. Clemens Alexand. Strom. lib. i. p. 390. edit. Oxon. Sixt. Senens.

<sup>b</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Prophet. Josh. xxi. 13, 18; xviii. 28.

<sup>c</sup> Jerem. i. 6; and Hieron. in Hierem.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xxi. 4—11; xxiv. 8—10; xxxii. 3, 4; xxxiv. 2—5, comp. with Ezek. xii. 13; and Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 10. Jer. xxxvi. 30, 31.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xliii. 3—7. Abarbinel erroneously asserts that Jeremiah was carried into captivity with Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, contrary to the prophet's own account. Vid. Abarb. in Ezek.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 1—7. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 39, Hieron. cont. Jovinian. lib. ii. Tertul. Adv. Gnost. c. 8.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xi. 21; Luke iv. 24.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xx. 7—18.

Ecclesiasticus,<sup>1</sup> alluding to his sufferings, remarks, "that they intreated him evil, who nevertheless was a prophet sanctified in his mother's womb." According to the account of St. Jerom, he was stoned to death at Tahpanhes,<sup>k</sup> a royal city of Egypt, about five hundred and eighty-six years before the birth of Christ; either by his own countrymen, as is generally maintained, or by the Egyptians, to both of which people he had rendered himself obnoxious by the terrifying prophecies which he had uttered. The chronicle of Alexandria relates, that the prophet had incensed the Egyptians, by predicting that their idols should be overthrown by an earthquake when the Saviour of the earth should be born and placed in a manger. His prophecies, however, that are still extant concerning the conquests of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, "the servant of God," must have been sufficient to excite the fears and hatred of those against whom they were uttered. It was added to this account which Ptolemy received, that Alexander the Great, visiting the tomb of Jeremiah, and hearing what he had predicted concerning his person, ordered that the prophet's urn should be removed to Alexandria, and built a magnificent monument to his memory.<sup>1</sup> This was soon rendered famous; and as a reverence for the prophet's character encircled it with imaginary influence, it became celebrated as a place of miracles.<sup>m</sup> Other accounts, however, relate, that the prophet returned unto his own country; and travellers are still shewn a place in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where, as they are told, Jeremiah composed his prophecies; and where Constantine erected a tomb to his memory.

Jeremiah, who professes himself the author of these prophecies,<sup>n</sup> employed Baruch as his amanuensis in committing them to writing.<sup>o</sup> He appears to have made at different times collections of what he had delivered. The first seems to have

<sup>1</sup> Ecclus. xlix. 17.

<sup>k</sup> Jerem. xliii. 7, 9; Heb. xi. 17. Hieron. in c. xxxiii. 9. Tahpanhes is contracted to Hanes by Isaiah, c. xxx. 4. It is supposed by many to have been the city which was afterwards called Daphnæ Pelusiacæ. Other traditions relate, that he was thrown into a pit, and transfixed with darts. Vid. Gregent. Disput. cum Herban. Jud.

<sup>1</sup> Abulfar. Hist. Orient. Dynast. iiii. Jean Mosque Pré. Spirituel, c. lxxvii.

Ruleigh's Hist. of the World, b. ii. p. 555.

<sup>m</sup> Crocodiles and serpents were supposed to be unable to live near it; and the dust of the place is now deemed a cure for the bite of the asp. Many other similar fictions were engendered by superstitious respect for the prophet's memory.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. i. 1, 4, 6, 9; xxv. 13; xxix. 1; xxx. 2; li. 60.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. iv. 32; xlv. 1.

been composed in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when the prophet was expressly commanded by God to write upon a roll all the prophecies that he had uttered concerning Israel, Judah, and other nations;<sup>p</sup> this he did by means of Baruch. But this roll being burnt by Jehoiakim,<sup>q</sup> another was written under Jeremiah's direction, with many additional particulars.<sup>r</sup> In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the prophet appears to have collected into one book all the prophecies that he had delivered before the taking of Jerusalem.<sup>s</sup> To this probably he afterwards added such farther revelations as he had occasionally received during the government of Gedaliah, and during the residence in Egypt, the account of which terminates with the fifty-first chapter. The fifty-second chapter, which is compiled from the five last chapters of the second book of Kings,<sup>t</sup> was probably not written by Jeremiah, as it contains in part a repetition of what the prophet had before related in the thirty-ninth and fortieth chapters of his book, and some circumstances which, as it has been supposed, did not happen till after the death of Jeremiah; and it is evident, from the intimation conveyed in the last verse, ("thus far are the words of Jeremiah,") that his book there terminates. The fifty-second chapter was therefore probably added by Ezra,<sup>u</sup> as an exordium to the Lamentations. It is, however, a very useful appendage, as it illustrates the accomplishment of Jeremiah's prophecies relative to the captivity and the fate of Zedekiah.

The prophecies, as they are now placed, appear not to be arranged in the chronological order in which they were delivered.<sup>x</sup> Whether they were originally so compiled by Jeremiah or Ezra, or whether they have been accidentally transposed, cannot now be determined. It is generally maintained, that if we consult the dates of their publication, they should be placed thus:

In the reign of Josiah, the twelve first chapters.

In that of Jehoiakim, chapters xiii—xx, xxi. 11—14, xxii, xxiii, xxv, xxvi, xxxv, xxxvi, xlv—xlix. 1—33.

<sup>p</sup> Jerem. xxxvi. 2; xxv. 13.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. xxxvi. 23. The Jews instituted an annual fast in commemoration of the burning of this roll, which is still observed in December, on the 29th day of the month Cisleu. Vid. Prid. part i. book 1.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xxxvi. 32.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. i. 3.

<sup>t</sup> 2 Kings xxiv. 18—20; xxv.

<sup>u</sup> Sixtus Senensis, without any just reason, attributes it to Baruch, Bib. lib. i.

<sup>x</sup> Origen. Epist. ad African. Hieron. Præf. in Jerem. Blaney's transl. of Jeremiah.

In that of Zedekiah, chap. xxi. 1—10, xxiv, xxvii—xxxiv, xxxvii—xxxix, xlix. 34—39, l. and li.

Under the government of Gedaliah, chap. xl—xliv.

Jeremiah does not seem to have received any revelations from God in the short intermediate reigns of Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, or of Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim.

The prophecies which related to the Gentiles are contained in the forty-sixth and five following chapters, being placed at the end, as in some measure unconnected with the others. But in some copies of the Septuagint,<sup>y</sup> these six chapters follow immediately after the thirteenth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter. Though the Israelites had been carried captive before Jeremiah began to prophesy, he occasionally addressed the ten tribes, as some remains of them were still left in Samaria.

The prophecies of Jeremiah, of which the circumstantial accomplishment is often specified in the Old and New Testament, are of a very distinguished and illustrious character. He foretold the fate of Zedekiah,<sup>z</sup> the Babylonish captivity, the precise time of its duration, and the return of the Jews.<sup>a</sup> He described the destruction of Babylon, and the downfall of many nations,<sup>b</sup> in predictions, of which the gradual and successive completion kept up the confidence of the Jews for the accomplishment of those prophecies which he delivered relative to the Messiah and his period.<sup>c</sup> He foreshewed the miraculous conception of Christ,<sup>d</sup> the virtue of his atonement, the spiritual character of his covenant, and the inward efficacy of his laws.<sup>e</sup> The reputation of Jeremiah had spread among foreign nations, and his prophecies were deservedly celebrated in other countries.<sup>f</sup> Many heathen writers have likewise undesignedly borne testimony to the truth and accuracy of his prophetic and historical descriptions.<sup>g</sup> Jeremiah, contemplating those calamities which

<sup>y</sup> As in the Vatican and Alexandrian.

<sup>z</sup> Chap. xxxiv. 2—5, comp. with 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19; 2 Kings xxv. 5; and Jerem. lii. 11.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xxv. 11, 12, comp. with Dan. ix. 2; xxix. 10; Ezra i. 1. Prid. Connect. Ann. 518. Newton's eighth and eleventh Dissert. on the Prophecies.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xxv. 12. Vid. also, ch. ix. 26; xxv. 19—25; xlii. 10—18; xlv. 1, and following chapters. And Newton's Dissert. xii.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xxiii. 5, 6; xxx. 9; xxxi. 15;

xxxiii. 14—18; xxxiii. 9, 26. Huet. Demon. Evan. Prop. vii. §. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xxxi. 22.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xxxi. 31—36; xxxiii. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Alex. Polyhist. in Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix.

<sup>g</sup> Vid. Herodotus, Xenophon Cyropæd. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Compare particularly the accounts of the taking of Babylon, as described prophetically by Jeremiah in chap. li. and historically by Herodotus, lib. i.

impended over his country, represented in the most descriptive terms, and under the most expressive images, the destruction that the invading enemy should produce. He bewailed, in pathetic expostulation, the shameless adulteries which had provoked the Almighty, after long forbearance, to threaten Judah with inevitable punishment, at the time that false prophets deluded the nation with the promises of "assured peace," and when the people, in impious contempt of "the Lord's word," defied its accomplishment. Jeremiah intermingles with his prophecies some historical relations relative to his own conduct, and to the completion of those predictions which he had delivered.

The style of Jeremiah, though neither deficient in elegance nor sublimity, has been considered as inferior in both respects to that of Isaiah.<sup>b</sup> St. Jerom<sup>i</sup> objects a certain rusticity of expression to him; but this it would not be easy to point out. His images are, perhaps, less lofty, and his expressions less dignified than those of some others of the sacred writers; but the character of his work, which breathes a tenderness of sorrow calculated to awaken and interest the milder affections, led him to reject the majestic and declamatory tone in which the prophetic censures were sometimes conveyed. The holy zeal of the prophet is, however, often excited to a very vigorous eloquence in inveighing against the frontless audacity with which men gloried in their abominations.<sup>k</sup> The first part of the book is chiefly poetical, and, indeed, near one half of the work is written in some kind of measure. The historical part, towards the middle of the work, is written with much simplicity of style. The six last chapters, which are entirely in verse, contain several predictions delivered in a high strain of sublimity. The descriptions of Jeremiah have all the vivid colourings that might be expected from a painter of contemporary scenes. The historical part has some characters of antiquity that ascertain the date of its composition. The months are reckoned by numbers; a mode

<sup>b</sup> Lowth's *Prælect.* 21.

<sup>i</sup> Hieron. *Præf. et Comm. in Jerem. Cunaus de Repub. Hebr. lib. iii. cap. 7.*

<sup>k</sup> The prophet is very animated in his admonitions against idolatry, being willing to caution the people against the temptations which they would encounter in the captivity. It is remarkable, that the

eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which contains a pious sentiment which the Jews are directed to utter as a profession of their faith, is written in Chaldee, that they might be furnished with the very words that they should answer to those who would seduce them.



which did not prevail after the captivity, when they were distinguished by Chaldaic names. There are likewise a few Chaldaic expressions, which about the time of Jeremiah must have begun to vitiate the Hebrew language.

Jeremiah has been sometimes considered as an appointed prophet of the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> He certainly delivered many prophecies relative to foreign nations. His name implies the exaltation of the Lord; and his whole life was spent in endeavouring to promote God's glory. His reputation was so considerable, that some of the fathers<sup>m</sup> fancifully supposed that, as his death is nowhere mentioned in scripture, he was living in the time of Christ, whom, as the gospel informs us, some supposed to have been this prophet.<sup>n</sup> They likewise applied to him and Elias what St. John mysteriously speaks of two witnesses that should prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days:<sup>o</sup> which superstitious fictions serve, at least, to prove the traditional reverence that was entertained for the memory of the prophet; who long afterwards continued to be venerated in the Romish church as one of the greatest saints that had flourished under the old covenant; as having lived not only with the general strictness of a prophet, but, as was believed, in a state of celibacy;<sup>p</sup> and as having terminated his righteous ministry by martyrdom.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

THE Jews denominate this book Echah,<sup>a</sup> from the first word of the text; or sometimes they call it Kinnoth,<sup>b</sup> which implies tears, alluding to the mournful character of the work; of which one would conceive, says Mr. Lowth, "that every letter was

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 5—10.

<sup>m</sup> Victorin. in Apoc. cap. xi. 3. Plures apud Hilar. in Matt. can. xx.

<sup>n</sup> Matt. xvi. 14.

<sup>o</sup> Rev. xi. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. xvi. 2. How far the restriction here enjoined was of a typical, or temporary

and local nature, is uncertain. The Chaldee Paraphrase supposes the prophet to have had children. Vid. Com. on Jerem. xxxvii. 12.

<sup>a</sup> עֵיכָה, Echah How.

<sup>b</sup> קִינּוֹת, Kinnoth, θρηνησι, Lamentations, or tears.

written with a tear, every word the sound of a broken heart.”<sup>c</sup> The book was composed by Jeremiah, as he informs us in the title, and as the unvaried tradition of the church declares. The style, indeed, itself indicates the same hand which composed the preceding book. Upon what occasion these Lamentations were produced, cannot be positively determined. In the second book of Chronicles,<sup>d</sup> it is said that “Jeremiah lamented for Josiah:” and Josephus<sup>e</sup> and other writers<sup>f</sup> suppose that the work which we now possess was written upon the occasion of that monarch’s death; maintaining that the calamities which only three months after attended the deposition of Jehoahaz, were so considerable as to correspond with the description of the prophet, though they are not minutely detailed in sacred history. The generality of the commentators are however of a different opinion; and indeed Jeremiah here bewails the desolation of Jerusalem, the captivity of Judah, the miseries of famine, and the cessation of all religious worship, in terms so forcible and pathetic, that they appear rather applicable to some period after the destruction of Jerusalem,<sup>g</sup> when, agreeably to his own predictions, every circumstance of complicated distress overshadowed Judæa.<sup>h</sup> But upon whatever occasion these Lamentations were composed, they are evidently descriptive of past events, and cannot be considered as prophetic elegies.

Some Jewish writers imagined, that this was the book which Jeremiah dictated to Baruch, and which was cut and burnt by Jehoiakim.<sup>i</sup> But there is no foundation for this opinion, for the book dictated to Baruch contained many prophetic threats<sup>k</sup> against various nations, of which there are no traces in this book. In the Greek, Arabic, and Vulgate versions of this book there is a spurious argument, which is not in the Hebrew, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase, any more than in the version of St. Jerom, who followed the Hebrew. It may be thus translated: “It came to pass, that after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem became desolate, the prophet Jeremiah

<sup>c</sup> Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. xii.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. x. c. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. in Lament. R. Solom. Lament. c. iv. 20. Michaelis note in Prælect. 23. Usser. Annal. A. M. 3394. et Lam. c. v. 7; which Michaelis considers as a complaint more just and reasonable in the time of

Josiah than in that of Zedekiah.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. i. 1, 3, 6, 12, 18; ii. 2, 5, 6, 7, 16; iv. 6, 10, 22; v. 6, 18.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. xx. 4, may allude to the fate of Zedekiah.

<sup>i</sup> Jerem. xxxvi. 4—23.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. xxxvi. 2.

sat weeping, and bewailed Jerusalem with this lamentation, and bitterly weeping and mourning, said as follows." This was probably added by the Greek translators, in lieu of the fifty-second chapter of Jeremiah's prophecies, which they rejected from this to the preceding book.<sup>l</sup> The Lamentations were certainly annexed originally to the Prophecies of Jeremiah, and were admitted with them together into the Hebrew Canon as one book. The modern Jews, however, place this work in their copies among other smaller tracts, such as Ruth, Canticles, &c. at the end of the Pentateuch; having deranged the books of scripture from the order which they held in Ezra's collection.

With respect to the plan of this work, it is composed after the manner of funeral odes, though without any very artificial disposition of its subject. It appears to contain the genuine effusions of real grief; in which the author, occupied by his sorrow, attends not to exact connection between the different rhapsodies, but pours out whatever presents itself. He dwells upon the same ideas, and amplifies the same thoughts, by new expressions and figures, as is natural to a mind intent on subjects of affliction. There is, however, no wild incoherency in the contexture of the book; the transitions are easy and elegant; but it is in fact a collection of distinct sentences upon the same subject, which are properly entitled Lamentations.

The work is divided into five parts. In the first, second, and fourth chapters, the prophet speaks in his own person; or, by a very elegant and interesting personification, introduces Jerusalem as speaking.<sup>m</sup> In the third chapter, a chorus of the Jews speaks as one person, like the coryphæus of the Greeks. In the fifth, which forms a kind of epilogue to the work, the whole nation of the captive Jews is introduced in one body, as pouring out complaints and supplications to God. Each of these five parts is distributed into twenty-two periods, or stanzas, in correspondence with the number of the Hebrew letters. In the three first chapters, these periods are triplets, or consist of three lines.<sup>n</sup> In the four first chapters, the initial letter of each period

<sup>l</sup> Huet. Prop. iv. cap. 14.

<sup>m</sup> In the first verse, Jerusalem is described as sitting pensive and solitary, as Judæa was afterwards represented on the coins of Vespasian and Titus. Sitting was a natural posture of sorrow; and the picture of

sedentary affliction was familiar to the Jews. Vid. Job ii. 13; Psal. cxxxvii. 1; Ezek. iii. 15. Addison's *Diss. on Medals*.

<sup>n</sup> There is, however, in each of the two first chapters, one tetracolon, or stanza of four lines, in cap. i. 1, in cap. ii. p. 7.

follows the order of the alphabet; and in the third chapter, each line of the same stanza begins with the same letter.<sup>o</sup> In the fourth chapter, all the stanzas are evidently distiches,<sup>p</sup> as also in the fifth, which is not acrostic. The intention of this acrostic, or alphabetic arrangement, was to assist the memory in retaining sentences not much connected;<sup>q</sup> and the same method was adopted, and is even still used, by the Syrians, Arabians, and Persians.<sup>r</sup> It is remarkable, also, that though the verses of the fifth chapter are short, yet those of the other chapters seem to be nearly half as long again as those which usually occur in Hebrew poetry; and the prophet appears to have chosen this measure as more flowing, and accommodated to the effusions of sorrow, and perhaps as more agreeable to the nature of funeral dirges.<sup>s</sup>

This poem affords the most elegant variety of affecting images that ever probably were collected into so small a compass.<sup>t</sup> The scenes of affliction, the circumstances of distress, are painted with such beautiful combination, that we contemplate everywhere the most affecting picture of desolation and misery. The prophet reiterates his complaints in the most pathetic style; and aggravates his sorrow with the boldness and force of description that correspond with the magnitude and religious importance of the calamities displayed to view. In the instructive strain of an inspired writer, he reminds his countrymen of the grievous rebellions that had provoked the Lord to "abhor his sanctuary;" confesses that it was of God's mercies that they were not utterly consumed; and points out the sources of evil in the iniquities of their false prophets and priests. He then, with indignant irony, threatens Edom with destruction for rejoicing over the miseries of Judæa; opens a consolatory prospect of deliverance and future protection to Zion; and concludes with an affecting address to God, to "consider the reproach" of his people, and to renew their prosperity.

<sup>o</sup> The third chapter has sixty-six verses in our translation, because each of the twenty-two periods is divided into three verses, according to the initial letters. It is remarkable, that in the second, third, and fourth chapters, the initial letter  $\Delta$  is placed before  $\text{J}$ , contrary to the order observed in the alphabet, and in the first chapter, as well as in the acrostic psalms.

<sup>p</sup> The stanza  $\Delta$ , as now read, cannot be divided into two or three verses.

<sup>q</sup> The Lamentations appear to have been sung in public service. Vid. Lowth's *Prælect.* 22; and Preface to *Isaiah*, p. 31.

<sup>r</sup> *Assemani Bibliothec. Oriental.* vol. iii. p. 63, 180, 188, 328.

<sup>s</sup> The lamentations which occasionally occur, appear all to be composed of this long measure, which may be supposed to have been properly the elegiac measure of the Hebrews.

<sup>t</sup> Lowth's *Prælect.* 22.

It is worthy to be observed, that Jeremiah, in endeavouring to promote resignation in his countrymen, represents his own deportment under afflictions in terms which have a prophetic cast, so strikingly are they descriptive of the patience and conduct of our Saviour under his sufferings.<sup>u</sup> The prophet, indeed, in the meek endurance of unmerited persecution, was an illustrious type of Christ.

Jeremiah is represented in some titles to have been the author of the cxxxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm;<sup>x</sup> as likewise to have composed the lxxv<sup>th</sup>,<sup>y</sup> in conjunction with Ezekiel; but probably neither of them were the production of his pen. The author of the second book of Maccabees<sup>z</sup> speaks of some recorded instructions of the prophet, which are no longer extant. In the Vatican library are some compositions in Greek, attributed to the prophet, containing spurious letters from Baruch and Ebedmelech to the prophet, and supposititious answers from him.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

EZEKIEL, who was the third of the great prophets, was the son of Buzi, a descendant of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; that is, of the sacerdotal race. He is said to have been a native of Sarara,<sup>a</sup> and to have been carried away captive to Babylon with Jehoiachin king of Judah, A. M. 3406. He settled, or was placed, with many others of his captive countrymen, on the banks of the Chebar,<sup>b</sup> a river of Mesopotamia, where he was favoured with the divine revelations which are described in this book. He appears to have been mercifully raised up to animate the despondence of his contemporaries in their sufferings and afflictions, and to assure them that they were deceived in supposing,

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iii. 1—30.

<sup>x</sup> This is ascribed to him in some Latin copies, as it formerly was in some Greek manuscripts; but it seems to have been written by some captive at Babylon.

<sup>y</sup> The titles in the Greek and Latin copies which assign this psalm to Jeremiah and Ezekiel, are of no authority. The psalm was probably written by David upon the occasion of some gracious rain after a drought; or perhaps by Haggai, or some

prophet after the return from the captivity. Vid. Calmet.

<sup>z</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 1—7.

<sup>a</sup> Pseudo-Epiphanius in Vit. Prophet.

<sup>b</sup> Called by Ptolemy and Strabo, Chaboras, or Aboras; and by Pliny, Cobaris, lib. i. cap. 26. It flows into the east side of the Euphrates at Circesium, or Carchemish, almost two hundred miles to the north of Babylon.

according to the representations of false prophets, that their countrymen who remained in Judæa were in happier circumstances than themselves; and with this view he describes that melancholy scene of calamities which was about to arise in Judæa, and thence he proceeds to predict the universal apostacy of the Jews, and the total destruction of their city and temple; adverting also, occasionally, to those punishments which awaited their enemies; and interspersing assurances of the final accomplishment of God's purpose, with prophetic declarations of the advent of the Messiah, and with promises of the final restoration of the Jews.

The name of Ezekiel<sup>c</sup> was happily expressive of that inspired confidence and fortitude which he displayed, as well in supporting the adverse circumstances of the captivity, as in censuring the sins and idolatrous propensities of his countrymen. He began to deliver his prophecies about eight or ten years after Daniel, in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, and, as some have supposed, in the thirtieth year of his age.<sup>d</sup>

The divine instructions were first revealed to him in a glorious vision, in which he beheld a representation, or, as he himself reverently expresses it, "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," attended by his cherubims symbolically portrayed. "The word of the Lord came expressly" unto him, and he received his commission by a voice, which was followed by a forcible influence of the spirit, and by awful directions for his conduct.\* He appears to have executed his high trust with great fidelity. The author of Ecclesiasticus<sup>f</sup> says of him, that "he directed them who went right;" which may be considered as a merited encomium on the industry with which he endeavoured to instruct and guide his countrymen to righteousness. He is reported by some writers to have presided in the government of the tribes of Gad and Dan in Assyria; and, among other mi-

<sup>c</sup> Ezekiel, עֶזְקִיֵּאל. Fortitudo Dei vel Apprehensio Dei.

<sup>d</sup> Esek. i. l. Hieron. in loc. &c. Usher, Prideaux, and others, reckon the thirty years here spoken of, as well as the forty days or years mentioned in chap. iv. 6, from the time of the covenant made by Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign. Vid. 2 Kings xxiii. 3; according to which computation, this thirtieth year corresponds with A. M. 3410, and the fifth year of Je-

hoiachin's captivity. Other chronologists, however, conceive it to be the thirtieth year of Ezekiel's age, or the thirtieth year of Nebopolassar's reign; and others, the thirtieth year from the Jubilee. Vid. Usher ad A. M. 3409. Prid. An. A. C. 594. Scaliger Can. Isag. p. 28. Ezekiel usually dates his prophecies from the era of his appointment to the prophetic office.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. i, ii, and iii.

<sup>f</sup> Ecclus. xlix. 9; et Arnald.

rales, to have punished them for idolatry by a fearful destruction produced by serpents. In addition to these popular traditions, it is reported that his countrymen were so incensed by his reproaches, as to put him to a cruel death.<sup>5</sup> In the time of Epiphanius, it was generally believed that his remains were deposited in the same sepulchre with those of Shem and Arphaxad, which was situated between the river Euphrates and that of Chaboras, in the land of Maur; and it was much resorted to,<sup>b</sup> not only by the Jews, but also by the Medes and Persians, who revered the tomb of the prophet with a superstitious devotion.

The authenticity of Ezekiel's book will admit of no question. He represents himself as the author in the beginning and other parts of it, and justly assumes the character and pretensions of a prophet:<sup>i</sup> as such he has been universally considered. A few writers, indeed, of very inconsiderable authority, have fancied, from the first word of the Hebrew text, which they consider as a connexive particle, that what we possess of Ezekiel is but the fragment of a larger work. But there is no shadow of foundation for this conjecture, since it was very customary to begin a discourse in that language with the particle *vau*,<sup>k</sup> which we properly translate, "Now it came to pass." It has been asserted, likewise, on Talmudical authority, that certain rabbins deliberated concerning the rejection of this book from the Canon, on account of some passages in it which they conceived to be contradictory to the principles of the Mosaic law.<sup>l</sup> If they had any such intention, they were soon convinced of their mistake, and gave up the design. But the Jews, indeed, did not suffer the book, or at least the beginning of it, to be read by any who had

<sup>5</sup> Hieron. in Ezech. xii.

<sup>b</sup> Benjamin Tudela relates, that a magnificent roof was built to it by Jechoniah and thirty thousand Jews, and decorated with images of Jechoniah, Ezekiel, and others; likewise, that a synagogue and library were erected there, in which was deposited a manuscript of Ezekiel's prophecies that was read on the day of expiation. The pretended tomb of Ezekiel is still shewn, about fifteen leagues from Bagdad.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. i. 1; ii. 2, 5. Clem. 1 Epist. ad Cor. c. xvii.

<sup>k</sup> Jonah. i. 1, and the beginning of most of the historical books of scripture; also Calmet Preface sur Ezechiel.

<sup>l</sup> Comp. Ezek. xviii. 20, with Exod. xxxiv. 7. The people whom Ezekiel addressed, presumptuously complained that they were punished for the sins of their forefathers, though, in truth, they had merited their captivity by persisting in evil. God, therefore, very consistently with his former declarations, threatens by Ezekiel to make such distinction between the righteous and the wicked, that each man should be sensible of having deserved his sufferings. And he assures the people, with especial reference to eternal punishment, that "the soul that sinned should die;" and that "the son should not bear the iniquity of the father;" that each should be responsible only for his own conduct.

not attained their thirtieth year ;<sup>m</sup> and restrictions were imposed upon commentators who might be disposed to write upon it."

St. Jerom hath remarked, certainly with great truth, that the visions of Ezekiel are sometimes very mysterious, and of difficult interpretation, and that they may be reckoned among the things in scripture which are "hard to be understood."<sup>o</sup> Ezekiel himself, well aware of the mysterious character of those representations which he beheld in vision, and of the necessary obscurity which must attend the description of them to others, humbly represented to God that the people accused him of speaking darkly "in parables."<sup>p</sup> It appears to have been God's design to cheer the drooping spirits of his people, but only by communicating such encouragement as was consistent with a state of punishment, and calculated, by indistinct intimations, to keep alive a watchful and submissive confidence. For this reason, perhaps, were Ezekiel's prophecies, which were revealed amidst the gloom of captivity, designedly obscure in their nature; but though mysterious in themselves, they are related by the prophet in a plain and historical manner. He seems to have been desirous of conveying the strong impressions which he received, as accurately as they were capable of being described.

The representations which Ezekiel beheld in vision are capable of a very interesting and instructive illustration from other parts of scripture, as may be seen in the commentaries of various writers who have undertaken to explain their allusive character; and the figurative directions which the prophet received in them, with relation to his own conduct, were very consistent with the dignity of his character, and the design of his mission. Some of these directions were given, indeed, only by way of metaphorical instruction: for when Ezekiel is commanded to "eat the roll of prophecy," we readily understand that he is enjoined only to receive, and thoroughly to digest its contents;<sup>q</sup> and when he professes to have complied with the command, we perceive that he speaks only of a transaction in vision. With respect to some other relations of this nature contained in Ezekiel's book,<sup>r</sup>

<sup>m</sup> Calmet's Dict. Herbelot. Bibliot. Orient. p. 942.

<sup>o</sup> Cuneus de Rep. Heb. 17.

<sup>p</sup> Hieron. Prolog. in Ezech. et Prolog. Gal.

<sup>q</sup> Ezek. xx. 49.

<sup>r</sup> Vid. Rev. x. 8—10.

<sup>r</sup> In the General Preface to the Prophets,

Ezekiel is supposed to have actually removed his household stuff, as thus prophesying by a sign; and this supposition seems to be authorized by the account. Vid. Ezek. xii. 7; and Waterland in Ezek. So, also, when deprived of his wife, he certainly refrained from the customary show of grief,



whether we suppose them to be descriptive of real or imaginary events, they are very reconcilable with the divine intention in the employment of the prophet. On a supposition that they were real, we may reasonably suppose a miraculous assistance to have been afforded when necessary; and if we consider them as imaginary, they might be represented equally as emblematical forewarnings revealed to the prophet.\*

The book of Ezekiel is sometimes distributed by the following analysis, under different heads. After the three first chapters, in which the appointment of the prophet is described, the wickedness and punishment of the Jews, especially of those remaining in Judæa, are represented under different parables and visions. From thence to the thirty-second chapter, the prophet turns his attention to those nations who had unfeelingly triumphed over the Jews in their affliction; predicting that destruction of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Philistines, which Nebuchadnezzar effected; and particularly, he foretells the ruin and desolation of Tyre<sup>1</sup> and of Sidon, the fall of Egypt,<sup>2</sup> and the base degeneracy of its future people, in a manner so forcible, in terms so accurately and minutely descriptive of their several fates and present condition, that nothing can be more interesting than to trace the accomplishment of these prophecies in the accounts which are furnished by historians and travellers.

From the thirty-second to the fortieth chapter, Ezekiel inveighs against the hypocrisy and murmuring spirit of his captive countrymen; encouraging them to resignation by promises of deliverance,<sup>3</sup> and by intimations of spiritual redemption.<sup>4</sup> In the two last chapters of this division, under the promised victories to be obtained over Gog and Magog,<sup>5</sup> he undoubtedlyly

as a sign of the unprecedented and inexpressible sorrow under which the Jews should pine away on the destruction of their temple. Vid. chap. xxiv. 16, et seq.

\* Chap. iv. and v.

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxvi, xxvii, and xxviii. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 11. cont. Apion. lib. i. Newton's eleventh Dissert. on Prophecy. Prid. Con. An. 573. Shaw's Travels, p. 330. Maundrell, p. 48, 49. Volney, vol. ii. c. 29. Bruce's Travels, Introd. p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Chap. xxix. and xxx. Newton's Dissert. xii. and every history, and every account of Egypt. Herodotus particularly relates the accomplishment of those prophecies which Jeremiah and Ezekiel uttered

concerning Hophra, king of Egypt. Vid. Jerem. xlv. 30; and Herod. lib. ii. Hophra is called Apries by Herodotus; who, says the historian, *was destined to misfortune*. See also the Testimonies of Megasthenes and Berosus in Newton.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. xxxvi. 11; xxxvii. 12, 14, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. xxxiv. 4; xxiii. et seq.; xxxvii. 24, et seq.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xx. 7, 8. Some conceive that these prophecies of Ezekiel related to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Calmet applies them to Cambyzes. Gog is, however, generally supposed to represent the Turks; who derive their origin from the Tartars, a race of the Scythians, who were

predicts the final return of the Jews from their dispersion, in the latter days, with an obscurity, however, that can be dispersed only by the event.

The eight last chapters of this book furnish the description of a very remarkable vision of a new temple and city; of a new religion and polity, under the particulars of which is shadowed out the establishment of a future universal church.<sup>a</sup> Josephus says, that Ezekiel left two books concerning the captivity;<sup>b</sup> and the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius, supposes that one book has been lost; but as the nine last chapters of Ezekiel constitute in some measure a distinct work, probably Josephus might consider them as forming a second book.

It deserves to be remarked that we are informed by Josephus, that the prophecy in which Ezekiel<sup>c</sup> foretold that "Zedekiah should not see Babylon, though he should die there," was judged by that monarch to be inconsistent with that of Jeremiah, who predicted that "Zedekiah should behold the king of Babylon, and go to Babylon."<sup>d</sup> But both were exactly fulfilled; for Zedekiah did see the king of Babylon at Riblah, and then being deprived of his eyes, he was carried to Babylon, and died there.<sup>e</sup> From this account it appears, that Ezekiel's prophecies were transmitted to Jerusalem, as we know that Jeremiah's were sent to his countrymen in captivity;<sup>f</sup> an intercourse being kept up, especially for the conveyance of prophetic instructions;

the descendants of Magog, the son of Japhet. Vid. Gen. x. 2. The word Gog appears to be applied to the people, and Magog to the land. We learn from Pliny, that Scythopolis and Hieropolis were always called Magog, after they were taken by the Scythians. The other prophets speak of some future enemy of the Jews and church under a similar description; but in what manner this magnificent prophecy is to receive its completion, time only can explain. Vid. Lowth in loc. Jerem. xxvii. and xxx; Joel iii; Micah v; Rev. xx. Mede conceives that the Gog and Magog mentioned in the Revelation of St. John, presignify some enemies different from those foretold under these names by Ezekiel; and that St. John's prophecies apply to some unconverted heathens, to appear in opposition to the church towards the conclusion of the millennium. Vid. de Gog et Mag. Conject. Mede's Works, vol. ii. b. 3.

<sup>a</sup> This obscure vision of Ezekiel is generally supposed to contain the description of

a temple, corresponding in its structure and dimensions with that of Solomon. The prophet, by presenting to the captives this delineation of what had been "the desire of their eyes," reminded them of the loss which they had suffered from their unrighteousness, and furnished them with a model upon which the temple might again rise from its ruins; as it did, with less magnificence, indeed, in the time of Zerubbabel. Under the particulars detailed by Ezekiel, however, we often discover the economy of a spiritual temple, which should again be filled "with the glory of the Lord coming from the east." Vid. chap. xliii. 1—4. Villalpandus, Capellus, and commentators at large.

<sup>b</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Ezek. xii. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Jerem. xxxiv. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 10. Vid. lib. xi. c. 10.

<sup>f</sup> Jerem. xxix. 1; and Hieron. in Ezech. xii. 7.

for imparting what might console misery, or awaken repentance; and it was probably on the ground of this communication, that the Talmudists supposed that the prophecies of Ezekiel were arranged into their present form, and placed in the Canon by the elders of the great synagogue.<sup>f</sup>

The style of this prophet is characterized by bishop Lowth as bold, vehement, and tragical;<sup>h</sup> as often worked up to a kind of tremendous dignity. His book is highly parabolical, and abounds with figures and metaphorical expressions. Ezekiel may be compared to the Grecian Æschylus: he displays a rough but majestic dignity, an unpolished though noble simplicity; inferior, perhaps, in originality and elegance to others of the prophets, but unequalled in that force and grandeur for which he is particularly celebrated. He sometimes emphatically and indignantly repeats his sentiments, fully dilates his pictures, and describes the adulterous manners of his countrymen under the strongest and most exaggerated representations that the license of the Eastern style would admit. The middle part of the book is in some measure poetical, and contains even some perfect elegies;<sup>i</sup> though his thoughts are in general too irregular and uncontrolled to be chained down to rule, or fettered by language.

Some persons have conceived that Pythagoras imbibed his knowledge concerning the Mosaic law from Ezekiel: and that the prophet was the same person with Nazaratus,<sup>k</sup> under whom Pythagoras is related to have studied.<sup>l</sup> Pythagoras certainly did visit Babylon, and, according to many calculations, he was contemporary with the prophet.

<sup>f</sup> Bava Bathra, c. 1. and in Gemar. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. cap. 2.

<sup>h</sup> The Ezekiel who is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebins, as the tragic poet of the Jews, was a different person from the prophet. Some suppose that he was one of the seventy translators under Ptolemy. His work, in which he describes the Exodus of the Jews under the conduct of Moses, is still extant. Vid. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 344. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 28. Fabric. Bib. Græc. lib. ii. c. 19.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. xxvii; and xxviii. 12—19.

<sup>k</sup> Called Zabratius, by Porphyry in Vita Pythagor. and Zaratus, by Plutarch. Vid. Huet. Prop. iv.

<sup>l</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. Some conceive that Pythagoras might have been born about nine years after Ezekiel's departure for the captivity, and might have visited Babylon very young, and so have conversed with Ezekiel when the prophet was in years.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL.

THAT Daniel collected these prophecies into their present form is evident, since in various parts of the book he speaks of himself in the character of its author,<sup>a</sup> and has been so considered in all ages of the church. Some Jewish writers, indeed, upon a mistaken notion that prophecies were never committed to writing out of the limits of Judæa, pretend that the book was composed by the men of the great synagogue, as also those of Esther and Ezekiel.<sup>b</sup> It was, however, unquestionably admitted into the Hebrew Canon as the authentic production of Daniel; and it is cited as his work in the New Testament.<sup>c</sup>

In the time of Josephus, Daniel was esteemed as one of the greatest of the prophets;<sup>d</sup> but since the period in which the historian flourished, the Jews, in order to invalidate the evidence that results from the prophet's writings in support of Christianity, have, on the authority of a few doctors, agreed to class him among the hagiographi;<sup>e</sup> which decision, however, does not, upon their own rules, affect his pretensions to be considered as an inspired writer. The reason which, among others, the Jews produce to authorize this degradation, is, that Daniel lived in the Babylonish court in a style of magnificence inconsistent with the restrictions observed by the prophets;<sup>f</sup> and though the divine will was revealed to him by an angel, yet as the prophet himself called this revelation a dream, the Jewish writers, by some unintelligible distinction, consider this as a mode of revelation inferior to any of those specified in God's address to Moses.<sup>g</sup> Without staying to refute these absurd

<sup>a</sup> Dan. viii. 1, 2, 27; ix. 2; x. 2; xii. 5, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Bava Bathra, cap. in Gemara, and Rabbins. Josephus assures us, that Daniel himself committed his prophecies to writing. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Joseph. lib. x. cap. 11, 12.

<sup>e</sup> Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. cap. 4, 5. Hieron. Præf. in Dan. Theod. cap. ult. Dan. Yet Daniel is reckoned among the prophets in some Talmudical books. Vid. Megilla, c. 2. Jacchiades in Dan. i. 17. In the second century, Aquila and Theodo-

tion placed him among the prophets in their Greek translations, agreeably to his rank in the Septuagint; and Melito found him reckoned in the same class. Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 26. Epiphani. Hæres. 29. Nazar. note 7. De Pond. et Mens. n. 4. 162. Chand. Vindic. ch. 1. sect. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Grot. Præf. ad Com. in Esai. Huet. Demon. Evan. Prop. iv. cap. 14. Kimchi. Præf. in Psalm.

<sup>g</sup> Numb. xii. 6. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. 45.

fancies it is only necessary to observe, that the exact accomplishment of Daniel's many remarkable predictions would have sufficiently established his right to the character of a prophet, even if he had not been expressly distinguished as such by the sacred writers,<sup>b</sup> and by Christ himself, who spoke agreeably to the opinion of the Jews, his contemporaries, in testimony to the prophetic character of Daniel.<sup>c</sup>

Daniel was a descendant of the kings of Judah. He is related to have been born at upper Bethoron,<sup>d</sup> which was in the territory of Ephraim. He was carried away captive to Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A. M. 3398; probably in the eighteenth or twentieth year of his age;<sup>e</sup> and on account of his birth, wisdom, and accomplishments,<sup>f</sup> was selected to stand in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar: so that in him and his companions was fulfilled that prophecy in which Isaiah declared to Hezekiah, that "his issue should be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."<sup>g</sup>

By the signal proofs which he gave of an excellent spirit, and by the many extraordinary qualities which he possessed, Daniel conciliated the favour of the Persian monarchs; he was elevated to high rank,<sup>h</sup> and entrusted with great power. In the vicissitudes of his life, as in the virtues which he displayed, he has been thought to have resembled Joseph. Like him, he lived amidst the corruption of a great court; and preserved an unshaken attachment to his religion, in a situation embarrassed with difficulties, and surrounded by temptations. He publicly professed God's service, in defiance of every danger; and predicted his

<sup>b</sup> Heb. xi. 33, 34; 2 Pet. i. 21.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Josh. xvi. 5. Sixtus Senensis affirms, after Epiphanius, that Daniel was born in Batheber, near Jerusalem. Vid. Bib. Sac. lib. i. p. 40. Michaelis considers this as an improbable tradition. Vid. Michael. Præf. p. 8.

<sup>e</sup> Aben-Ezra.

<sup>f</sup> Dan. i. 3, 4; Ezek. xiv. 14; xxv. 3; xxviii. 3.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Kings xx. 18; Isa. xxxix. 6, 7. The word eunuch formerly was a general title for the royal attendants. The same phrase in the original is applied to Potiphar. Vid. Gen. xxxix. 1. Vid. also Acts viii. 27.

<sup>h</sup> The name of Daniel implied, "the man of our desires." Others say it signified, the judgment of God; or, according to Mi-

chaelis, God is my judge. (Vid. Mich. Præf. in Dan. and Geirus in Dan.) The name given to him in the Babylonish court was Belteshazzar; a name which, as Nebuchadnezzar remarked in his decree, was derived from the name of his god, (Bel.) Vid. Dan. iv. 8. It was usual among the Babylonians so to denominate persons after the names of their deities, as Nebuchadnezzar from Nebo, and Evil-Merodach from Merodach. Vid. Isa. xlvi. 1; Jerem. l. 2. It was also customary among the Eastern nations, for the kings to distinguish their favourites by new names when they conferred on them new dignities; and the Mogul still adheres to the custom. Gen. xli. 45; Esther ii. 7. Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. v. and vi. Cellar. ad Curtium, lib. vi. c. 6.

fearful judgments to the very face of intemperate and powerful tyrants.<sup>p</sup> It may be collected, from the pensive cast of his writings, that he was of that melancholy disposition which might be expected to characterize the servants of the true God amidst scenes of idolatry. He experienced through his whole life very signal and miraculous proofs of divine favour; and was looked up to by the Persians, as well as by his own countrymen, as an oracle of inspired wisdom;<sup>q</sup> he contributed much to spread a knowledge of God among the Gentile nations. Many writers have supposed that Zoroaster, the celebrated founder or reformer of the Magian religion, was a disciple of Daniel, since Zoroaster was evidently well acquainted with many revealed truths, and borrowed from the sacred writings many particulars for the improvement of his religious institutes.<sup>r</sup>

Daniel appears to have attained a great age, as he prophesied during the whole period of the captivity. He probably, however, did not long survive his last vision concerning the succession of the kings of Persia, which he beheld in the third year of Cyrus,<sup>s</sup> A. M. 3470, when the prophet must have reached his ninetieth year. As Daniel dates this vision by a Persian era, it was apparently revealed to him in Persia; and though some have asserted that he returned from the captivity with Ezra, and took upon him the government of Syria,<sup>t</sup> it is probable that he was too old to avail himself of the decree of Cyrus,<sup>u</sup> however he might have been accessary in obtaining it; and that agreeably to the received opinion, he died in Persia. Epiphanius and others affirm that he died at Babylon; and they say that his sepulchre was there to be seen many ages after, in the royal cave.<sup>x</sup> But it is more probable, according to the common tradition, that he was buried at Susa, or Shushan, where certainly he sometimes resided,<sup>y</sup> and perhaps as governor of Persia;

<sup>p</sup> Chap. iv. 20—28; v. 18—29.

<sup>q</sup> Dan. v. 11; Ezek. xiv. 14; xxviii. 3. Daniel was very young when Ezekiel bore this testimony to his praise.

<sup>r</sup> Wendelin. Diss. de Pythagor. Tetr.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. x. 1; xii. 13. Michael. in Jerem. Diss. Prelim. §. 21.

<sup>t</sup> Herbelot. Biblioth. Oriental. p. 233.

<sup>u</sup> The Daniel mentioned by Nehemiah, ch. x. 6, was a different person from the prophet, being probably the same with Daniel the son of Ithamar, spoken of by Ezra, ch. viii. 2. The Belshazzar, likewise,

mentioned by Diodorus, differed from the prophet in his period and character.

<sup>x</sup> Epiphanius. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sac. lib. i. p. 2. It appears, however, from other writers, that the sepulchre of the Persian kings was near Persepolis. Vid. Diodor. Sic. Reland. in Palæst. lib. iii. p. 635. Strabo relates, that Cyrus was buried at Persepolis, and that his monument was there seen by Alexander. Vid. Strab. lib. xv. p. 730. His successors were perhaps buried at Susa.

<sup>y</sup> Chap. viii. 2, 27. Shushan was the capital of Elam, or Persia, properly so called.

and where he was favoured with some of his last visions. Benjamin Tudela, indeed, informs us,<sup>a</sup> that he was shewn the reputed tomb of Daniel, at Tuster, (the ancient Susa,) on the Tigris; where likewise, as we are assured by Josephus, was a magnificent edifice in the form of a tower, which was said to have been built by Daniel,<sup>a</sup> and which served as a sepulchre for the Persian and Parthian kings. This in the time of the historian retained its perfect beauty, and furnished a fine specimen of the prophet's skill in architecture.

The book of Daniel contains a very interesting mixture of history and prophecies; the former being introduced as far as was necessary to describe the conduct of the prophet, and to shew the design and occasion of his predictions. The six first chapters are chiefly historical; though, indeed, the second chapter contains the prophetic interpretation of Daniel's dream concerning the kingdoms which were successively to illustrate the power of that God who removeth and setteth up kings, as seemeth good to him.

The four historical chapters which succeed, relate the miraculous deliverance of Daniel's companions from the furnace;<sup>b</sup> the remarkable punishment of Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance;<sup>c</sup> the impiety and portended fate of Belshazzar;<sup>d</sup> and the divine in-

It was taken from Astyages, king of Media, by Nebuchadnezzar, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Vid. Jerem. xlix. 34. It afterwards revolted to Cyrus. Vid. Xenoph. Cyropæd. lib. v.

<sup>a</sup> Benjam. Itiner. p. 78. et Abulfar. Hist. Oriental. Dynast. 5.

<sup>b</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. cap. 12. The present copies of Josephus, indeed, place this edifice in Ecbatana, but probably the historian originally wrote Susa; for St. Jerom, who professes to copy his account, reads Susa, which was in the Babylonish empire. Vid. Hieron. Com. in Dan. viii. 2.

<sup>c</sup> In this miracle was literally accomplished a prophetic assurance of Isaiah. Vid. xliiii. 2.

<sup>d</sup> It has been usually supposed, that the punishment inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar was that species of madness which is called lycanthropy. This disorder operates so strongly on those affected by it, as to make them fancy themselves wolves, and run howling and tearing every thing in extravagant imitation of those animals. Vid. Sennerti Institut. Medic. 2. par. iii. §. 7. and §. 2. c. 4. Aertius. lib. vi. c. 2. Mercur.

Var. Lect. vi. 20. Pausan. in Arcad. Ovid. Metam. lib. i. 232, et seq. But it should seem from the account, that the divine threats were fulfilled in a more exact and literal sense; and that Nebuchadnezzar was actually driven from society, till his affections were brutalized, and his appearance changed. Scaliger conceives, that this metamorphosis is alluded to by Abydenus; who remarks, on the authority of the Chaldean writers, that Nebuchadnezzar, after having uttered a prophecy relative to the destruction of the Babylonish empire by Cyrus, *disappeared*. Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evan. lib. ix. c. 41. Scaliger's notes upon the ancient fragments in the appendix to his work, de Emendatione Temporum.

<sup>d</sup> The death of Belshazzar is related by Xenophon nearly in the same manner as it is described by Daniel. Vid. Histor. lib. vii; and many other particulars recorded in this book are represented in a similar way by heathen historians, as St. Jerom has shewn by many references. The Eastern kings had, however, many titles assumed on various occasions: they are therefore sometimes spoken of in this book, as in other parts of

terposition for the protection of Daniel in the lion's den.\* All these accounts are written with a spirit and animation highly interesting: we seem to be present at the scenes described; and the whole work is enriched with the most exalted sentiments of piety, and with the finest attestations to the praise and glory of God.

Daniel flourished during the successive reigns of several Babylonish and Median kings, to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, in the beginning of whose reign he probably died. The events recorded in the sixth chapter were coeval with Darius the Mede: but in the seventh and eighth chapters, Daniel returns to an earlier period, to relate the visions which he beheld in the three first years of Belshazzar's reign;† and those which follow in the four last chapters, were revealed to him in the reign of Darius.

The six last chapters of this book are composed of prophecies delivered at different times, all of which are, however, in some degree connected as parts of one great scheme. They extend through many ages, and furnish the most striking description of the fall of successive kingdoms, which were to be introductory to the establishment of the Messiah's reign. They characterize, in descriptive terms, the four great monarchies of the world to be succeeded by "that kingdom which should not be destroyed."<sup>‡</sup> They foreshew the power and destruction of Antichrist, in predictions repeated and extended by St. John;<sup>§</sup> and conclude with a distinct assurance of a general resurrection to a life of everlasting shame, or everlasting glory.<sup>¶</sup>

The prophecies of Daniel were in many instances so exactly accomplished, that those persons who would have otherwise been unable to resist the evidence which they furnished in support of

scripture, under titles different from those by which they are distinguished in profane history; and probably the sacred writers chose to characterise wicked princes by those obnoxious appellations which they assumed in honour of their idols, as in the instance of Evil-Merodach and Belshazzar. Belshazzar was probably the son of Evil-Merodach, by Nitocria, and the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, whose son (or descendant) he is called in scripture. Vid. Bishop Hallifax's Second Sermon on Prophecy.

\* Daniel's deliverance from the den of lions, as well as that of his friends from the

flames, was long celebrated among the Jews. Vid. 1 Macc. ii. 59, 60, and 3 Macc. iv. 3—5.

† Michael. Præf. in ch. vii. Hieron. Com. in ch. vii.

‡ Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27.

§ Dan. passim, and Bishop Andrews's Respon. ad Bellarm. Apol. p. 334. et Revel. The prophecies concerning the Antichrist are usually applied to the papal power prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanes. Vid. chap. viii. 23—25; xi. 36—45.

¶ Dan. xii. 2, 31.



our religion, have not scrupled to affirm, that they must have been written subsequently to those occurrences which they so faithfully describe.<sup>k</sup> But this groundless and unsupported assertion of Porphyry, who in the third century wrote against Christianity, serves but to establish the character of Daniel as a great and enlightened prophet; and Porphyry, by confessing and proving from the best historians, that all which is included in the eleventh chapter of Daniel relative to the kings of the north and of the south, of Syria and of Egypt, was truly and in every particular acted and done in the order there related, has undesignedly contributed to the reputation of those prophecies of which he attempted to destroy the authority; for it is contrary to all historical testimony, and contrary to all probability, to suppose that the Jews would have admitted into the canon of their sacred writ, a book which contained pretended prophecies of what had already happened.<sup>l</sup> And indeed it is impossible that these prophecies should have been written after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, since they were translated into Greek near an hundred years before the period in which he lived; and that translation was in the possession of the Egyptians, who entertained no kindness for the Jews, or their religion.<sup>m</sup> Those prophecies also, which foretold the victories and dominion of Alexander,<sup>n</sup> were shewn to that conqueror himself by Jaddua, the high-priest, as we learn from Josephus;<sup>o</sup> and the Jews

<sup>k</sup> The first chapter has by some been thought to have been written after the time of Daniel, because it speaks of the prophet in the third person, and says that he continued to the first year of Cyrus, (that is, to his first year over the Medes and Persians, and to the third over Babylon;) but these words might well proceed from Daniel, as he lived beyond that period. The conclusive verse of the sixth chapter might equally have proceeded from Daniel, speaking of himself in the third person.

<sup>l</sup> The names of the musical instruments mentioned in this book, have some resemblance to those of Grecian instruments; but as colonies of Ionians, Dorians, and Æolians were settled in Asia long before the time of Daniel, technical names might easily be communicated from them to the Babylonians; or rather, as the East was the source of music, and the words appear to be of eastern derivation, they might be originally derived from the East to the Greeks. Vid. Marsham. Chron. Sæc. 13;

and Chandler's *Vindic. of Def.* chap. 1. sect. 2.

<sup>m</sup> St. Jerom informs us, that the Septuagint version of Daniel was rejected by the church for that of Theodotion. Vid. Hieron. on Dan. iv. 8. The Septuagint was admitted into Origen's Hexapla, and from his time fell into discredit. Before, it was in general use; the Latin version was probably made from it, and it was cited by the earliest writers. It was therefore probably made with the rest of the prophetic books, which we know were all translated before the time of Euergetes II. Vid. Prol. in *Ecclus.* Euseb. *Dem. Evan. lib. viii. p. 381.* Clemens. *Roman. Epist. i. §. 34.* Justin Martyr. *Dialog. cum Trypho.* edit. Oxon. p. 87, 241. *Chand. Vind. c. 1. sect. 3.*

<sup>n</sup> Chap. viii. 5; xi. 3. Lloyd's *Letter to Sherlock.* Chandler's *Vindic. chap. 2. sect. 1.* Bayle's *Dict. Art. Macedo.* note o.

<sup>o</sup> Joseph. *Antiq. lib. x. cap. 12;* lib. xi. cap. 8. Newton's *Diss. vol. ii. diss. xv. p. 36.*

thereupon obtained an exemption from tribute every sabbatical year, and the free exercise of their laws. Many other prophecies in the book have likewise been fulfilled since the time of Porphyry.<sup>p</sup>

Daniel not only predicted future events with singular precision, but likewise accurately defined the time in which they should be fulfilled; as was remarkably exemplified in that illustrious prophecy of the seventy weeks,<sup>q</sup> in which he prefixed the period for "bringing in everlasting righteousness by the Messiah," as well as in some other mysterious predictions which probably mark out the time or duration of the power of Antichrist,<sup>r</sup> and, as some suppose, for the commencement of the millennium, or universal reign of saints, which they conceive to be foretold; for the explanation of which we must wait the event.

From the fourth verse of the second chapter, to the end of the seventh chapter of this book, Daniel wrote his history originally in the Chaldaic or Syriac language;<sup>s</sup> and, indeed, the greatest part of the book bears marks of the Chaldaic idiom, as might well be expected from an author who had so long resided in Chaldæa. As all the historical particulars which concerned the Babylonish nation were probably recorded in the annals of that government,<sup>t</sup> Daniel might possibly have extracted some passages, as perhaps the decree of Nebuchadnezzar,<sup>u</sup> from those chronicles; and no testimony could be more honourable, or with more propriety be prefixed to his prophecies. As the Jews also in their dispersion had separately intermixed with the natives of Chaldæa, they all understood the language of the country; and must have received so authentic a document of Daniel's fidelity with particular respect. The remaining chapters,<sup>x</sup> which were

<sup>p</sup> Porphyry was born at Tyre, A. D. 233. St. Jerom agrees with him in applying the eleventh chapter, as far as the twenty-first verse, to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. The prophet afterwards speaks of the Romans and of the Antichrist, as he does of the latter in the eighth and twelfth chapters. Vid. Bishop Chandler's *Vindict. of Def. and S. Chandler's Vindication of the Antiquity and Authority of Daniel's Prophecies.*

<sup>q</sup> Chap. ix. 24—27. For computations concerning the exact accomplishment of this amazing prophecy, vid. User. *Annal. Vet. Test. ad Ann. Per. Jul. 4260. Prid. Connect. Ann. A. C. 458. Lloyd's Chron. Tables*, num. 3, 4. *Basnage's Diss. on Se-*

*venty Weeks.* Calmet *Dissert. sur les Sept. Sem. Petav. de Doct. Temp. lib. xii. &c.*

<sup>r</sup> Chap. vii. 25; viii. 14; xii. 7. *Lowth, &c.*

<sup>s</sup> These were originally the same language. Vid. 3 Kings xviii. 26; Ezra iv. 7. The language of Babylon was the pure Chaldee; the modern Syriac is the language which was used by the Christians of Comagena and other provinces bordering upon Syria, when that was the language of the country.

<sup>t</sup> Esther ii. 23; vi. 1.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iv.

<sup>x</sup> The first chapter of the book, and the

written in Hebrew, contain prophetic visions, which were revealed only to the prophet, and related principally to the church and people of God.

The style of Daniel is clear, concise, simple, and historical, though the visions which he describes were in themselves of a figurative and emblematical character. They portrayed future circumstances to his imagination under representations strikingly symbolical of those particulars which they foreshewed; and they who advert to the ensigns and armorial devices of those nations of whom Daniel prophesies, will discover a very apposite propriety in the hieroglyphical images which the prophet selects.<sup>7</sup>

Daniel's name, like that of many others of the sacred writers, has been borrowed to countenance spurious books, besides the apocryphal additions in our Bibles. A book entitled the visions of Daniel,<sup>8</sup> was condemned as spurious and impious by the decree of Gratian.<sup>9</sup> In this book, Daniel is said to have foretold how many years each emperor should live, as well as the events of his reign, and the future circumstances of the Saracens. Some supposititious magical writings were likewise attributed to the prophet.<sup>b</sup> But Daniel, though well versed in the Chaldean philosophy, as Moses was "learned in all the wisdom of Egypt," yet disclaimed all magical arts, and relied on the true God.

## GENERAL PREFACE TO THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS.

THE writings of the twelve minor prophets were in the Hebrew Canon comprised in one book, which was called by St. Stephen, the Book of the Prophets.<sup>a</sup> By whom they were so compiled is uncertain; probably, however, they were collected together in that form by Ezra, or by some member of the great synagogue,<sup>b</sup>

three first verses of the second chapter, were written in Hebrew, as they form a kind of introduction to the book.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. viii. Thus the ram was the royal ensign of the Persians, and was to be seen on the pillars of Persepolis. Vid. Ammian. Marcel. lib. xix. Sir J. Chardin's Travels. The goat also was the emblem or arms of Macedon. Vid. Justin. Hist. lib. viii. Mede's Works, book iii. p. 654, 712.

Joseph. Archæol. lib. x. cap. 10. and Newton on Dan. ch. iv. part i.

<sup>8</sup> *Opusculis Somnialia.*

<sup>9</sup> Decret. part ii. causa. 27. quæst. 1. c. 16. and Athan. Synop. lib. ii.

<sup>b</sup> Jos. Alb. Fabrici. Codic. Pseudepig. Vet. Test. p. 1130.

<sup>a</sup> Acts vii. 42, comp. with Amos v. 25.

<sup>b</sup> Abarb. Præf. in Isaiah. Bava Bathra, &c.

but certainly above two hundred years before the birth of Christ; for the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, who wrote about A. M. 3770, celebrates the memorial of the twelve prophets under one general encomium; as of those who had comforted God's people, and confirmed their confidence in God's promises of a Redeemer.<sup>c</sup> The order in which the books are placed, is not the same in the Septuagint as in the Hebrew.<sup>d</sup> According to the latter, they stand as in our translation; but in the Greek, the series is altered, as to the six first, to the following arrangement—Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah. This change, however, is of no consequence, since neither in the original nor in the Septuagint are they placed with exact regard to the time in which their sacred authors respectively flourished.

The order in which they should stand, if chronologically arranged, is by Blair and others supposed to be as follows—Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Joel, Zephaniah, Habbakkuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. And this order will be found to be generally consistent with the periods to which the prophets will be respectively assigned in the following work, except in the instance of Joel, who probably flourished rather earlier than he is placed by these chronologers. The precise period of this prophet, however, cannot be ascertained; and some disputes might be maintained concerning the priority of others, also, when they were nearly contemporaries, as Amos and Hosea; and when the first prophecies of a later prophet were delivered at the same time with, or previously to some of those of a prophet who was called earlier to the sacred office. The following scheme, however, in which also the greater prophets will be introduced, may enable the reader more accurately to comprehend the actual and relative periods in which they severally prophesied.

<sup>c</sup> Ecclus. xlix. 10; and Arnauld on the place. Chandler's Defen. chap. 1. sect 2. p. 44. It is called the Book of the Twelve

Prophets by Cyprian, epist. 59.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Reg. in 12 Proph. et in Joel.

*The Prophets in their supposed Order of Time, arranged according to Blair's Tables,\* with but little variation.*

	<i>Before Christ.</i>	<i>Kings of Judah.</i>	<i>Kings of Israel.</i>
Jonah	Between 856 and 784.		Jehu and Jehoahaz, according to Lloyd; but Joash and Jeroboam the Second, according to Blair.
Amos	Between 810 and 785.	Uzziah, ch. i. 1.	Jeroboam the Second, ch. i. 1.
Hosea	Between 810 and 725.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, the third year of Hezekiah.	Jeroboam the Second, chap. i. 1.
Isaiah	Between 810 and 698.	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, ch. i. 1. and perhaps Manasseh.	
Joel	Between 810 and 660, or later.	Uzziah, or possibly Manasseh.	
Micah	Between 758 and 699.	Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, ch. i. 1.	Pekah and Hosea.
Nahum	Between 720 and 698.	Probably towards the close of Hezekiah's reign.	
Zephaniah	Between 640 and 609.	In the reign of Josiah, ch. i. 1.	
Jeremiah	Between 628 and 586.	In the thirteenth year of Josiah.	
Habakkuk	Between 612 and 598.	Probably in the reign of Jehoiakim.	
Daniel	Between 606 and 584.	During all the captivity.	
Obadiah	Between 588 and 583.	Between the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the destruction of the Edomites by him.	
Ezekiel	Between 595 and 536.	During part of the captivity.	
Haggai	About 520 to 518.	After the return from Babylon.	
Zechariah	From 520 to 518, or longer.		
Malachi	Between 436 and 397.		

\* Bishop Newcome's version of Minor Prophets, preface, p. 43.

The twelve minor prophets were so called, not in respect to any supposed inferiority in their writings as to matter or style, but in reference to the brevity of their works. The shortness, indeed, of these prophecies seems to have been one reason for joining them together;<sup>f</sup> by which means, the volume of their contents was swelled to a greatness in some degree correspondent to their importance.<sup>g</sup> Neither were they later in point of time than the greater prophets; some having preceded Isaiah, and many of them having lived before Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and by the Greeks, indeed, they are placed before them. It is a traditionary account, that of these prophets, such as do not furnish us with the date of their prophecies must be supposed to have flourished as contemporaries with, or immediately after the prophets that precede them in the order of the books; but this is not invariably true, and is built upon an erroneous supposition, that the books are chronologically arranged in the Hebrew manuscripts.

Some of the prophets were probably born in the territory of Israel, but most in that of Judah. They appear, however, to have been sometimes commissioned to preach reciprocally against those tribes among whom they were not born.

These twelve prophets furnish us in scattered parts with a lively sketch of many particulars relative to the history of Judah and of Israel, as well as of other kingdoms; they describe in prophetic anticipation, but with historical exactness, the fate of Babylon, of Nineveh, of Tyre, of Sidon, and of Damascus. The three last prophets especially illustrate many circumstances at a period when the historical pages of scripture are closed, and when profane authors are entirely wanting. They describe, under the most striking representations, the advent and character of the Messiah and his kingdom; and endeavour, by the most admirable instruction, to excite those religious sentiments which would facilitate the reception of the Gospel. The Jewish prophets of the most eminent rank at first flourished but as single lights, and followed each other in individual succession; for during the continuance of the theocracy, and perhaps some time after, the Jews were in possession of the power of consulting

<sup>f</sup> Beth Israel relates, that Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi added their writings to those of the minor prophets, and composed them into one volume, lest they should perish. Vid. Bava Bathra, c. 1.  
<sup>g</sup> Hieron. Proleg. 12 Prophet. Theodor. in Proem. Aug. de Civit. lib. xviii. c. 27.

God by means of the Urim and Thummim. But when the calamities of the captivity approached; during the continuance of that affliction, and amidst the melancholy scenes which the people contemplated on their return to desolate cities and to a wasted land; during these dark periods, the prophets were, by God's mercies, raised up in greater numbers for the consolation of his people; who were encouraged to look forward to that joyful deliverance by the Messiah which now approached. The light of inspiration was collected into one blaze previous to its suspension; and it served to keep alive the expectations of the Jews during the awful interval which prevailed between the expiration of prophecy and its grand completion in the advent of Christ. If in the writings of the later minor prophets we sometimes are perplexed at seeing the light of revelation but faintly glimmering through the obscurity of their style, we must recollect that they lived when the language of the Jews began to vitiate and decline; that there are no contemporary records to illustrate their prophecies; that the brevity of their works prevents us from collating the author with himself; and that we, who read them in English, judge of them through the imperfect medium of a translation.<sup>h</sup>

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HOSEA.

HOSEA has been supposed to have been the most ancient of the twelve minor prophets; and, indeed, by some writers he is represented as having preceded all the prophets,<sup>a</sup> since he flourished about the middle of the reign of Jeroboam the Second, the son of Joash, king of Israel, and towards the commencement of that of Uzziah,<sup>b</sup> who began to reign over Jerusalem about A. M. 3194.

<sup>h</sup> "Hebræi bibunt Fontes, Græci Rivos, Latini Paludes," as Picus Mirandula observed.

<sup>a</sup> Hieron. in Osee. Basil. in Isai. i. Ruffin. &c. In the second verse of the first chapter it is said, "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea," which some have supposed to imply, that when God began to manifest himself, he addressed Hosea; but it perhaps means only, that "The first revelation to (ב) Hosea was as

follows."

<sup>b</sup> Chap. i. 1. Uzziah, or, as he is sometimes called, Azariah, and Ozias, ascended the throne of Judah in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam the Second; that is, according to some chronologists, in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, from the era of his conjunction with his father; and in the sixteenth year of his monarchy, which commenced A. M. 3179. As Jeroboam reigned forty-one years, Hosea must have entered

According to some accounts, of no great authority,<sup>c</sup> he was of the tribe of Issachar, and of the city of Beleenor;<sup>d</sup> others represent him to have been of the tribe of Judah. He was the son of Beeri,<sup>e</sup> and entered on the prophetic office sometime between the years 3194 and 3219. He continued to prophesy above sixty years; during the successive reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and probably to about the third year of the reign of the last; or if we reckon by the kings of Israel, against which nation he chiefly prophesied, he may be described as having flourished during the reign of Jeroboam and his successors, to the sixth year of Hosea, which corresponds with the third year of Hezekiah. Hosea was therefore nearly contemporary with Isaiah, Amos, and Jonah. It is probable that he resided chiefly in Samaria; and that he was the first prophet, of those at least whose prophecies we possess, that predicted the destruction of that country; which was effected soon after the prophet's death by Salmaneser, king of Assyria.<sup>f</sup>

Hosea undoubtedly compiled his own prophecies, and he speaks of himself in the first person in this book.<sup>g</sup> Calmet, indeed, on account of some supposed chronological difficulties, questions the authenticity of the first verse, which he conceives to have been a subsequent addition; but these difficulties may be solved without having recourse to such conjectures. The book is cited by St. Matthew as unquestionably the inspired production of a prophet;<sup>h</sup> as likewise by St. Paul,<sup>i</sup> and, indeed, by Christ himself.<sup>k</sup>

The prophecies of Hosea being scattered through the book without date or connection, cannot now be chronologically arranged with any certainty. They are, however, perhaps placed in the order in which they were at first uttered; and Wells,

on his ministry before the twenty-fifth year of Uzziah's reign, if he prophesied while Uzziah and Jeroboam were contemporaries. Vid. Comm. on 2 Kings xv. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Pæudo Epiphani. and Doroth. de Vit. Prophet.

<sup>d</sup> Or Bethsaim, not Beleemoth. Vid. Drus. in Osee, c. i. 1.

<sup>e</sup> Not Beerah, who was taken captive by Tiglath-Pileser; (vid. 1 Chron. v. 6.) whose name is, indeed, spelt differently, and who was a prince of the Reubenites. The word Beeri implies a well; or, as some say, it is

derived from a word which imports teaching: whence an argument in support of the rabbinical fancy, that Hosea was the son of a doctor, or prophet. Hosea's name signifies "a saviour."

<sup>f</sup> 2 Kings xviii. 10. Hieron. in Osee, cap. i. and Usser ad A. M. 3197.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. iii. 1—3.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. ii. 15, from Hosea xi. 1, and Chand. Def. ch. xi. sect. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. ix. 25, 26; 1 Cor. xv. 35.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. ix. 12, 13; xii. 7.



upon some probable conjectures, supposes them to have been delivered in the following succession, reckoning by the kings of Israel.

In the reign of Jeroboam,	The three first chapters.
In the interregnum which succeeded the death of Jeroboam,	The fourth chapter.
In the reign of Menahem, or in that of his son Pekahiah. According to which account, none are assigned to the short intermediate reigns of Zechariah and Shallum,	The fifth chapter; to chap. vi. 3. inclusively.
In the reign of Pekah,	From chap. vi. 4. to chap. vii. 10. inclusively.
In the reign of Hosea,	From chap. vii. 11. to the end. Comp. chap. vii. 11. with 2 Kings xvii. 4. Wells subdivides this portion into two parts, supposing the first, which terminates with the tenth chapter, to have been delivered before the king of Assyria took away the golden calf that was at Bethel; and the remainder after that event.

At whatever periods the prophecies were delivered, the occasion and design of them are sufficiently clear. The author, in one continued strain of invective, declaims against the sins of Israel; exposes in the strongest terms the spiritual whoredoms of those who worshipped the vain idols erected at Bethel and Bethaven, calling on Judah to shun pollutions so offensive to Jehovah. He denounces God's vengeance against Ephraim, (the representative of the ten tribes,) who should vainly call on other nations for protection. He points out the folly of the people in their pursuits; telling them, that they had "sown the wind, and should reap the whirlwind." He threatens them in

many prophecies: from among which we may select, as remarkable proofs of that foreknowledge with which the prophet was inspired, those in which he foretold the captivities, dispersion, and sufferings of Israel;<sup>1</sup> the deliverance of Judah from Sennacherib, allusively figurative of salvation by Christ;<sup>m</sup> the punishment of Judah, and the demolition of its cities;<sup>n</sup> the congregation of the Gentile converts;<sup>o</sup> the present state of the Jews,<sup>p</sup> and their future restoration in the general establishment of the Messiah's kingdom;<sup>q</sup> the calling of our Saviour out of Egypt;<sup>r</sup> his resurrection on the third day;<sup>s</sup> and the terrors of the last judgment, figuratively to be represented in temporal destruction impending over Samaria.<sup>t</sup> Thus, amidst the denunciations of wrath, the people were animated by some dawnings of favour; and taught to cultivate righteousness and mercy in expectation of the blessings of our Lord;<sup>u</sup> and in the assurances of a final ransom from the power of the grave, and of a redemption from death, to be ultimately vanquished and destroyed.<sup>x</sup>

The style of Hosea has been considered as particularly obscure; it is sententious and abrupt, and characterized by a compressive and antiquated cast. The transitions of person are sudden; the connexive and adversative particles frequently omitted. His figures and similitudes are rather lively than elegant, and are traced with more force than exactness.<sup>y</sup> His writings are animated with a fine spirit of indignation, descriptive of the zealous resentment which he felt against the princes and priests who countenanced the iniquities of the people; and his work may be considered as a noble exordium against those general offences which the prophets who succeeded him more particularly detailed, as well as a diffusive revelation of those judgments which were afterwards more minutely described.

The subject of Hosea's marriage has been much agitated.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 4, 5; v. 5—7; ix. 3, 6—17; x. 5, 6, 15; xiii. 16.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. i. 7, comp. with 2 Kings xix. 35, and Chand. Def. ch. ii. sect. 1. p. 70.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. v. 10; viii. 14.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. i. 10, 11; ii. 23; comp. with Rom. ix. 24, 26.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. iii. 4. Vid. Origen. Philocal. c. 1. Hieron. in loc.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. i. 11; iii. 5; xiv. 4, 8.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xi. 1, comp. with Matt. ii. 15, and Hieron. Grot. et in loc.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. vi. 2, comp. with 1 Cor. xv. 4.

August. de Trinit. cap. xxviii. <sup>t</sup> Cyprian. cont. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 24. Bernard. Serm. i. in Resur. Orig. Homil. 5. in Exod. Tertul. Advers. Jud. c. xiii. and commentators.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. x. 8, comp. with Luke xxiii. 30, and Rev. vi. 16. Hieron. in loc. and Lowth on Isaiah ii. 19.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. x. 12. Hieron. in loc.

<sup>x</sup> Chap. xiii. 14, comp. with 1 Cor. xv. 55, and Poecock in loc.

<sup>y</sup> Lowth's Prælect. 21.

Many Jewish and Christian writers conceive it to have been enjoined, and performed in a literal and historical sense; \* some supposing that "a wife of whoredoms" may imply, a wife who should prove false; \* or only a wife from among the Israelites, who were remarkable for their idolatrous fornications: as likewise by an adulteress, <sup>b</sup> whom the prophet is represented afterwards to have bought, may be understood, a woman who had apostatized from God in a spiritual sense. Those who contend for the historical truth of these relations, maintain that all impropriety in such proceedings was done away by God's command; and that the immediate minister of God might, consistently with the design of his appointment, be employed thus to illustrate the scandalous conduct of the Israelites. Other writers however contend that these accounts are descriptive of transactions in vision, as the expression of "the word of the Lord," that came to the prophet, might seem to intimate; <sup>c</sup> and others consider the relations as fictitious representations furnished by way of parable. <sup>d</sup> Without presuming to determine on either side on a subject so difficult, it may be observed, that it was not inconsistent with the character of a vision, or of a parabolical fiction, to specify minute particulars with narrative exactness. <sup>e</sup> The names, therefore, of the personages introduced <sup>f</sup> in the accounts can furnish no explanation of the nature of the transactions; and whether real or fictitious, they might with equal consistency be represented as figurative.

\* Hieron. et Theodoret in loc. August. Grotius, Calmet's Preface. Carpzov. Introd. ad Lib. Bib. pars iii. p. 277. Abarbin. et Baail in loc. cap. 8. p. 933. Grot. et Wells in loc.

<sup>a</sup> Wells, Diodat. &c.

<sup>b</sup> It is uncertain, whether by the woman spoken of in the third chapter, is meant Hosea's wife, whom he is commanded to take back after her infidelity, as predicted, or a different person appointed for the prophet after the death of the first wife. Consult Pocock and other commentators.

<sup>c</sup> Aben-Ezra, R. David Kimchi, Maimon. More Nevoch, lib. ii. c. 46. Hieron. Præf.

in Com. and General Preface, p. 180. note u.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. in loc. Aben-Ezra, Isidor, &c. The Chaldee paraphrast has been thought to have considered it as a parable. He introduces the account thus: "The Lord said unto Hosea, Go, and utter a prophecy," &c. Vid. R. Tanch. Rivet, Junius Tremellius, Pocock, &c.

<sup>e</sup> Ezek. xxiii; Luke xvi. 20—31.

<sup>f</sup> By "children of whoredoms," we are probably to understand, legitimate children of a woman addicted to fornication; perverse, lewd, or idolatrous children, who should imitate the conduct of their mother.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JOEL.

THE book of Joel is placed in the Hebrew Bible immediately after that of Hosea; but in the Septuagint version, the books of Amos and Micah are interposed between them. It is difficult to determine whether the Greek translators were authorized by chronology to change the order, since there is no positive criterion by which the age of Joel can be ascertained. St. Jerom, however, and many of the ancients,<sup>a</sup> were of opinion, that as no date is prefixed to the book, its author should be supposed, agreeably to the Jewish rule, to have flourished at the same time with Hosea, whose writings in the Hebrew manuscripts immediately precede. This rule is, however, not to be depended on; neither can any proof of the priority of Joel be drawn from the notion supported by Usher;<sup>b</sup> who conceived that the famine and drought of which Joel speaks as impending in his time, were parts of the same affliction which Amos represented as actually come to pass:<sup>c</sup> for Joel prophesied calamities against Judah; and Amos describes afflictions which were seemingly sustained, as a peculiar judgment only by the people of Israel. Still, however, there is no sufficient reason for departing from the Hebrew order;<sup>d</sup> nor is it necessary to suppose that Joel prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, merely because he makes no mention of Israel. His commission, probably, was confined to Judah, as that of Hosea, his supposed contemporary, was chiefly restricted to Samaria; and had the divine threats been already accomplished against Israel, it is reasonable to suppose that the prophet would, like his successors, have instructed the people to take warning by the fate of a sister kingdom.<sup>e</sup> We may therefore safely suppose him to have lived in the reigns of Uzziah king of Judah, and of Jeroboam king of Israel,<sup>f</sup> who flourished as contemporary sovereigns between A. M.

<sup>a</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Proph. Theodor. in Præloq. Proph. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 27.

<sup>b</sup> Usher. ad A. M. 3197. Lloyd's Tables.

<sup>c</sup> Amos iv. 7, 8.

<sup>d</sup> Abarb. Præf. in 12 Proph.

<sup>e</sup> Israel, mentioned in ch. iii. 2, means not merely the ten tribes, but the whole

nation of the Jews; and the prophet speaks prophetically of a future dispersion among the nations from which God's people should be gathered.

<sup>f</sup> Lloyd's Tables. A French writer (P. Pezron, sur les Prophetes) fixes the prophecy of Joel to the twentieth year of Uzziah, and the thirty-sixth of Jeroboam

3194 and 3219; and to have delivered his prophecies soon after Hosea had commenced his ministry; though some Jewish and Christian writers have chosen to assign to him a later period; <sup>a</sup> some placing him in the reign of Jotham, <sup>b</sup> others in that of Jeram, <sup>c</sup> and others contending that he prophesied under Manasseh, <sup>d</sup> or Josiah, <sup>e</sup> the last of which monarchs began to reign about six hundred and forty years before the birth of Christ.

Joel was the son of Pethuel, or Bethuel, and, according to some reports, of the tribe of Reuben. <sup>m</sup> He is related to have been born at Bethoron; <sup>n</sup> which was probably the lower or nether Bethoron, a town in the territory of Benjamin, <sup>o</sup> between Jerusalem and Cæsarea. Of the particulars of his life, or of the age to which he attained, we have no account. <sup>p</sup> Dorotheus relates only, that he died in peace at the place of his nativity.

The book appears to be entirely prophetic, though Joel, under the impression of foreseen calamities, describes their effects as present, and, by an animated representation, anticipates the scenes of misery which lowered over Judæa. <sup>q</sup> Though it cannot be positively determined to what period the description contained in the first chapter may apply, it is generally supposed that the prophet blends two subjects of affliction in one general consideration, or beautiful allegory; and that under the devastation to be produced by locusts in the vegetable world, he portrays some more distant calamities to be produced by the armies of the Chadaeans in their invasion of Judæa. <sup>r</sup> And hence a designed

the Second. Vid. also Joel ii. 20; which contains a prediction that seems, at least in its secondary sense, to relate to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, which happened in the reign of Hesekiah, A. M. 3294.

<sup>s</sup> Poli Synopsis.

<sup>t</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 27.

<sup>u</sup> The advocates for this period maintain, that Joel foreshewed the impending famine, which desolated Judæa seven years in the reign of Joram. Vid. 2 Kings viii. 1—3.

<sup>v</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, et Zuta, Kimchi, R. Selomo, R. David Ganz, Druaius, and Wells's Preface to Joel. Wells maintains that the famine and dearth of which Micah prophesied, was to take place (and did happen) in the time of Manasseh. Vid. Wells's Preface to Micah, and in Micah vi. 14, note *a. a.*

<sup>w</sup> Calmet's Preface sur Joel. He conceives Joel to have been contemporary with Josiah, to whose reign he assigns the drought spoken of by Jeremiah, ch. xii. 4;

xiv. But the last of these chapters, whether prophetic or descriptive, was composed probably in the reign of Jehoikim, the successor of Josiah.

<sup>x</sup> Epiphan. de Vit. Prophet.

<sup>y</sup> Dorotheus writes Bethomeron. Huet proposes to read Betharan, a place in the territory of Gad, adjacent to the tribe of Reuben; or Bethnemra, in the district of Gad; or Bethabara; or Beelmoon, which was beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben.

<sup>z</sup> Josh. xviii. 13, 14.

<sup>aa</sup> Jerom, though he supposes him to have been contemporary with Hosea, conceives that he survived (as well as Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah) the captivity of the ten tribes.

<sup>ab</sup> Chap. i. 4—7, 10, 16—28; and Lowth's Prælect. 15.

<sup>ac</sup> Those who will consult Pliny, Bochart, and the naturalists and travellers in general, will find much cause to admire Joel's descriptive pictures of the destruction to be

ambiguity in the expressions. In the second chapter, the prophet proceeds to a more general denunciation of God's vengeance; which is delivered with such force and aggravation of circumstance, as to be in some measure descriptive of that final judgment which every temporal dispensation of the Deity must faintly prefigure. The severe declarations of Joel are intermingled with exhortations to repentance, and to the auxiliary means of promoting its effects, fasting and prayer; as also with promises of deliverance, and of a prosperity predictive of evangelical blessings. In treating of these, he takes occasion to foretell, in the clearest terms, the general effusion of the Holy Spirit, which was to characterize the Gospel dispensation;<sup>1</sup> concluding with a striking description of the destruction of Jerusalem which followed soon after, and punished the Jews for the obstinate rejection of the sacred influence; speaking in terms that, as well as those of our Saviour which resembled them,<sup>2</sup> had a double aspect, and referred to a primary and a final dispensation.

In the third chapter, Joel proceeds to foretell the future assemblage of all nations into the valley of Jehoshaphat,<sup>3</sup> where the enemies of God will be cut off in some final excision:<sup>4</sup> and the prophet concludes with the assurance of some glorious state of prosperity to be enjoyed by the church; representing its perfections and blessings under the poetical emblems of a golden age.

In consideration of these important prophecies, we need not wonder that the Jews should have looked up to Joel with particular reverence,<sup>5</sup> or that he should be cited as a prophet by the evangelical writers.<sup>6</sup>

The style of Joel is equally perspicuous and elegant; obscure only towards the conclusion, where the beauties of his expression are somewhat shaded by allusions to circumstances yet unac-

produced by locusts; and understand with what force and propriety the ravages of those all-devouring enemies are made figuratively to represent the devastation and havoc of an invading army.

<sup>1</sup> Joel ii. 28—32, comp. with Acts ii. 1—21, and Acts x. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Joel ii. 30, 31, comp. with Matt. xxiv. 29.

<sup>3</sup> The original expression means, the valley of the Lord's judgment, from Je-

hovah, and Shaphat, "to judge."

<sup>4</sup> The precise application of his prophecy must be shewn by the event. It is supposed to relate to those circumstances predicted in Ezekiel, ch. xxxix. 5—11; Rev. xx. 8, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Joel is related to have received the Cabala, or traditionary explication of the law, from Micah.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. ii. 32, comp. with Rom. x. 13; Acts ii. 16—21.

complished. His descriptions are highly animated; the contexture of the prophecy in the first and second chapters is extremely curious; and the double destruction to be produced by locusts, and those enemies of which they were the harbingers, is painted with the most expressive force, and under terms that are reciprocally metaphorical, and admirably adapted to the twofold character of the description.<sup>7</sup> The whole work is extremely poetical. Herman Vonder Hardt,<sup>8</sup> a learned German, conceiving that Joel's prophecies were composed in elegies, endeavoured, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, to reduce them to iambic verse. They, undoubtedly, like the rest of the prophecies, have a metrical arrangement.

### OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET AMOS.

Amos appears to have been contemporary with Hosea, but it is uncertain which was the first honoured by divine revelations. They both began to prophesy during the time that Uzziah and Jeroboam the Second reigned over their respective kingdoms; and Amos saw his first vision "two years before the earthquake;"<sup>a</sup> which, as we learn from Zechariah,<sup>b</sup> happened in the days of Uzziah. As there is no sufficient reason to suppose that this first verse was added by any writer subsequent to Amos, since he himself might have annexed the era in which he beheld his vision, when he afterwards collected his prophecies and committed them to writing, we must suppose this earthquake to have happened while Uzziah and Jeroboam were contemporaries, or at least within two years of that period. But little attention therefore is due to the account of Josephus; who represents the shock to have been felt on the occasion of Uzziah's usurpation of the priestly office, when the presumptuous king attempted to offer incense to the Lord:<sup>c</sup> which sacrilegious attempt is by some placed in the twenty-fifth year,<sup>d</sup> and by some still more towards the conclusion of Uzziah's reign;<sup>e</sup> for, ac-

<sup>7</sup> Lowth's Præl. 21. Chandler, &c.

<sup>8</sup> Wolfi Biblioth. Heb. tom. ii. p. 169.

and Lowth's Pref. to Isaiah.

<sup>a</sup> Amos i. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Zechariah xiv. 5.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. xvi. 16—21.

<sup>d</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. cap. 10, 11.

<sup>e</sup> The daring attempt was probably made towards the conclusion of Uzziah's reign, as upon that occasion he was stricken with

ording to the most extended calculations, Jeroboam and Uzziah did not flourish as contemporary sovereigns above twenty-five years. Amos, however, began to prophesy some time between A. M. 3194 and 3219. Some have confounded him with the father of Isaiah.

The prophet Amos<sup>f</sup> was a native of Tekoa, a small town in the territory of Judah, about four leagues southward from Jerusalem, and six southward from Bethlehem,<sup>g</sup> adjacent to a vast wilderness, where probably Amos might have exercised his profession of an herdsman. Some, indeed, think that he was not born at Tekoa, but that he only resided there when commanded by Amaziah to leave Bethel.<sup>h</sup> But Amos does not appear to have regarded the arrogant injunction of the priest, but to have continued boldly to prophesy wherever the service of God required his presence.

Amos was by profession an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.<sup>i</sup> In the simplicity of former times, and in the happy climates of the East, these occupations were by no means considered in that degrading light in which they have been viewed since refinement hath introduced a taste for the elegant arts of life, and established fastidious distinctions. He was no prophet, as he informed Amaziah,<sup>k</sup> neither was he a prophet's son; that is, he had no regular education in the schools of the prophets, but was called by an express irresistible commission from God,<sup>l</sup> to prophesy unto his people Israel. The Holy Spirit did not disdain to speak by the voice of the most humble man; and selected its ministers as well from the tents of the shepherd, as from the palace of the sovereign;<sup>m</sup> respecting only the qualities, and not

a leprosy that lasted unto the day of his death; and his son Jotham took upon him the government, who was not born till after Jeroboam's death. Vid. Usser. *Annal.* ad A. M. 3221.

<sup>f</sup> Clemens Alex. *Strom.* lib. i. Epiphan. de Vit. Prophet. אָמוֹס, Amos, or Hamos, signifies βαρρα(ον, *portans*, "loaded;" that is, perhaps, with the burden of prophecy, chap. vii. 10. If names were intentionally descriptive, they must have been providentially imposed, or assumed after the display of character.

<sup>g</sup> Amos i. 1; 2 Chron. xi. 5, 6. Epiphanius places it in the lot of Zebulun; but Eusebius, Cyril, and St. Jerom, who lived near Tekoa, placed it to the south of Jerusalem, in the territory of Judah. Vid.

Euseb. de locis Ebraicis. Cyrill. *Præf.* Enar. in Amos. Hieron. *Procem.* in Amos, et de locis Ebraicis.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. vii. 12.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. vii. 14. The sycamore fruit was a species of wild fig, sometimes called the Egyptian fig, which is said to grow from the trunk, and not from the branches of the tree. The Septuagint translators interpret the Hebrew word וְבֵרִים וְשִׂמְשִׁים, κνί(ον) τα συκαμυρα, "opening the sycamine fruit;" as it was thought necessary to open the skin of this fruit that it might ripen. Vid. Plinii *Hist. Natur.* lib. xiii. c. 7. Theophras. *Dioscorid.* et Theod. in loc.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. vii. 14.

<sup>l</sup> Amos iii. 8; vii. 15.

<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. i. 27—29.



the conditions of its agents, as capable of inspiring knowledge and eloquence where they did not exist.

Amos undoubtedly composed his prophecies in their present form. He speaks of himself as the author of them;<sup>a</sup> and his prophetic character is established, not only by the admission of his book into the Canon, and by the testimony of other writers,<sup>o</sup> but by the exact accomplishment of many prophecies which he delivered. His work consists of several distinct discourses; the particular period of their delivery cannot now be ascertained.<sup>p</sup> They chiefly respect the kingdom of Israel, though he sometimes inveighs against Judah, and threatens the kingdoms that bordered on Palestine,<sup>q</sup> the Syrians,<sup>r</sup> Philistines,<sup>s</sup> Tyrians,<sup>t</sup> Edomites,<sup>u</sup> Ammonites,<sup>v</sup> and Moabites.<sup>w</sup> He predicts in clear terms the captivities and the destruction of Israel, to be preceded by fearful signs on earth, and in the heavens;<sup>x</sup> concluding with assurances that God would not utterly destroy the house of Jacob; but after sifting, as it were, and cleansing the house of Israel among the nations, God should again raise up the tabernacle, (that is, the kingdom of David,) to be enlarged to more than its first splendour by the accession of Gentile subjects, and to be succeeded by the establishment of that government which the prophet describes, under poetical images, as a blessed dispensation of security, abundance, and peace.<sup>a</sup>

The zeal with which the prophet removed the impenitence of the people, and the severe threats which he denounced against

<sup>a</sup> Chap. vii. 8; viii. 1, 2.

<sup>o</sup> Tobit ii. 6; Acts vii. 42, 43; xv. 15—17.

<sup>p</sup> Some have supposed that the first of his prophecies is contained in the seventh chapter; and that the contents of the other chapters were afterwards delivered at Tekoa.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. two first chapters. These prophecies were fulfilled by the victories of the kings of Assyria and Babylon.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. i. 3—5, comp. with 2 Kings xvi. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. i. 6, 7, comp. with 2 Kings xviii. 8; Jerem. xlviii. 1. Quint. Curt. lib. iv. 6. Comp. also, ch. i. 8, with 2 Chron. xxvi. 8, and Jerem. xlvii. 5.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. i. 9, 10, comp. with Esek. xxvi. 7—14. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. and Q. Curt. lib. iv. 13.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. i. 11, 12, comp. with Jerem. xxv. 9, 21; xxvii. 3—6; 1 Macc. v. 3;

and Prid. Con. part ii. ad Ann. A. G. 165. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 9.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. i. 13—15, comp. with Jerem. xxvii. 3, 6.

<sup>w</sup> Chap. ii. 1—3, comp. with Jerem. xxvii. 3—6.

<sup>x</sup> Chap. viii. 8—19. Usher remarks, that about eleven years after the time at which Amos prophesied, there were two eclipses of the sun; one upon the feast of tabernacles, and the other at the time of the passover. The prophecy, therefore, in its first aspect, might allude to the ominous darkness which on these occasions "turned their feasts into mourning." Vid. Usser. Annal. ad A. M. 3213. Hieron. Theod. et Grot. in loc.

<sup>a</sup> Amos ix. 11—15; Acts xv. 16; Tobit xiii. 10, 11; Joel iii. 18. Chandler's Def. chap. ii. sect. 1. p. 168. and Com. in loc. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 28.

the oppression, effeminacy, and luxurious indolence that prevailed, exasperated so much the court of Jeroboam, which cultivated its idolatries at Bethel, that they drew upon him the resentment of the priests and princes of the people; and tradition relates, that he was ill treated and put to death by Uziah,<sup>b</sup> the son of Amaziah,<sup>c</sup> who was irritated by his prophecies and censures, but who soon after experienced the divine vengeance in the calamities which Amos had predicted to his family and country.

Some writers who have adverted to the condition of Amos, have, with a minute affectation of criticism, pretended to discover a certain rudeness and vulgarity in his style; and even St. Jerom is of opinion that he is deficient in magnificence and sublimity; applying to him the words which St. Paul speaks of himself,<sup>d</sup> "that he was rude in speech, though not in knowledge;" and his authority, says bishop Lowth, has influenced many commentators to represent him as entirely rude, and void of elegance; whereas it requires but little attention to be convinced that he "is not a whit behind the very chiefest" of the prophets; equal to the greatest in loftiness of sentiment, and scarcely inferior to any in the splendour of his diction, and in the elegance of his composition. Mr. Locke has observed, that his comparisons are chiefly drawn from lions and other animals, because he lived among, and was conversant with such objects. But, indeed, the finest images and allusions which adorn the poetical parts of scripture in general, are drawn from scenes of nature, and from the grand objects that range in her walks; and true genius ever delights in considering these as the real sources of beauty and magnificence.<sup>e</sup> Amos had the opportunities, and a mind inclined to contemplate the works of the Deity; and his descriptions of the Almighty are particularly sublime. Indeed, his whole work is animated with a very fine masculine eloquence.

## OF THE BOOK OF OBADIAH.

THIS prophet hath furnished us with no particulars of his own

<sup>b</sup> Cyrill. Præf. Expos. in Amos.

Synop. cap. 2. Chron. Pascal. p. 147.

<sup>c</sup> Epiphani. de Vit. Proph. c. xii. Isidor. de Vita et Morte. S. S. c. 43. Doroth.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. Com. in Amos. 2 Cor. xi. 6.  
<sup>e</sup> Lowth's Præl. Post. 21.

origin or life, any more than of the period in which he was favoured by the divine revelations. That he received a commission to prophesy is evident, as well from the admission of his work into the sacred Canon, as from the completion of those predictions which he delivered. According to some traditionary accounts,<sup>a</sup> he was of the tribe of Ephraim, and a native of Bethacamar,<sup>b</sup> which Epiphanius describes as in the neighbourhood of Sichem, but which, according to Huet, was a town in the hilly part of the territory of Judah; and there probably he prophesied, though some suppose that he was carried captive to Babylon, and others that he died in Samaria.<sup>c</sup>

There is scarce an Obadiah mentioned in sacred history who has not been considered by different writers as the same person with the prophet. The prince whom Jehoshaphat employed to teach in the cities of Judah;<sup>d</sup> the governor of Ahab's house, who rescued the hundred prophets from the vengeance of Jezebel;<sup>e</sup> the captain of Ahaziah, who found favour with Elijah;<sup>f</sup> the overseer appointed by Josiah to inspect the reparation of the temple;<sup>g</sup> each has been separately represented as the prophet, though not one of them is characterized in scripture under that description; and all of them, except perhaps the last, lived long before the period at which Obadiah the prophet must be supposed to have flourished. Equally unfounded are those conjectures by which it is imagined that he was the husband of the widow of Zarephath,<sup>h</sup> and a disciple of Elijah;<sup>i</sup> as well as that of the ancient Hebrew doctors, who conceived that he was an Idumæan, who having become a proselyte to the Jewish religion, was inspired to prophesy against the country of which he had forsaken the superstitions.<sup>k</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Pseudo Epiphan. Doroth. Isidor. &c.

<sup>b</sup> Or Bethacara, or Bethacaron. Huet proposes to read Bethacad, a town of Samaria; but Obadiah was probably of the tribe of Judah, and prophesied against the insulting enemies of his country.

<sup>c</sup> St. Jerom speaks of his tomb at Sebaste, formerly Samaria, and says, that St. Paul visited it, and performed miracles there: but this could not contain the remains of Obadiah; for in the time of the emperor Julian, the Gentiles emptied the sepulchres, burnt the bones of the prophets, and dispersed the ashes, after mixing them with those of beasts, about A. D. 362. Vid. Julian, Misopogon, et Baillet Vies des

Saints du Vet. Test. 14 Juin, 19 Nov.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. xvii. 7. Sanct. Proleg. ii. n. 5.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 4. Hieron. in Abdiam, et in Epist. Paul. R. Selom. Jarchi, R. David Kimchi, and R. Aben-Ezra in Abd. 1. R. David Ganz, in Chron. Sixt. Senens in Abd. et Mercer. Com.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Kings i. 13. Clemens Alex. Strom. 1. Euseb. Chron.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.

<sup>h</sup> Lyran. in 4 Reg. c. iv. initio. The widow of Zarephath has also been represented as the mother of the prophet Jonah.

<sup>i</sup> Clemens Alex. Strom. 1. Euseb. Chron. et Aben-Ezra.

<sup>k</sup> R. Selemoth. Jarchi, et R. David

Huet and other writers, in consideration of the place which he holds among the prophets in the Hebrew Canon, suppose him to have been contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Joel. In conformity to which opinion, Huet also conceives that the prophet delivered his threats against the Edomites<sup>1</sup> because they took possession of Elah, after it had been conquered by Pekah and Rezin in the reign of Ahaz, and exercised great cruelties against the Jews.<sup>m</sup> All those writers who imagine that Obadiah foretold the calamities which the Edomites suffered from the invasion of Sennacherib, maintain that he lived in the reign of Ahaz or Hezekiah, but it is more probable that he flourished about the same time with Ezekiel and Jeremiah; and the best opinions concur in supposing him to have prophesied a little after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about A. M. 3416. He predicted, therefore, the same circumstances which those prophets had foretold against the Edomites,<sup>n</sup> who had upon many occasions favoured the enemies of Judah;<sup>o</sup> and who, when strangers, carried their forces into captivity; and when they cast lots upon Jerusalem, had rejoiced at the destruction, and insulted the children of Judah in their affliction.<sup>p</sup>

The prophet, after describing the pride and cruelty of the Edomites, declares, that though they dwelt in fancied security among the clefts of the rocks,<sup>q</sup> yet that the "men of Teman" should be dismayed," and "every one of the Mount of Esau

Kimchi, in Abd. 1. et R. Iar. Abarb. Præf. in Prophet. Minor. Cyrill. Præf. in Abd.

<sup>1</sup> The Edomites were the descendants of Esau; they possessed Arabia-Petræa, all the country between the Red Sea and the Lake of Sodom, and some adjacent territory.

<sup>m</sup> Huet. Demona. Evan. in Abd. Cyrill. Præf. in Abd. Grotius, and Lightfoot's Harmon. of the Old Test. In our translation of 2 Kings xvi. 6, no mention is made of the Edomites, but in the Vulgate it is rendered "the Edomites came to Elah." The words Aram and Edom are written in the Hebrew nearly in the same manner; and Calmet thinks that it should be written Edom, instead of Syria, through the verse, as the Edomites had previously possession of Elah, but it does not appear that the Syrians had, for whom it could not therefore be recovered. Still, however, the Chaldean, Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic versions, as well as Josephus, suppose that

Rezin took Elah for the Syrians, and established them there. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. cap. 11. Grotius, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Comp. Obad. ver. 3, 4, with Jerem. xlix. 16; Obad. ver. 5, with Jerem. xlix. 9; Obad. ver. 8, with Jer. xlix. 7; Obad. ver. 16, with Jer. xxv. 15—21, and xlix. 7—12. Vid. Ezek. xxv. 12, 14; and ch. xxxv.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Chron. xxviii. 17; Joel iii. 19.

<sup>p</sup> Ver. 11—14; Psalm cxxxvii. 7.

<sup>q</sup> The south part of Palestine, from Eleutheropolis to Petra (the ancient capital of Idumæa) and Elah, was full of rocks, inhabited by the natives. Vid. Hieron. in loc.

<sup>r</sup> Teman, a city, or, as some say, a province of Idumæa, so called from Teman, grandson of Esau. Vid. Jerem. xlix. 7; Amos i. 12. Vid. Hieron. et Euseb. in loc. Ebraica.

should be cut off by slaughter." That the men who had confederated with them against Jacob,<sup>1</sup> and been supported by them as their allies, should inflict the punishment of their malevolence. The prophet concludes with consolatory assurances of future restoration and prosperity to the Jews, to whom should arise deliverance from Zion; saviours who should judge the nations; and a spiritual kingdom, appropriated and consecrated to the Lord. These prophecies began to be completed about five years after, when Nebuchadnezzar ravaged Idumæa,<sup>2</sup> and dispossessed the Edomites of much of Arabia-Petræa, which they never afterwards recovered. But they were still farther fulfilled in the conquests of the Maccabees over the remainder of the Edomites;<sup>3</sup> and they received their final accomplishment in the advent of that Redeemer whom preceding saviours had fore-shewn.

Obadiah's name implies, the servant of the Lord: a title by which Moses was distinguished,<sup>4</sup> and in which St. Paul gloried. The prophet's work is short, but composed with much beauty: it unfolds a very interesting scene of prophecy, and an instructive lesson against human confidence and malicious exultation.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JONAH.

THOUGH Jonah be placed fifth in the order of the minor prophets, both in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint copies, he is generally considered as the most ancient of all the prophets, not excepting Hosea. Jonah was the son of Amittai, of the tribe of Zebulun, and was born at Gath-hepher,<sup>5</sup> which is supposed to have been the same place with Jotapeta; a town remarkable for having sustained, under the conduct of Josephus, a siege against the Roman army. It was situated in the land of Zebulun, near

<sup>1</sup> Obadiah uses the expression, "thy brother Jacob," in allusion to Esau's hatred against Jacob. Vid. Gen. xxvii. 41; a primary source of God's displeasure against the Edomites.

<sup>2</sup> Usser. ad A. M. 3419. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 12.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Macc. v. 8, 65.

<sup>4</sup> Numb. xii. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Vid. 2 Kings xiv. 2. The same place,

probably, with Gittah-hepher. Vid. Josh. xix. 13. Dorotheus erroneously affirms, that he was born at Carjathmaus, or Carjathjarim, in the tribe of Judah, and buried at Saar, (Tyre in Phœnicia;) and St. Jerom has taken the trouble to refute some who maintained that Jonah was born at another Geth, near Lydda, or Diospolis, confounding Geth with Gath-hepher, and Diospolis with Diocæsarea.

Siphorim,<sup>b</sup> towards Tiberias, where was the canton of Ophir, or Hopher. St. Jerom informs us, that the prophet's sepulchre was shewn there in his time; and there the natives still believe it to exist.<sup>c</sup> Since this place, as indeed all the land of Zebulun, was in Galilee,<sup>d</sup> it may be produced in confutation of the illiberal assertion of the Pharisees, that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.<sup>e</sup> The Orientals now shew his tomb at Mosul,<sup>f</sup> which they suppose to be the site where Nineveh stood; and the Turks have built a mosque there, in which they pretend to possess his relics; while others, who reside at Gath-hepher, now a little bourgade, shew a mausoleum of Jonah in a subterraneous chapel, inclosed in a mosque, and compel travellers to enter barefoot. Such are the contests of superstitious reverence, or the claims of mercenary rivalship.

Some Jewish writers report, upon a very groundless fancy, that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah raised from the dead;<sup>g</sup> but Jonah represents himself as an Hebrew, and Zarephath was a city of Sidon.<sup>h</sup> He is generally supposed to have flourished in the reigns of Joash and Jeroboam the Second, kings of Israel; the former of whom began to reign, A. M. 3163, the latter died A. M. 3220. In the second book of Kings,<sup>i</sup> Jonah is said to have prophesied concerning Jeroboam, that he should "restore the coast of Israel;" which prophecy, now not extant, was perhaps delivered in the reign of Jehohaz, the grandfather of Jeroboam, when the kingdom of Israel was greatly oppressed by the Syrians;<sup>k</sup> and therefore it is probable that bishop Lloyd does not place him much too high, in supposing that he prophesied towards the latter

<sup>b</sup> Now called Diocæsarea. Vid. Hieron. Proem. Com. in Jonam.

<sup>c</sup> Benjam. Itiner. et Brocardus Argentoratensis Descrip. Terræ Sanctæ.

<sup>d</sup> Isaiah ix. 1; Matt. iv. 13.

<sup>e</sup> John vii. 52. Nahum was a Galilæan by birth, though of the tribe of Simeon; and Malachi, as some say.

<sup>f</sup> Thevenot's Travels, part ii. book i. ch. 11. p. 50. Mosul, now the seat of the patriarch of the Nestorians, is on the western side of the Tigris; and is by some asserted to have been a suburb of Nineveh, which is said to have been on the eastern side, though Pliny maintains it to have been situated on the western side. Vid. Plinii, lib. vi. cap. 13. Benjam. Tudela, Itiner. Marsham Chron. Sæc. xviii. p. 558.

<sup>g</sup> Hieron. et Isidor. et Quæst. ad Antioch. in Append. ad Oper. S. Athan. qu. lxx. Jonah was the son of Amittai, which word implies *truth* in the Hebrew; and the widow had said to Elijah, "The word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." Vid. 1 Kings xvii. 24. Hence the rabbinical conceit. Others make him the son of the woman of Shunem, a place in the tribe of Issachar. Vid. 2 Kings iv. 16. Some maintain, that he was the prophet who was sent to anoint Jehu king over Israel. Vid. 2 Kings ix. 1, 2. R. David Kimchi, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Comp. Luke iv. 26, with Jonah i. 9.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Kings xiv. 25.

<sup>k</sup> Comp. 2 Kings xiii. 3—7, with 2 Kings xiv. 26; and Joseph.

end of Jehu's reign or in the beginning of that of Jehoahaz, when Hazael, by his cruel treatment of Israel, was verifying the predictions of Elisha.<sup>1</sup> So that though Jonah might be contemporary with Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah, he appears to have uttered the prophecy alluded to, before any were delivered of those now extant in the writings of the prophets; and the prophecy concerning Nineveh, of which the publication is related in this book, must, contrary to the opinion of many writers,<sup>m</sup> have been delivered long before the time that Obadiah prophesied.

This book, which is chiefly narrative, furnishes us with an account of the mandate that Jonah, who was more especially a prophet to the Gentiles, received to preach against Nineveh, the metropolis of that mighty kingdom of Assyria, which was employed by God as the "rod of his anger against Israel and Judah."<sup>n</sup> It relates that Jonah, who was of a timid character,<sup>o</sup> aware of the pride and false confidence of a city, equally distinguished for its magnificence and corruption, for its careless merriment and inconsiderate dissipation,<sup>p</sup> and conscious that the Lord was "slow to anger," and loath to execute his threats, was afraid to carry the message of wrath. He knew that the prophets were exposed to insult from such as confidently maintained that the day of the Lord would not arise, and who challenged God to hasten his work.<sup>q</sup> He resolved, therefore, "to flee from the presence of the Lord;" that is, possibly, as some have interpreted the expression, to flee from the council of God in the land of Israel; or perhaps simply to avoid the divine appointment: but in this foolish attempt, in his flight to Tarshish,<sup>r</sup> which he records with a very ingenuous and repentant fidelity, he was arrested, and punished by a miracle; and when delivered from the jaws of destruction, he was compelled to utter the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings vii. 12; xiii. 3, 4, 22.

<sup>m</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. Euseb. Præp. lib. x. c. 14. Cyrill. Præf. in Jon. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 27. Theod. Procem. in 12 Proph.

<sup>n</sup> Isaiah x. 5.

<sup>o</sup> Jonah, or Jonas, as it is written in the Greek, signifies a dove; a name probably descriptive of his gentle disposition.

<sup>p</sup> By Zephaniah it is called the rejoicing city: *Κρησσαν Νινω εδφραιουσης*, (better than merry Nineveh,) was a proverbial comparison. Nineveh was greater than Babylon. Vid. Strabo, lib. x. p. 737. Diodor. Siculus,

lib. xvi. p. 65. edit Stephan.

<sup>q</sup> Amos v. 18; Isa. v. 19; Jerem. xvii. 15; Ezek. xii. 22.

<sup>r</sup> The Tarshish here mentioned was probably the same place with Tarsia, or Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, where St. Paul received his birth; and Jonah might be cast on shore somewhere on the coast of Cilicia. There were likewise places of the name of Tarshish in India and in Spain. Vid. 2 Chron. xx. 36. Bochart. Phaleg. lib. iii. c. 27. Stephan. de Urb. 16. and Wells's Geography of New Test. part ii.

doleful message, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh" (if it continue impenitent) "shall be overthrown." The king, who, according to Usher, was Pul, or possibly a predecessor of that monarch, alarmed by the prophetic threat conveyed to him under such miraculous circumstances, proclaimed a solemn fast and supplication for pardon ;<sup>6</sup> and as God's threats are conditional, and his anger ever softened by repentance, he suspended the sentence which he had pronounced, till about one hundred and sixty years after, when the wickedness of the people provoked its execution. The last chapter represents the unreasonable displeasure of Jonah at God's mercy, and his mortification at having been employed to deliver a prediction which was not to be accomplished; more solicitous for his own reputation than for the glory of God, or for the security of a kingdom. The Almighty is described as condescending gently to reprove the prophet; and to justify his own conduct by a miraculous illustration, and by an appeal to the compassion of the prophet, which Jonah records with a tacit confession of the equity and goodness of God.

It must be remarked, that the miracle by which God punished the unbecoming flight of Jonah was, agreeably to the figurative arrangements of the Old Testament, rendered symbolical of an event that was to occur under the New. The prophet, in this instance a sign of Christ,<sup>7</sup> was swallowed up by a great fish,<sup>8</sup> as our Saviour was admitted into the jaws of death, and for a similar continuance of time: both were detained three days and three nights<sup>9</sup> entombed in the grave. The objections that have been made to this miracle are certainly unworthy of attention,<sup>7</sup> since considerations of what may or may not be

<sup>6</sup> Usher. *Annal*, A. M. 3233. Lloyd's *Tablea*. Newton on the *Prophecies*, diss. 9. vol. i. p. 256.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. xii. 39, 40; xvi. 4; Luke xi. 39, 40. August. *de Civit. Dei*, lib. xviii. c. 30.

<sup>8</sup> The fish is generally supposed to have been a whale. The word used by the apostle, (Matt. xii. 40.) *κητος*, *cetus*, means any large fish, as does the Hebrew word in Jonah, דַּגְּגָדוֹל, *dag gadol*. Some suppose it to have been the *canis charcarias*, the *lamia*, or *sea-dog*. The rabbins talk of a fish created on purpose from the beginning of the world; and many other absurd notions have been entertained on the subject.

Vid. Scaliger. cont. Cardan. Bochart. Hieroz. p. ii. lib. v. c. 12. Drusius in *Jonam*. Calmet's *Dissert.*

<sup>9</sup> As the Hebrew language has not any word which defines a natural day, the Jews describe what the Greeks call *νυκθημερον*, by a day and a night. The space of time, therefore, which consists of one whole revolution of twenty-four hours, and part of two other days, is properly expressed in Hebrew by three days and three nights; the length of time during which Jonah and Christ were respectively sepulchred in the fish and in the grave. Vid. Patrick in c. i. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Herman Von-der Hardt absurdly un-



probable, are clearly not applicable to works which exceed the measure of human power, and deviate from the course of human events, and which, indeed, in their proper definition, are described as unprecedented. The miraculous preservation and deliverance of Jonah was surely not more remarkable or descriptive of almighty power, than were the multiplied wonders in the wilderness,<sup>a</sup> the protection of Daniel, or the resurrection of the widow's son; all were positive violations of the general rules of nature.

Among other testimonies given to the prophetic character of Jonah, may be reckoned that of Tobit, who professed a firm confidence in the accomplishment of Jonah's prediction against Nineveh,<sup>b</sup> and whose son, indeed, afterwards lived to witness its completion. The sacred writers, likewise, and our Lord himself,<sup>c</sup> speak of him as a prophet of considerable eminence.

As the word with which this book begins is frequently used as a connexive particle, some writers have conceived that these prophecies are but compendious extracts of a larger collection; but the book appears in its present state to be an entire and perfect work; and the particle with which it begins is here only a common introductory expression. True it is, that Jonah, as probably all the prophets, delivered some prophecies which are no longer extant, as appears from the passage in the second book of Kings before alluded to;<sup>c</sup> and these, as intended by their speedy completion only to excite the confidence of contemporaries, were probably not committed to writing; such chiefly being composed for the Canon as were designed for the permanent instruction of the church. There is, however, no sufficient evidence to prove the authenticity of some other predictions ascribed to Jonah by Dorotheus and others:<sup>d</sup> as that "when they should see a stone" (i. e. Christ, the corner-stone) "bitterly lamenting, and all the nations in Jerusalem, then should the city be entirely destroyed;" which pretended prophecy<sup>e</sup>

dertook to turn the whole book into a kind of prophetic scheme or parable, though there is not a shadow of reason to suppose it any other than a literal narration of actual events. Vid. Carpov. *Introductio ad Lib. Vet. Test.* par. iii. p. 349.

<sup>a</sup> Quod aut omnia divina miracula credenda non sint aut hoc cur non credatur causa nulla sit. Vid. August. *Epist. cii.* in

quæst. 6. de Jona, n. 30.

<sup>b</sup> Tobit. xiv. 4—6, 15.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Kings xiv. 25; Matt. xii. 39, 41; xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29. Vid. also, 2 Esdras i. 32, and Clement. *Epist. i.* ad Rom. c. vii.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings xiv. 25.

<sup>e</sup> Epiph. *Dorothei et Chron. Pascal.*

<sup>f</sup> Luke xix. 41.

alluded to our Saviour's weeping over Jerusalem, and to the assemblage of the Gentiles, which preceded the destruction of the holy city.

The style of Jonah is narrative and simple; the beautiful prayer contained in the second chapter has been justly admired. The book furnishes us with a fine description of the power and mercies of God.

The fame of Jonah's deliverance appears to have spread among the heathen nations; and the Greeks, who were accustomed to adorn the memory of their heroes by every remarkable event and embellishment which they could appropriate, added to the fictitious adventures of Hercules, that of having continued three days without injury in the belly of a dog sent against him by Neptune.<sup>f</sup> The fable of Arion and the Dolphin, of which the date is fixed at a time nearly coeval with the period of Jonah, is possibly a misrepresentation of particulars recorded in this sacred book.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MICAH.

MICAH was unquestionably the author of this book, and he speaks in that character.<sup>a</sup> In the Hebrew manuscripts he is placed the sixth, and in the Septuagint copies the third in order of the twelve prophets. He calls himself a Morasthite,<sup>b</sup> and is supposed to have been a native of Morasthi, a village situated near the city of Eleutheropolis, in the southern part of Judah; a place distinguished by St. Jerom<sup>c</sup> from Mareshah, mentioned in this book<sup>d</sup> and in Joshua.<sup>e</sup>

Micah speaks only of the kings of Judah; and he prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, contemporary with whom were Pekah and Hosea, the two last kings of Israel.

<sup>f</sup> Lycophron et Isaacus Tsetzes, Cyrill. et Theophylact. in Jon. Sext. Emp. adv. Gram. lib. i. cap. 12. Phavorinus in *ῥησιωρεπος*, et Gaseus in Dialog. de Immort. Anim.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iii. 1, 8.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. i. 1; Jerem. xxvi. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Hieron. Prol. in Micah. Epit. Paul. c. vi. Euseb. de loc. Ebraic. Drasius erroneously imagines that Morasthi might be

the same place with Moreseth-gath, mentioned in Micah, ch. i. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. i. 15.

<sup>e</sup> Josh. xv. 44. St. Jerom, however, places this town likewise in the territory of Judah, and says that the ruins of it were extant in his time. Josephus represents it to have been in Idumæa. Vid. Joseph. lib. xiii. c. 25. et de Bell. Jud. lib. i. c. 2. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 10. 2 Chron. xi. 8; xiv. 10.

Micah, then, began to prophesy soon after Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos; and he prophesied between A. M. 3246, when Jotham began to reign, and A. M. 3305, when Hezekiah died, but probably not during the whole of that period. It is related by Epiphanius,<sup>f</sup> and the Greek writers who copied him, that Micah was thrown from a precipice and killed by Jehoram, son of Ahab, whom he erroneously calls king of Judah, but who really was king of Israel; and whose *grandson* Jehoram lived at least one hundred and thirty years before Micah. But these writers<sup>g</sup> seem to have confounded Micah with Micaiah the son of Imlah, who flourished in Israel, and prophesied evil of Ahab;<sup>h</sup> and Micah does not appear to have suffered martyrdom, as may be collected from a passage in Jeremiah,<sup>i</sup> but probably died in peace under the reign of the good king Hezekiah. St. Jerom says, that his tomb was at Morasthi, and converted into a church in his time.<sup>k</sup> And Sozomen<sup>l</sup> professes to have heard that his body was shewn, in a divine vision, to Zebennus, bishop of Eleutheropolis, in the reign of Theodosius the Great, near a place called Berathsatia, which probably might be a corruption of Morasthi, since Sozomen describes it to have been at nearly the same distance from Jerusalem that St. Jerom places Morasthi.<sup>m</sup>

Micah, who received the divine revelations by vision,<sup>n</sup> was appointed to preach against both Israel and Judah, and executed his commission with great animation and zeal. One of his predictions is related<sup>o</sup> to have saved the life of Jeremiah; who, under the reign of Jehoiakim, would have been put to death for prophesying the destruction of the temple, had it not appeared that Micah had foretold the same thing under Hezekiah above one hundred years before.<sup>p</sup> Micah is mentioned as a prophet in the book of Jeremiah,<sup>q</sup> and in the New Testament.<sup>r</sup> He is imitated by succeeding prophets,<sup>s</sup> as he himself had borrowed

<sup>f</sup> Epiphanius erroneously calls him a Morasthite of the tribe of Ephraim; and says that he was buried at Marathi.

<sup>g</sup> Athan. in Synop. Euseb. Chron.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 8—28.

<sup>i</sup> Jerem. xxvi. 18, 19.

<sup>k</sup> Hieron. Ep. xxvii. seu Epitaph. Paul. c. vi.

<sup>l</sup> Sozom. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 29. et Nicephor. lib. xii. c. 48.

<sup>m</sup> About ten stadia, which answers nearly to the two miles of St. Jerom. Some place

Micah's tomb on the declivity of Mount Olivet.

<sup>n</sup> "The word of the Lord" came to him. Vid. Dr. Wheeler.

<sup>o</sup> Jerem. xxvi. 18—24.

<sup>p</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 7. Micah iii. 12.

<sup>q</sup> Jerem. xxvi. 18, comp. with Micah iii. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. ii. 5, and John vii. 42.

<sup>s</sup> Comp. Zephaniah iii. 19, with Micah iv. 7; and Esek. xxii. 27, with Micah iii. 11.

the expressions of those who preceded, or flourished at the same time with him.<sup>t</sup> Our Saviour himself, indeed, condescended to speak in the language of the prophet.<sup>u</sup>

Dr. Wells<sup>v</sup> supposes Micah's prophecies to have been uttered in the order in which they are here written. He maintains that the contents of the first chapter were delivered in the time of Jotham and Pekah; and that it consists of general invective against the sins and idolatry of Israel and Judah, to be punished by impending judgments. What is comprised between the first verse of the second chapter and the eighth verse of the fourth, he assigns to the reign of Ahaz, and his contemporaries Pekah and Hosea; and the twelfth verse of the third chapter, which is attributed by Jeremiah to the reign of Hezekiah,<sup>w</sup> Wells conceives to have been spoken in the year when Hezekiah was partner in the kingdom with Ahaz, in the last year of the reign of the latter; and the remainder of the book the learned commentator assigns to the reign of Hezekiah. But at whatever period these prophecies were delivered, they contain many remarkable particulars. The prophet predicted, in clear terms, the invasion of Shalmaneser<sup>x</sup> and Sennacherib,<sup>y</sup> and their triumph over Israel and Judah; the captivities, dispersion,<sup>b</sup> and deliverance<sup>c</sup> of Israel; the cessation of prophecy;<sup>d</sup> the destruction of Assyria<sup>e</sup> and of Babylon,<sup>f</sup> the representatives of the enemies of the Christian church; the birth of the Everlasting Ruler at Bethlehem Ephratah;<sup>g</sup> the establishment and exaltation of Christ's kingdom over all nations;<sup>h</sup> the influence of the Gospel;<sup>i</sup> and the destruction of Jerusalem.<sup>k</sup>

The beauty and elegance of Micah's style have been much ad-

<sup>t</sup> Comp. Micah iv. 1—3, with Isaiah ii. 2—4; Micah iv. 13, with Isa. xli. 15. Micah began to prophesy rather later than Isaiah.

<sup>u</sup> Comp. Micah vii. 6, with Matt. x. 35, 36.

<sup>v</sup> Preface to Micah.

<sup>w</sup> Jerem. xxvi. 18, 19.

<sup>x</sup> Micah i. 6—8; 2 Kings xvii. 4, 6.

<sup>y</sup> Micah i. 9—16; 2 Kings xviii. 13.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. v. 7, 8.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. ii. 12; iv. 10; v. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. iii. 6, 7.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. v. 5, 6. Some imagine that Micah foretells in this prophecy the victories to be obtained by the leaders of the Medes and Babylonians who took Nineveh. Others

suppose him to speak of the seven Maccabees, with their eight royal successors, from Aristobulus to Antigonus. It may perhaps bear a reference to some higher triumph. Vid. Ezek. ch. xxxviii. and xxxix.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. vii. 8, 10. Mede's Discourses, p. 796.

<sup>f</sup> Micah v. 2, comp. with Matt. ii. 6, and John vii. 42.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. iv. 1, 2.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. iv. 1—8, comp. with Isaiah ii. 2—4.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. iii. 12. This prophecy was fulfilled by the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian, when, according to Christ's prediction, not one stone was left on another. Vid. Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. vii. c. 17.

mired. Bishop Lowth has characterized it as compressed, short, nervous, and sharp. It is often elevated, and very poetical, though occasionally obscure from sudden transition of subject.

Micah, after shewing what is good for man, and that the Lord requireth of him "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God,"<sup>1</sup> concludes his book with a fine prophetic assurance of God's mercies, who should cast away the sins of his people, and perform the promises which he had sworn unto Abraham.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET NAHUM.

NAHUM describes himself as an Elkoshite: which some have considered as a patronymic expression, conceiving it to imply his being a descendant of Elkosha; but which is generally supposed to intimate that he was born at Elkosh, or Elkosha, a small village in Galilee, of which St. Jerom professes to have seen the ruins.<sup>a</sup> Nahum is said to have been of the tribe of Simeon;<sup>b</sup> but amidst a variety of opinions, it is difficult to determine what precise time should be assigned for the period of his existence. Josephus asserts,<sup>c</sup> that he lived in the time of Jotham, king of Judah; in which case he may be supposed to have prophesied against Nineveh, when Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, carried captive the natives of Galilee, and other parts,<sup>d</sup> about A. M. 3264. The Jews place him so late as the reign of Manasseh.<sup>e</sup> The most probable opinion is, that though Nahum might have lived in the reigns of both these kings, yet he delivered these prophecies in Judæa, in the reign of Hezekiah;<sup>f</sup> for he appears

<sup>1</sup> Chap. vi. 8.

<sup>a</sup> Epiphanius and Dorotheus place it near Begabar, or Bethabara, where St. John baptised his disciples. Vid. Origen in Joh. But St. Jerom represents it as at a great distance from that town. He says that it was called Helkesai. It is not mentioned in scripture, or by Josephus.

<sup>b</sup> He was probably in Judah when he received divine revelations. Bethabara was far from the territory of Simeon.

<sup>c</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. ix. c. 11. sect. 3. edit. Hudson. Josephus says, also, that Nahum's predictions concerning Nineveh came to pass

in one hundred and fifteen years after; in which case, the prophet must have delivered them in the reign of Ahas, the son of Jotham, when Shalmaneser invaded Samaria, and rendered it tributary.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Kings xv. 29.

<sup>e</sup> Seder Olam, Grot. Sixt. Senens. &c. Clemens Alexandrinus places Nahum between Daniel and Ezekiel, and supposes him to have flourished during the captivity. Vid. Strom. i. p. 92.

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. Theodor. et Theophyl. Procem. in Nahum.

to speak of the taking of No-Ammon, a city of Egypt,<sup>s</sup> and of the insolent messengers of Sennacherib,<sup>h</sup> as of things past; and he likewise describes the people of Judah as still in their own country, and desirous of celebrating their festivals. He cannot therefore be supposed to have prophesied before the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, since the expedition of Sennacherib against this prince was in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign; and therefore he probably prophesied between A. M. 3283, when Shalmaneser carried Israel captive into Assyria,<sup>i</sup> and A. M. 3294, when Sennacherib was meditating the destruction of Jerusalem.

At this period of perplexity and distress, when the fate of Samaria was present to the apprehensions of Judah, when her own cities had been taken by Sennacherib, and Hezekiah had drained his treasury, and even despoiled the temple in the vain hope of averting the fury of Sennacherib,<sup>k</sup> then was Nahum raised up in consolation<sup>l</sup> to Judah, and to proclaim destruction "to him that imagined evil against the Lord."<sup>m</sup> At this time, Sennacherib still continued to send arrogant messages, and blasphemous letters, threatening the destruction of Jerusalem; insulting Hezekiah, and deriding the confidence of his people, who trusted in the Lord.<sup>n</sup> Already had Isaiah been commissioned to send an assurance of protection to Jerusalem;<sup>o</sup> and Nahum conspired with him to promise deliverance to Hezekiah<sup>p</sup> from the Assyrian yoke; and to anticipate, with prophetic exultation, the appearance of welcome messengers, that should bring good tidings, and publish peace to Judah; who should celebrate her solemn feasts secure from invasion, as her enemy "was utterly cut off."<sup>q</sup>

Nahum afterwards, in his two last chapters, proceeds to foretell the future downfall of the Assyrian empire; renewing those denunciations of wrath which, about ninety years before, Jonah

<sup>s</sup> Chap. iii. 8. This city is called also Diospolis, and was the same place that was called Thebes by Homer. It was probably first taken by Sennacherib, in his expedition to Egypt, before he marched to Jerusalem. Vid. Calmet in loc. Prid. Con. An. 713. It was afterwards destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. ii. 13, comp. with 2 Kings xviii. 17, et seq.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Kings xvii. 6; Nahum ii. 2.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Kings xviii. 16.

<sup>l</sup> Nahum signifies a comforter. Vid. Hier.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. i. 11.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Kings xviii. and xix; 2 Chron. xxxii; Isaiah xxxii; Nahum i. 7, comp. with Isa. xxxvi. 15.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings xix. 20—34.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. i. 13.

<sup>q</sup> Nahum i. 15; 2 Kings xix. 35; Isa. xxxvii. 36, 37. Berosus and Herodotus give a disguised account of the miraculous destruction of Sennacherib's army. Vid. Berosus ap. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 1, 2. Herod. lib. ii. c. 141.

had uttered against Nineveh, whose repentance was but of short duration; and predicting, in the most descriptive manner, that final destruction which was effected probably by Nabopalassar and Cyaxares, A. M. 3392,<sup>r</sup> but certainly by the Medes and Babylonians; whose confederate forces assaulted the Assyrians unexpectedly, "while they were folden together as thorns, and while they were drunken as drunkards;"<sup>s</sup> when "the gates of the river were opened, the palace dissolved,"<sup>t</sup> and an "over-running flood" assisted the conquerors in their devastation;<sup>u</sup> who took an endless store of spoil of gold and of silver,<sup>v</sup> making an utter end of the place of Nineveh;<sup>w</sup> of that vast and populous city, whose walls were an hundred feet high,<sup>x</sup> and capable of admitting three chariots abreast upon them, and fortified with fifteen hundred towers, in walls of two hundred feet high.<sup>a</sup> So totally, indeed, was this city destroyed, that in the second century after Christ not a vestige of it remained to ascertain the spot on which it stood. Its situation has long been a matter of uncertainty and dispute.<sup>b</sup>

This illustrious prophecy, thus remarkably accomplished in little more than a century after it was delivered, affords a signal evidence of the inspiration of Nahum, and a striking lesson of humility to human pride. It must have furnished much consolation to the tribes who were carried away captive by the king of Assyria, as well as to those of Benjamin and Judah; and all must have rejoiced with the hope of deliverance, to hear that their conquerors should in time be conquered, their city levelled to the dust, and their empire overturned. The book in which

<sup>r</sup> Diodorus Siculus speaks of the taking of Nineveh by Arbaces and Belesis, which must have happened at a preceding time. Herodotus, however, asserts, that it was taken by Cyaxares; and since the account of Diodorus minutely corresponds with the prophetic description of Nahum, it is probable that he confounds the two captures, as he mistakes the situation of Nineveh, placing it on the Euphrates. Usher places the final destruction of Nineveh fourteen years earlier than Prideaux, who assigns it to A. M. 3392. Vid. Diod. Sic. lib. ii. Herod. lib. ii. Marsham's Chron. Sæc. xviii. p. 556.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. i. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. ii. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. i. 8. Diodor. Sic. lib. ii. p. 80. edit. Stephan. p. 113. Alex. Polyhist. ap. Syncel.

<sup>v</sup> Nahum ii. 9; and Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 81.

<sup>w</sup> Chap. i. 8, 9; and Newton's ninth Dissertation on Prophecies, vol. i.

<sup>x</sup> Diod. Sic. lib. ii. p. 65. edit. Stephan. Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 737. ed. Par.

<sup>a</sup> Lucian, *ἔπιστολ.* prop. fin. Lucian was a native of Samosata, a city on the Euphrates, in a country adjacent to Nineveh.

<sup>b</sup> Bochart. Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 20. col. 248. Marsham's Chron. Sæc. xviii. p. 559. The best supported opinions concur to place the ancient Nineveh (for some supposed there were two, and some three cities of that name) on the Tigris. There are ruins on the eastern side of the river, said to be those of Nineveh. Vid. Tavernier in Harris, vol. ii. book ii. ch. 4. But probably they are the ruins of the Persian Nineveh.

these interesting prophecies are contained, is justly considered by bishop Lowth as a complete and perfect poem, of which the conduct and imagery are truly admirable.

The fire, spirit, and sublimity of Nahum are unequalled. His scenes are painted with great variety and splendour. The exordium of his work, in which he describes the attributes of God, is august; and the preparations for the attack, as well as the destruction of Nineveh, are represented with singular effect.<sup>c</sup> The art with which the immediate destruction of the Assyrians under Sennacherib is intermingled with the future ruin of the empire, affords a very elegant specimen of the manner in which the prophets delight to introduce present and distant events under one point of view. The allegorical pictures in this book are remarkably beautiful.<sup>d</sup>

Neither history nor tradition furnish us with any account of Nahum, or of the period of his death. His tomb, or pretended tomb, was formerly shewn in a village named Bethogabra, now called Giblin, near Emmaus.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HABAKKUK.

SOME writers, whose relations are probably founded on traditionary accounts, describe Habakkuk as a native of Bethzakar,<sup>a</sup> and affirm that he was of the tribe of Simeon. Some suppose him to have flourished in the reign of Manasseh,<sup>b</sup> others in that of Josiah,<sup>c</sup> and some have placed him so late as Zedekiah;<sup>d</sup> but the most approved opinion is, that he prophesied under Jehoiakim, who ascended the throne A. M. 3395, and reigned over Judah eleven years.

As the prophet makes no mention of the Assyrians, and speaks of the Chaldean invasions as near at hand,<sup>e</sup> he probably lived after the destruction of the Assyrian empire in the fall of Nineveh, A. M. 3392, and not long before the devastation of Judæa by

<sup>c</sup> Lowth's *Prælect.* 21.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. ii. 7, 11, 12.

<sup>a</sup> Epiphanius calls it Bethsocher; Dorotheus, Biticuchar. Bethzacharias is mentioned in 1 Macc. vi. 32: this was between Jerusalem and Bethsura; and Josephus describes it as a narrow defile. Vid.

*Antiq. lib. xii. c. 4.* Bezeth is spoken of in 1 Macc. vii. 19.

<sup>b</sup> Seder Olam Rabba, and Zuta. Abard. Joseph. *Antiq. lib. x. c. 4.*

<sup>c</sup> Wells, Patrick, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom. i.* Epiphan. &c.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. i. 5; ii. 3; iii. 2, 16—19.



the victories of Nebuchadnezzar. Habakkuk was then nearly contemporary with, and predicted the same events as Jeremiah; and he probably lived to witness the completion of that part of his prophecy which related to the afflictions of his country.

Habakkuk is said, as well as Jeremiah, to have chosen to remain amidst the sad scenes of a desolate and deserted land, rather than follow his conquered countrymen into captivity, and even to have refused to accompany those who afterwards retired into Egypt. There are no proofs, however, that, as some writers<sup>f</sup> have asserted, he lived till within two years of the return of the Jews, under Zerubbabel, which happened A. M. 3468; but he appears to have died in his own country, and possibly he was buried at Cela, in the territory of Judah, where his tomb was shewn in the time of Eusebius.<sup>g</sup>

It must be observed, that some Jews have, on very chimerical grounds, pretended that our prophet was the son of the Shunamite widow, whom Elisha restored to life;<sup>h</sup> and the wretched biographers of the prophets who write under the names of Epiphanius and Dorotheus relate, that on the approach of Nebuchadnezzar to Jerusalem, the prophet fled to Ostracina, in the land of Ismael, and there continued till after the retreat of the Chaldæans. But these writers appear, as does also St. Jerom, to have confounded the prophet with the Habakkuk of the tribe of Levi mentioned by Daniel; who is described in the Greek title to Bel and the Dragon, as the author of that book; and who is therein related to have been snatched up at Jerusalem by an angel, and conveyed to Babylon, to furnish food to Daniel in the lions' den, as also to have returned in the same miraculous manner. Habakkuk is said likewise, upon no better authority, to have delivered many prophecies not contained in the book which we now possess; to have predicted the return of the Jews from captivity, the appearance of a great light (the Messiah) and God's glory in the temple, and the destruction of the temple by a nation from the West (the Romans), as likewise to have composed the story of Susanna, and that of his own conveyance to Babylon.

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. Proem. in Habac.

<sup>g</sup> Eusebius calls it by its old name Cela, which is, perhaps, the same place with Echela and Betzekar. Sozomen says that Habakkuk's body was discovered there in the time of Theodoton the Elder. Vid. Sozom. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 29. The prophet's

tomb was shewn also at Gabata, about twelve miles from Eleutheropolis.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings iv. 16. The name of Habakkuk had some resemblance with the words of Elisha, who pronounced to the woman "thou shalt embrace a son."

This book, which was certainly composed by Habakkuk,<sup>1</sup> opens with a pious exclamation, in which the prophet expostulates with God in the bold terms that a zeal for his glory might suggest, on beholding the iniquities and lawless violence that prevailed among the Jews. The Almighty is represented as declaring that he would "work an incredible work in their days," that he would "raise up the Chaldæans," who are described by name; which nation, though then possibly in alliance, if not in friendship with Judah,<sup>2</sup> should "march through the breadth of the land," and take possession of its dwellings.

As Nahum had before predicted the fall of the Assyrians, who had carried the ten tribes into captivity; so Habakkuk, blending probably all the invasions of the Chaldæans<sup>1</sup> under one consideration, describes, in the most striking manner, their victories, fierceness, and rapidity; and then, by a sudden transition, contrasts the scene, and points out the punishment of the pride of the victors, and of their false confidence in their gods;<sup>2</sup> foreshewing, in express terms, the change and insanity of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>3</sup> The prophet still continues, with reverence for God's attributes, to plead the cause of his countrymen, as more righteous than those whom God had "established for correction," and to inquire why the Almighty should suffer his people to be drawn up "like fishes," by a nation that attributed its success to its own prowess. He is then commanded to write on durable tablets, and in legible characters, the vision in which it is revealed to him, first, that the general expectation on which the living faith of the just was built, should surely come, though it must tarry the appointed time;<sup>4</sup> and, secondly, the destruction of that

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 1; ii. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings xxiii. 29; and Prid. An. 610. Josiah 31st.

<sup>3</sup> Chap. i. 5—10. The Chaldæans invaded Judæa three times in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar: first, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A. M. 3397; secondly, in the reign of Jechoniah, A. M. 3405; and thirdly, in the ninth year of Zedekiah, A. M. 3414.

<sup>4</sup> Chap. ii. 4—12.

<sup>5</sup> Chap. i. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Chap. ii. 3, 4; Rom. i. 17; Heb. x. 37, 38. The evangelical writer cites the passage according to the Septuagint, and the original will admit of the same construction. Vid. Pearson's Prolegomena to the Septuagint. Some Greek copies read *eis kairov*

*μικρον*, "for a long time:" the Vulgate has it, *adhuc visus procul*, "the vision is yet afar off." Bishop Chandler is of opinion, that the third and fourth verses of the second chapter should be thus translated: "And at the end he shall break forth, and not deceive: though he tarry, expect him, because he that cometh will come; he will not go beyond (God's appointed time.) Behold, if any man draw back, the soul of him (God) shall have no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by faith." And the learned bishop justifies this translation by a reference to the original, and to several versions. Vid. Chandler's Defence, ch. ii. sect. 1. p. 162, 163, note a. The spiritual deliverance included also the temporal restoration from the captivity. The

kingdom of Babylon which had "spoiled many nations;" and of those evil kings who gathered unto themselves all people with insatiable ambition, who should find that graven images could not profit, but "the Lord" only "in his holy temple." The prophet having heard the divine promises and threats in fearful reverence, concludes his work with an enraptured prayer, in which he supplicates God to hasten the deliverance of his people.<sup>p</sup> He commemorates, in majestic language, the mercies which their forefathers had experienced from God when he delivered them out of Egypt, and conducted them through the wilderness; alluding to particular circumstances, with a desultory and irregular description, but with all the enthusiasm of inspired piety; entering at once into the midst of the subject; representing God's descent from Teman,<sup>q</sup> and now contemplating "the tents of Cushan<sup>r</sup> in affliction" and terror at the approach of the Israelites, he finishes with a declaration of entire confidence in God, which no change of circumstance should shake.

It should seem, from the title<sup>s</sup> prefixed, and from the intimation subjoined to the last verse of this prayer, as well as from the word *Selah*, which occurs three times in the chapter, that the prayer was set to music, and perhaps performed in the service of the temple; and it was possibly delivered in a kind of measure. The style of the whole book is poetical, but more especially this beautiful and perfect ode, which is decorated with every kind of imagery and poetical embellishment.<sup>t</sup> Habakkuk is imitated by succeeding prophets, and is cited as an inspired person by the evangelical writers.<sup>u</sup>

Talmudists apply the prophecy to the advent of the Messiah.

<sup>p</sup> The ancient fathers explain this hymn as allusive to the Messiah; and the Romish church has inserted into its offices some parts of it as applicable to Christ. Vid. Cyprian. cont. Jud. lib. ii. Euseb. Præpar. lib. vi. c. 15. August. de Trin. lib. xviii. Hieron. Theodoret Cyrill. &c. Offices du Vendredi Saint, Antienne de Laudes, a la Messe.

<sup>q</sup> Teman was a part of Seir, or Edom. Paran, according to Ptolemy, was a district towards the extremity of the wilderness; a part of it was near Kadesh. Vid. Numb. xiii. 26; and Patrick on Deut. xxxiii. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Cushan may mean Chus, or Midian, a part of Arabia Petrea, and of Arabia Felix. The Arabians were called Scenitæ, or dwellers in tents. The Midianites dwelt

in part of Cush. The prophet may allude to the circumstances described in Exod. xv. 15; Numb. xxii. 3; or xxxi. 2—11; or possibly to some later victories. Vid. Judg. iii. 10; vii. 1, &c. Bochart. Geogr. Sac. 213.

<sup>s</sup> The meaning of the word Sigionoth is not known: some suppose it to imply an instrument, some a tune. In the margin of our Bibles it is explained, "according to the variable songs or tunes, called in Hebrew Shigionoth." The directions annexed to the end of the prayer might have been added by Josiah, if the prayer was written in his reign. The meaning of the word Neginoth is uncertain. Vid. title to Psalm iv.

<sup>t</sup> Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 21. and 28; and Green on ch. iii. 3—10.

<sup>u</sup> Heb. x. 37, 38; Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ZEPHANIAH.

THE prophet Zephaniah informs us that he was the son of Cushi; and that the word of the Lord came to him in the days of Josiah king of Judah. He is supposed to have been of the tribe of Simeon; and as he traces back his pedigree for four generations,<sup>a</sup> he was doubtless of noble birth;<sup>b</sup> though not of the royal family, as some have imagined,<sup>c</sup> from the resemblance between the names of Hezekiah and that of Hiskia, from whom the prophet professes himself to have been a descendant; the period which intervened between king Hezekiah and the time in which Zephaniah flourished, being scarce sufficient to admit of three intermediate ancestors to the prophet.

Zephaniah begins with denouncing God's wrath against "the remnant of Baal,<sup>d</sup> and the name of the Chemarims;"<sup>e</sup> against them that worshipped the host of heaven, and swore by Malcham;<sup>f</sup> and therefore probably he addressed those idolatrous priests who were not yet extirpated by the religious zeal of Josiah:<sup>g</sup> he foretold, also, the destruction of Nineveh, which happened A. M. 3392. And upon these considerations he may

11; Acts xiii. 41, comp. with Hab. i. 5. St. Luke cites this passage according to the Septuagint; and Pocock has shewn that the original will admit of the apostle's construction. Vid. Pocock in Porta Mosis, c. 3. He derives the word Bagojim, which we translate, "among the heathen," from the word Baga, which still signifies, in the Arabic, to be "proud or scornful;" and the word Tamah may be translated, "wonder and perish."

<sup>a</sup> Some of the Jews fancied that these ancestors were all propheta. Vid. Hieron. Com. in Sophon. init.

<sup>b</sup> Cyrill.

<sup>c</sup> R. Aben-Ezra.

<sup>d</sup> Baal was anciently a name applied to the true God, and afterwards prostituted to many pagan deities. The Baal whose worship Jezebel introduced from Zidon, was, according to Mede, a deified king of the Phœnicians. The name was often given to the heavenly bodies when made the object of idolatrous worship. Vid. Selden. de Diis Syris Syntag. ii. c. 1. Mede, b. i. disc. 42.

<sup>e</sup> The word Chemarim is translated

"idolatrous priests," 2 Kings xxiii. 5. They were called Chemarim, because clothed in black garments. Vid. Kimchi in loc. and in 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Black was the customary dress of idolatrous priests in many nations. Vid. Horace, lib. i. sat. viii. 23, 24. Apoll. Rhod. lib. iii. 861. Plutarch. de Isid. Apuleius, i. 10. Miles. The black ox, that represented Osiris among the Egyptians, was covered with a black silk or linen garment. Vid. Patrick in 2 Kings xxiii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Malcham was the same deity with Moloch, a god of the Ammonites. Some suppose him the same with Baal, as both words signify dominion; but the name particularly means the sun. He was worshipped by heathens with human sacrifices; and the Israelites dedicated their children to his service, by making them pass through the fire. Vid. Vossius de Orig. et Progres. Idolat. lib. ii. cap. 5. Patrick in Levit. xviii. 21; and Calmet's Diss. sur l'Idolat.

<sup>g</sup> Comp. Zeph. i. 4—9, with 2 Kings xxiii. 5, 6, 12, &c.

be supposed to have prophesied before the last reformation made by Josiah, A. M. 3381. He may be conceived also to have entered on his office towards the commencement of the reign of that monarch, who ascended the throne A. M. 3364, since he preceded Jeremiah, who began his prophetic ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign. Epiphanius relates that Zephaniah was born at Mount Sarabatha, or Baratha.<sup>b</sup>

Zephaniah and Jeremiah resemble each other so much in those parts where they treat of the idolatries and wickedness that prevailed in their time, that St. Isidore asserts, that Zephaniah was the abbreviator of Jeremiah: but he apparently prophesied before Jeremiah; and the latter seems to speak of those abuses as partially removed, which the former describes as present in the most flagitious extent.<sup>i</sup>

Zephaniah, in this book, appears to have conspired with Josiah in his righteous design of bringing back the people to the worship and obedience of the true God. His first chapter contains a general denunciation of vengeance against Judah, and those who superstitiously observed the rites<sup>k</sup> of idolaters, or violently invaded the property of others; and he declares that "the great day of trouble and distress, of desolation and darkness," was at hand. In the second chapter, the prophet predicts woe to the Cherethites,<sup>l</sup> the Moabites, Ammonites, and Æthiopians,<sup>m</sup> and describes the desolation of Nineveh, in terms wonderfully descriptive.<sup>n</sup> These prophecies were chiefly accomplished by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>o</sup> In the third

<sup>b</sup> Dorotheus calls the place Sabarthara. Sarathasa is mentioned in Joshua, as a mountainous place in the territory of Reuben. Zerodatha, or Sarthas, is spoken of in 2 Chron. iv. 17. The place of Zephaniah's nativity might be Sarasa, near Esathaoh, in the tribe of Simeon, with the addition of Beth, or Batha, which signifies an house, or place of residence.

<sup>i</sup> Comp. Zeph. i. 4, 5, 9, with Jerem. ii. 5, 20, 32.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. i. 9. The Chaldee paraphrast applies this verse to those who lived after the rules of the Philistines. Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. lib. ii. c. 36. If a superstitious practice be alluded to, it might be derived from the blind prejudice of the Philistines. Vid. 1 Sam. v. 1—5. Traces of a similar observance may be found among other nations. Vid. Juven. Sat. vi. 47. Tibul.

lib. i. eleg. ii. 89, 90. Lucan. lib. ii. 359.

<sup>l</sup> The Cherethites, or Cherethims, were the Philistines who bordered on the Mediterranean, called Cherethims. Ezek. xxv. 16; and *Koppes*, Cretans, in the Septuagint. They are supposed to have been a colony removed from Crete to Palestine. Vid. Lowth and Calmet.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. ii. 12, comp. with Jerem. xlv. 2, 9; Ezek. xxx. 4—10. Joseph. Ant. lib. x. c. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. ii. 14, 15. Some have, without sufficient reason, supposed that this prophecy is an interpolation from Jonah; and that it is alluded to in Tobit xiv. 4, 8. Vid. Whiston's Authentic Records, vol. ii. append. 4.

<sup>o</sup> Prid. Con. in 21, 31, and 32 of Nebuchadnezzar.

chapter, the prophet returns to Jerusalem, arraigns her pollutions, oppressions, and corruption, which should be punished in God's general vengeance; and concludes, as is usual with the prophets, with promises of a remnant who should trust in the Lord's name; of a return to his favour; and of blessings partly completed by the Gospel dispensations, but finally to be accomplished in the general restoration of the Jews.<sup>p</sup> In the second and third chapters, likewise, the prophet magnifies his expressions, in speaking of temporal events, to an importance which accords only with the effects produced by the preaching of the Gospel, in the destruction of idolatry, and in the calling of the Gentiles to God's service.<sup>q</sup> The style of Zephaniah is poetical; but it is not distinguished by any peculiar elegance or beauty, though generally animated and impressive.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET HAGGAI.

HAGGAI is generally reputed to have been born in the captivity, and to have returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel.<sup>a</sup> He is reckoned as the tenth in order among the prophets, both in the Hebrew and Greek copies; and may be considered as the first of the three prophets who flourished among the Jews after their return to their country. He appears to have been raised up by God to exhort Zerubbabel,<sup>b</sup> and Joshua the high-priest, the son of Josedech, to resume the work of the temple; which had been interrupted near fourteen years, in consequence of the intrigues of the Samaritans, and other obstructions excited to defeat the edict of Cyrus.<sup>c</sup> He began to prophesy in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, A. M. 3484, about fifteen years after the foundation of the temple had been laid.<sup>d</sup> The prophets, after the

<sup>p</sup> Chap. iii. 8—20.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. ii. 11; and ch. iii.

<sup>a</sup> Ezra ii. 2. Cyrill. lib. i. Adv. Julian. Epiphani. et Doroth.

<sup>b</sup> Ezra v. 1.

<sup>c</sup> Ezra iv. 24.

<sup>d</sup> Ezra v. 1. The Darius of Haggai and Zechariah could not have been Darius Nothus, who did not begin to reign till above one hundred years after the decree of Cyrus, and before whose time Zerubbabel

and Joshua must have been dead, as well as all those who remembered the temple in its first glory. But as the second year of Darius Hystaspes corresponds with the seventeenth year after the return from the captivity, many might have at that time been living who remembered Solomon's temple, which was destroyed only sixty-eight years before; and we may allow the temple to have been rebuilt in about twenty years. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi.

captivity sometimes reckoned by the dates of those sovereigns to whom their country was subjected.

Haggai begins with representing to the people, who delayed by evasive procrastinations the work of the temple, that they were more solicitous to build and to adorn their own houses, than to labour in the service of God; and informs them, that the scarcity and unfruitful seasons which they experienced were designed as a punishment for their selfish disregard to the glory of the Lord. His earnest remonstrance and exhortations appear to have produced their effect; and the prophet—in order to encourage those who fondly remembering the magnificence of that glorious structure which had been reared by Solomon, and who, perhaps, impressed with the description furnished by Ezekiel,<sup>c</sup> must have lamented the comparative meanness of the present building—declares to them, in the name of the Lord, that the glory of this latter house, though it might appear as nothing in their eyes, yet should be greater than that of the former; “for thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts,”<sup>f</sup> with a greater glory, with a glory more apparent and manifest than was that clouded and symbolical representation of the divine majesty which overshadowed the mercy-seat in the old temple, and which prefigured only that incarnate presence of the Messiah, in whom should “dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;”<sup>g</sup> that from this temple, though not decorated with silver and with gold, yet there should appear the Prince of Peace.<sup>h</sup> Haggai, after again recapitulating the offences that

c. 4. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. Witsius Miscel. Sac. lib. i. c. 20. Dr. Allix, with less reason, contends for Darius Ochus.

<sup>e</sup> Ezek. xl—xlviii.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. ii. 6, 7, comp. with Heb. xii. 26.

<sup>g</sup> Coloss. ii. 9.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. ii. 6—9, comp. with Ephes. ii. 14. and Heb. xii. 26, 27. Some writers would restrict this magnificent prophecy to an assurance of the riches and splendour of the second temple, maintaining that *יִסְדְּרָהּ*, as the nominative case to a plural verb, ought to be translated *desirable things*. But *things* could not, with any propriety of speech, be said “to come;” and the Hebrew language admits of a plural substantive for the ex-

pression of dignity, (as even in the same word in Dan. ix. 23.) It is not clear, indeed, that the word is plural; for the *vau*, which constitutes the plural termination of *יִסְדְּרָהּ*, might perhaps belong to the next word, and signify *As*; and the Chaldee and Vulgate render the word in the singular number. Certain it is, that neither Zerubabel's nor Herod's temple did ever equal that of Solomon in magnificence; and the solemnity with which this prophecy is introduced, as well as the grandeur of its description, are hyperbolic in the extreme, unless applied to the glorious presence of the Messiah. Vid. parallel text in Malac. iii. 1. Chandler's Def. sect. i. c. 2. Newcome, &c.

had excited God's anger, and which could not be atoned for till the people should have repented of their neglect of God's service; and after consoling them with a promise of future blessings, concludes his splendid prophecies, which he was enabled to deliver by four distinct revelations,<sup>l</sup> with predicting the important revolutions that should precede the great and final advent of our Lord,<sup>k</sup> typically described under the name of Zerubbabel, when the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ:<sup>l</sup> a consummation foreshadowed, perhaps, in the temporal commotions which happened before the first advent of our Saviour.<sup>m</sup>

These signal predictions, which obtained to Haggai the character of a prophet,<sup>n</sup> were supposed by the Jews to refer to the time of the Messiah.<sup>o</sup> Some modern objections have, indeed, been made to the exact accomplishment of that prophecy which has been applied to Christ, on a pretence that the temple in which our Saviour appeared, was not in reality a second, but a third temple, rebuilt by Herod; but it is certain, that whatever alterations and additions were made by Herod to Zerubbabel's temple, yet it did not constitute an entirely new building;<sup>p</sup> and as Herod's structure was a gradual work of forty-six years, no nominal distinction was ever made between the two,<sup>q</sup> both being considered, in popular language, as the second temple; and had the prophet adopted such distinction, it must have led the Jews to expect a demolition of the temple, instead of serving to console them. It is likewise undeniable, that the Jews did, in consequence of this prophecy, expect the Messiah to appear in this temple,<sup>r</sup> till after its destruction by Vespasian; they then applied it to a third, which they expect at some future period.

The style of Haggai is represented by the learned Lowth as entirely prosaic;<sup>s</sup> but bishop Newcome has given a translation of it, on an idea that a great part of it admits of a metrical

<sup>l</sup> They are precisely marked out. Vid. ch. i. 1; ii. 1, 10, 20.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. ii. 22, 23.

<sup>l</sup> Dan. ii. 44; Rev. xi. 15.

<sup>m</sup> As the Babylonian commotions under Darius, the Macedonian wars, and those between the successors of Alexander, or the disturbances in the Roman empire which succeeded the death of Cæsar. Vid. Orosius, lib. vii. c. 18, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; Heb. xii. 26.

<sup>o</sup> Aben-Ezra ap Degling. Obser. Sac. par.

iii. observ. 20.

<sup>p</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. xv. c. 15.

<sup>q</sup> Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. viii. c. 18. Prid. Con. An. A. C. 534.

<sup>r</sup> Talm. Sanh. c. 10. sect. 30. Maimon. in Sanh. Midr. on Deut. xxxiii. 12. Ber. Ketan. on Gen. i. par. ii. Ber. Rab. on Gen. xxvii. 27. Talm. Hier. tr. Beracoth in Lightf. R. Sal. Jarchi. Book Capthor, quoted by Grotius de Verit. lib. v.

<sup>s</sup> Prælect. Poet. 21.



division.<sup>a</sup> Haggai, according to some traditionary accounts, must have been conversant with metrical compositions. In some manuscripts of the Septuagint, Vulgate, and other versions of the Psalter, titles are prefixed to the cxxxviii<sup>th</sup>, cxlviii<sup>th</sup>, cxlviii<sup>th</sup>, and cxlviii<sup>th</sup> psalms,<sup>b</sup> by which they are ascribed to Haggai and Zechariah. But as these titles are not in the Hebrew copies, and as the dates and occasion of these several psalms are in some measure uncertain, we can place but little confidence in these inscriptions. It is, however, very probable, that these prophets were concerned in the composition of some of these hymns, which were produced after the return from the captivity. Haggai was probably of the sacerdotal race; and Epiphanius relates that he was buried among the priests at Jerusalem. He and Zechariah are said to have been the first who sung the Hallelujah in the temple. The rabbins report, that they were both of the great synagogue,<sup>c</sup> which they suppose to have had its origin in the time of Darius Hystaspes.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

ZECHARIAH was the son of Barachiah, and the grandson of Iddo;<sup>a</sup> the last of whom is supposed to have been a different person from the Iddo mentioned by Nehemiah as one of the priests that returned from Babylon under the conduct of Zerubbabel:<sup>b</sup> but it is very possible that Zechariah might have been of the sacerdotal race; and when released by the decree of Cyrus from the captivity, in which he probably was born, have been ac-

<sup>a</sup> Newcome's attempt towards an improved version of the Twelve Minor Prophets.

<sup>b</sup> Prol. in Bib. Max.

<sup>c</sup> For this reason Isaac Abarbinel excludes them, as well as Malachi, from the rank of prophets, though their books were admitted into the Canon, and they were considered as prophets by the Jews, and the synagogue was allowed to contain some persons entitled to the rank of prophets. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. i. c. 59. Vid. Auctor. Beth Israel, ad Bava Bathra, c. 1.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. i. 1; Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; where son is put for descendant, as is usual in

scripture. Vid. Dan. v. 2; Matt. i. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Nehem. xii. 4. St. Jerom says, that it was not doubted that Iddo was the same person with the man of God who was sent to Jeroboam, (vid. 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2; 2 Chron. xii. 15;) but this was probably an error. It is certain, at least, that Zechariah could not be the grandson of a man who lived above four hundred years before he began to prophesy. It is doubtful whether Iddo, the ancestor of Zechariah, is described in this book as a prophet, for that title is ambiguously placed in chap. i. 1. The Septuagint and Vulgate apply the title to Zechariah. Ζαχαρίας του του Βαραχίου, υιον 'Αδδω, τον Προφητην.

accompanied by his grandfather in the general restoration. No certain information can be collected concerning the time or place in which Zechariah was born. Some writers relate that he was of the tribe of Levi, and consecrated to the priestly office;<sup>c</sup> and we are told that his body was found with a sacerdotal white robe at Caphar, or Capher,<sup>d</sup> at the extremity of the territory of Eleutheropolis; while by others we are informed that he was buried at Betharia, in the land of Noeman, about forty furlongs from Eleutheropolis;<sup>e</sup> not to mention that according to other accounts his remains were deposited near those of Haggai at Jerusalem,<sup>f</sup> and that his pretended tomb is still shewn at the foot of Mount Olivet.

But little reliance can be placed on these and similar representations, some, or indeed all of which, have confounded the prophet with other persons mentioned in the scriptures. Sozomen imagined that the prophet was the same person with Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, the witness mentioned by Isaiah,<sup>g</sup> and who appears to have lived in the time of Ahaz, about A. M. 3262. Others, by a great anachronism, make him coeval with Joash,<sup>h</sup> or Uzziah.<sup>i</sup>

The author of the present work<sup>k</sup> was unquestionably a contemporary with Haggai; and began to prophesy two months after him, in the eighth month of the second year of Darius Hystaspes, A. M. 3484; being commissioned, as well as Haggai, to exhort the Jews to proceed in the building of the temple, after the interruption which the work had suffered. We are informed by Ezra, that the Jews "prospered through the prophesying,"<sup>l</sup> and obeyed the instructions of Zechariah, who continued to prophesy above two years; the last revelation of which the date is specified in this book, having been delivered in the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes;<sup>m</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Cyrill. Præf. in Com. in Zechar. Epiph. Dorothe. &c.

<sup>d</sup> Sozomen, who relates an idle tale concerning the miraculous discovery of Zechariah's body, in a perfect state, at Caphar, adds to the account, that an infant was found under the prophet's feet, buried with the ornaments of royalty: and that about the same time an apocryphal book was also found, in which it was written, that the favourite son of Joash died suddenly on the seventh day after that monarch had slain Zechariah; and that Joash considering it as

a judgment, ordered that his son's body should be buried with that of the prophet. Sozomen. lib. ix. c. ult. Niceph. lib. xiv. c. 8.

<sup>e</sup> Dorotheus.

<sup>f</sup> Epiphanius.

<sup>g</sup> Isaiah viii. 2.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Chron. xxiv. 21. Epiph. &c.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. xxvi. 5.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. i. 1; Ezra v. 1; vi. 14; Haggai i. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Ezra vi. 14.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. vii. 1. The month Chisleu cor-

Zechariah therefore probably lived to witness the completion of the temple, which was finished in about six years; and having contributed, either as a priest, or a member of the great synagogue, as well as a prophet, to promote the welfare and interests of his country, died in peace, being probably a different person from the Zacharias mentioned by Christ.<sup>a</sup>

Zechariah, who certainly collected his own prophecies into their present form,<sup>o</sup> is mentioned as a prophet by Ezra,<sup>p</sup> and is cited as an inspired writer by the sacred penmen of the New Testament.<sup>q</sup> The minute accomplishment of his own illustrious prophecies bears a signal testimony to the truth of that infallible spirit by which he was inspired. He was so distinguished for the peculiar excellency of his predictions, as to be styled the sun among the lesser prophets. It is, however, the sun sometimes clouded by obscurity. The enigmatical cast of his visions, which are of difficult interpretation, must, indeed, be supposed necessarily to produce some shades. The general design of the work, however, is sufficiently obvious; and it is occasionally illuminated with the brightest and most striking passages.

The prophet, in conformity with his first intention, begins with general exhortations to his countrymen: exciting them to repent from the evil ways of their fathers, to whom the prophets had vainly addressed their cry; describes, as an interesting representation which he had beheld in vision, angels of the Lord ministering to his will, and interceding for mercy on Jerusalem, and the desolate cities of Judæa, which had experienced God's indignation seventy years,<sup>r</sup> while other nations connected with

responds with part of our November and December.

<sup>a</sup> Our Saviour (vid. Matt. xxiii. 35.) imputes to the Jews the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias; accusing them of having slain him between the temple and the altar. By this martyr, however, was probably meant Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who is related, in 2 Chron. xxiv. 21, to have been slain by command of Joash in the court of the Lord's house, (which might be between the temple and the altar;) for it is not conceivable that both Zachariah and Zechariah were slain in the same manner. It is probable, therefore, that the copyists of St. Matthew inserted Barachiah, (perhaps first in the margin,) thinking that it must have been the prophet whose writings were extant. And this is confirmed, if we consider that

Barachiah is not mentioned in the parallel passage of St. Luke. Vid. ch. xi. 5. And St. Jerom assures us, that in a manuscript copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew, used by the Nazarenes, which he obtained permission from the inhabitants of Beræa in Syria to copy, it was written, the son of Jehoiada. Vid. Hieron. in Matt. xxiii. et de Script. Eccles. Josephus relates, that Zechariah, the son of Baruch, was slain in the temple, but he certainly means the contemporary of Joash. Vid. de Bell. Jud. lib. iv.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. i. 9; ii. 2.

<sup>p</sup> Ezra v. 1; vi. 14.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. xxi. 4, 5; xxvi. 31; xxvii. 9; Mark xiv. 27; John xiv. 15; xix. 37; Ephea. iv. 25; Rev. i. 7; and the marginal references in our Bible.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. i. 12. Zechariah reckons these

Judah were in peace. He announces God's displeasure against the heathens who "had helped forward the affliction" of the Jews, by endeavours to impede the building of the temple; and declares that the house of the Lord should be built in Jerusalem, and Zion be comforted.<sup>a</sup> The prophet then proceeds figuratively to represent the increase and prosperity of the Jews; promising that God should be unto them "a wall of fire;" that he should dwell in the midst of them, and the nations to be converted to his service; that the high-priest should be restored with his former splendour in the person of Joshua, who is declared to be the type<sup>a</sup> of that spiritual servant of the Lord who should be called "the Branch,"<sup>b</sup> become the chief corner-stone of his church, and remove the iniquity of the land; and the success of whose government is foreshewn under the promised completion of Zerubbabel's designs.<sup>c</sup> The prophet then interweaves in his discourse some instructive admonitions: unfolding the ample roll of God's judgment against theft and perjury, and such other prevailing wickedness<sup>a</sup> as had provoked God's former vengeance. He then emblematically portrays the four successive empires that had been, or should be employed as ministers of wrath;<sup>b</sup> and is empowered to foretell the establishment of the Jewish government, and to crown the representative of Christ, who should be both King and Priest, with the emblems of civil and religious authority united.<sup>c</sup>

To the captives from Babylon, or other professors of the

seventy years from the besieging of Jerusalem, in the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, and the tenth month, for which a solemn fast was kept by the Jews. Comp. 2 Kings xxv. 1, with Zech. viii. 19. This ends in the second year of Darius. If we reckon from the destruction of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the seventy years will be completed in the fourth year of Darius. Vid. Zech. vii. 1, 5. Prid. An. A. C. 518.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. i. 16, 17.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. ii. 4, comp. with Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. v. 4. 2. Vitringa, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. ii. 10—13.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iii. 8. The word Mophet signifies a wonder, or a type. Vid. Isa. xx. 3; Ezek. xii. 7; xxiv. 24. Chand. Def. ch. 3. sect. 1, 4.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. iii. 8, 9. A title of the Messiah, as descending from the stock of David. Vid. Isa. iv. 2; Jerem. xxiii. 5. The

Chaldee paraphrast applies these texts to Christ, who is eminently called God's servant. Vid. Isa. xli. 1; xlix. 3; lii. 13; liii. 11; Ezek. xxxiv. 23. The Seventy translate the word Tsemach, here and elsewhere, Ἀνατολή, "the east," or sun-rising, thence applied to Christ, (Luke i. 78.) and translated "the day-spring." Hence, perhaps, the Jewish prophecy mentioned by Tacitus, (ut valesceret Oriens.) Vid. Tacit. Hist. lib. v. c. 13. Grot. in loc. et ad Agg. ii. 8.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iv. 9, 10.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. v; Deut. xxvii, xxviii.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. vi. The chariots and horses probably represent the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires. The two brazen mountains may signify God's immovable decrees. Vid. Psal. xxxvi. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. vi. 10—15, comp. with Jer. xxxiii. 15; xxiii. 5.

Hebrew religion,<sup>d</sup> who pharisaically observed solemn fasts without true contrition, the prophet recommends judgment, mercy, and compassion:° and then addressing himself to the Jews, he promises a return of righteousness and favour to Jerusalem; assuring them that the mournful fasts, with which they lamented its destruction, should be converted into cheerful feasts, and that the church of the Lord should be enlarged by the accession of many nations converted by means of the Jews.<sup>f</sup>

The twelfth verse of the eleventh chapter of this book, which exhibits a prophetic description of some circumstances afterwards fulfilled in our Saviour, appears to be cited by St. Matthew as spoken by Jeremy;<sup>g</sup> and as this and the two preceding chapters, which are connected by a kind of continuation, have been thought to contain some particulars more suitable to the period of Jeremiah than to that of Zechariah, or to the design of his appointment,<sup>h</sup> some learned writers have conceived<sup>i</sup> that they were written by the former prophet; that they differ in style from the eight first chapters,<sup>k</sup> and have been accidentally transposed, or joined to those of Zechariah, from similarity of subject. Other writers are, however, of opinion, that St. Matthew, in the place referred to, might allude to some traditional prophecy of Jeremiah; or that the name of Jeremy was improperly added or substituted by a mistake of the copyist of the Gospel for that of Zechariah:<sup>l</sup> and these writers maintain,

<sup>d</sup> Some have supposed that they who were sent to pray before the Lord, (vid. ch. vii. 2.) were Persian officers of Darius. Theodorot imagines that they were Cutheans, or Samaritans; others, that they were distant inhabitants of Judæa; but probably they were Jewish captives from Babylon. Vid. Calmet and other commentators.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. vii. 9, 10.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. viii.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

<sup>h</sup> Mede is of opinion, that the description of Tyre, in chap. ix. 3, was not applicable to her condition after the destruction effected by Nebuchadnezzar; but New Tyre might be rising into prosperity in the time of Zechariah. The prophecies in the ninth chapter against Damascus and the Philistines, and especially against Akelon, have been judged more descriptive of the desolation produced by Nebuchadnezzar, than of the circumstances which resulted from the victories of Alexander. It may be observed, likewise, that Assyria is

threatened, in chap. x. 11, though that empire was destroyed before the time of Zechariah. Assyria, however, may be put for Syria, or the enemies of God in general. Some, also, apply the passage in chap. xi. 1—6, at least in the first instance, to the destruction of Jerusalem produced by the Babylonians; though, perhaps, it may refer only to those calamitous circumstances which occurred subsequently to the time of Zechariah, as under Antiochus or Vespasian. Vid. 1 Macc. i. Joseph. de Bel. Jud.

<sup>i</sup> Hammond in Matt. xxvii. Mede, book iv. epist. 31, et 60. Kidder. Demonst. part ii. c. 3. Randolph's Texts cited in N. T. n. 28.

<sup>k</sup> Lowth's Prælect. Poet. 21.

<sup>l</sup> Matt. xxvii. 9. One manuscript, the Syriac, Persian, and other versions, read *δία του προφητου*, without any name, as do some of the fathers. St. Jerom professes to have seen a book attributed to Jeremiah, in which the prophetic passage was contained.

that the chapters concerned in this inquiry admit of a construction perfectly consistent with the time of Zechariah; that Zechariah in them describes the conquest of Damascus, Tyre, and Sidon, and of the cities of the Philistines, as effected by Alexander;<sup>m</sup> the victories of the Maccabees over the troops of Antiochus, who was of Grecian descent; with future successes to be obtained by conversion to the true God, and deliverances similar to those from Egypt and Assyria;<sup>n</sup> that Zechariah, then angry at the little effect produced by his endeavours, denounces the future destruction of Jerusalem, its temple,<sup>o</sup> and lofty houses; and represents himself as breaking in vision the symbolical badges of his pastoral office, and as assuming "the instruments of a foolish shepherd," to foreshew the cruelties which should be exercised by wicked rulers:<sup>p</sup> interspersed with, and adumbrated by which temporal promises and threats, are prophecies of Christ; who is spoken of in the most striking manner, as with respect to his lowly entrance to Jerusalem "upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass;"<sup>q</sup> and his being valued at thirty pieces of silver, which is typically foreshewn in a visionary representation.<sup>r</sup>

Whatever may be determined as to these three chapters, there is no sufficient reason to suppose, with some commentators, that the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters also, which constitute a distinct prophecy, were written before the time of Zechariah, since they contain nothing incompatible with the period of that prophet.<sup>s</sup> But at whatever time they were

<sup>m</sup> Chap. ix. 1—16.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. ix. 15; x. 10, 11.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. xi. 1—3. Lebanon is supposed to mean the temple, with its cedar buildings. The Jewish writers relate, that before the destruction of the temple, the doors, though barred with iron, opened of their own accord; (vid. Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. vii. c. 12;) when R. Johanan, a disciple of R. Hillel, directing his speech to the temple, said, "I know thy destruction is at hand, according to the prophecy of Zechariah," (open thy doors, O Lebanon.) And Tacitus gives the same account of the opening of the doors. Vid. Hist. lib. v.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. xi. 15—17. Basnage's Hist. of the Jews, book vii. Prid. Con. par. i. book iii. anno 6. Ptolemy Philometor.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. ix. 9, comp. with Matt. xxi. 2—9; where the evangelist, perhaps, refers likewise to Isaiah lxii. 11. Vid. also,

John xii. 14, 15; who cites the sense rather than the words of the prophet.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. xi. 12, 13, comp. with Matt. xxvi. 15; xxvii. 3—10.

<sup>s</sup> It has been supposed that the prophet, in chap. xii. 11, alludes to the mourning made for Josiah, who was slain at Megiddo. Vid. 2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22—25. But Zechariah might speak of this mourning as proverbially sorrowful, though it happened before his time. Some also have imagined, that the prediction in chap. xiii. 2—6, was uttered before the captivity, though the abuses, of which the final extirpation is there foretold, were not so totally suppressed as to be unknown after the return from Babylon. The prophets, likewise, in general, in their descriptions of the final reformation to be produced in the church, foretell the utter destruction of idolatry. Vid. Isa. ii. 18;

written, they were unquestionably the production of an inspired writer, since they are cited as such in the New Testament.<sup>t</sup> They contain prophecies which refer entirely to the circumstances of the Christian dispensation. They begin with the assurance of some final victories to be obtained over the enemies of Jerusalem;<sup>u</sup> they describe the restoration of the Jews, their conversion, and bitter compunction for having pierced the Messiah;<sup>v</sup> their admission by baptism to the privileges of the Gospel covenant;<sup>y</sup> and their deliverance from the delusions of false prophets. The prophet then reverts to foreshew the dispersion of Christ's disciples,<sup>z</sup> and the preservation of a small remainder of his converts, whose faith should be tried in affliction. In the last chapter, he represents the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans,<sup>a</sup> the subsequent discomfiture of its enemies,<sup>b</sup> and the final and triumphant establishment of Christ's righteous kingdom, who should be King over the whole earth.<sup>c</sup> The prophet describes these particulars with a clearness which indicated the near approach of the events of which he speaks.

The style of Zechariah is so remarkably similar to that of Jeremiah, that the Jews were accustomed to observe that the spirit of Jeremiah had passed into him. He is generally prosaic, till towards the conclusion of his work, when he becomes more elevated and poetical. The whole work is beautifully connected by easy transitions, and present and future scenes are blended with the most delicate contexture. Epiphanius attributes some predictions to Zechariah, which were delivered, according to his account, by the prophet at Babylon, and on the journey in his return from thence; but these are not extant in scripture, and are of very questionable authority. The Zechariah to whom an apocryphal book is attributed by some writers, is supposed to have been a different person from the prophet, and according to Fabricius, he was the father of John the Baptist.<sup>d</sup>

xxx. 22; xxxi. 7; Hosea ii. 17; Micah v. 13.

<sup>t</sup> John xix. 37; Matt xxi. 4, 5; xxxvi. 31.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. xii. 1—9, comp. with Ezek.

xxxvii, xxxix, and Rev. xx. 9.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. xii. 10.

<sup>y</sup> Chap. xiii. 1.

<sup>z</sup> Chap. xiii. 7, comp. with Matt. xxvi. 31, and Mark xiv. 27.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xiv. 1, 2; that by Vespasian. Vid. Euseb. Demonst. lib. vi.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xiv. 3.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xiv. 8, 9.

<sup>d</sup> Athan. Synop. Fabric. Pseudep. Script. vol. i.

## OF THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET MALACHI.

MALACHI was the last of those prophets who flourished before the Gospel dispensation. Some writers strangely imagined that Malachi was merely a general name, signifying the angel of the Lord; a messenger, a prophet, because the title of Malach-Jehovah, or messenger of the Lord, was often applied to the prophets.<sup>a</sup> The Septuagint version has rendered מלאכי, Malachi, his angel; and several of the fathers have quoted Malachi, under the title of the angel of the Lord; and hence some have conceited that he was an angel incarnate, and not a man.<sup>b</sup> Others have supposed, that under the appellative name of Malachi, was intended Ezra;<sup>c</sup> and have maintained that Malachi is not mentioned among the prophets in the book of Ecclesiasticus. But it is very certain, that Malachi was a different person from Ezra. His work had a distinct place in the Hebrew Canon; and, in fact, he is as much noticed by the author of Ecclesiasticus, as any of the other minor prophets, all of whom are celebrated under one collective memorial.<sup>d</sup> The names of the prophets are very often expressive of their office; and that of Malachi was probably assumed as descriptive of his character,<sup>e</sup> as he was eminently distinguished for the virtues of his mind, and for the graces of his exterior form, it being unquestionably the appropriate name of a human prophet.

Malachi is represented by some traditionary accounts to have been of the tribe of Zebulun, and a native of Sapha;<sup>f</sup> to have died young, and to have been buried with his ancestors at Sapha, after having assisted, as a member of the great synagogue, in the re-establishment of order and prosperity in his country. Usher conceives him to have flourished about A. M. 3588, which is about twenty years later than the period assigned to him by

<sup>a</sup> Isai. xlv. 26; Haggai i. 13. Maimon. More Nevoch, par. ii. c. 41. "Propheta non raro vocatur Angelus."

<sup>b</sup> Origen. tom. ii. in Joan. Hieron. in Agg. Præf. in Malach. et Epist. ad Evagrium. Tertull. cont. Judæ. The same idea prevailed concerning Haggai, the Baptist, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Abrah. Zacut. in Juchasin, David Ganz,

Chald. Parap. in Malach. Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. 3. Hieron. Præf. in Malach. Isidor. &c. <sup>d</sup> Ecclus. xlix. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Some inventive writers absurdly say, that an angel visibly appeared to confirm immediately what the prophet uttered. Vid. Epiph. Doroth. et Chron. Alex.

<sup>f</sup> Or Sapha, or Supha, or Socha. Vid. Epiph. Doroth. &c.



Blair.<sup>a</sup> But as it appears, from the consent of all Jewish and Christian antiquity, that the light of prophecy expired in Malachi,<sup>b</sup> we may suppose that the termination of his ministry coincided with the accomplishment of the first seven weeks of Daniel's prophecy, which was the period allotted for "sealing the vision and prophecy."<sup>1</sup> This, according to Prideaux's account, must be assigned to A. M. 3595, but according to the calculations of bishop Lloyd, to A. M. 3607, twelve years later;<sup>2</sup> whichever reckoning we may prefer, Malachi must be admitted to have completed the Canon of the Old Testament, about four hundred years before the birth of Christ; when the great designs of Providence were completed in the termination of the prophetic ministry; and when a scheme of prophecy was unfolded, which, in its entire contexture, was to be accommodated to, and to characterize the Messiah.

Malachi certainly prophesied some time after Haggai and Zechariah, for in his time the temple was rebuilt, and the worship re-established:<sup>1</sup> his ministry coincided with or succeeded that of Nehemiah. He censures the same offences that had excited the indignation of that governor, and which he had not been able entirely to reform: for Malachi, speaking of God's superior kindness to the Israelites above the Edomites, begins with declaiming against the priests for their profane and mercenary conduct, and the people for their multiplied divorces and intermarriages with idolatrous nations:<sup>m</sup> he threatens them with punishment and rejection; declaring that God would "make his name great among the Gentiles."<sup>n</sup> for that he was

<sup>a</sup> St. Jerom makes Malachi contemporary with Darius Hystaspes. Vid. Hieron. Præf. in 12 Proph. et Procem. in Mal. Euseb. Chron. lib. ii. Theodor. Procem. in 12 Proph. But if we admit Blair's account, which gives Malachi the highest antiquity, he must rather have been contemporary with Artaxerxes Longimanus, or Darius Nothus. Vid. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 26. Clem. Alex. Strom. i. Cyrill. Præf. in Malach.

<sup>b</sup> Abraham Zacutus in Juchasin. David Ganz in Zemach David. Seder Olam Zuta. Maimon. Massech. Sotah, c. ult. Edict. Bartiner. Gem. Sanhed, c. 1. §. 13. Coari Maam, 3. §. 39. R. Tanchum. 1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. i. Justin Martyr entertained a false notion, that the spirit of prophecy did not cease till the Christian era. Smith on Pro-

phesy, ch. 12.

<sup>1</sup> Dan. ix. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to Nehemiah, p. 116, note i.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. i. 7, 10, 12; iii. 10.

<sup>m</sup> Mal. ii. 11, comp. with Neh. xiii. 23—27; and Mal. i. 10; iii. 8, with Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. i. 11. The latter part of this verse relative to the Mincha, or bread-offering to be generally offered up, was considered in the primitive church as an express prophecy of the Christian sacrifice in the eucharist, of which the circumstances are described under the typical rites of the Jewish worship. Hence the words of the passage were inserted into an hymn in the liturgy of the church of Alexandria, which is called the Liturgy of St. Mark. Vid. John iv. 21, 22. Mede's Discourses on the Christian Sacrifice, vol. i. b. ii. p. 451.

wearied with the impiety of Israel; and thence the prophet takes occasion awfully to proclaim, that the Lord whom they sought should suddenly come to his temple, preceded by that messenger who, like an harbinger, should prepare his way; that the Lord, when he should appear, should purify the sons of Levi from their unrighteousness, and refine them as metal from the dross;° that then “the offering of Judah,” the spiritual sacrifice of the heart, should be pleasant to the Lord,” as was that of the patriarchs, or the uncorrupted ancestors;† and that the Lord would quickly exterminate the corruptions and adulteries that prevailed. He proceeds with an earnest exhortation to repentance; promising high rewards and remembrance to the righteous in that last day, when the Lord should select unto himself a peculiar treasure, and finally discern between the righteous and the wicked.‡ Malachi concludes with another assurance of approaching salvation to those who feared God’s name, from that “Sun of righteousness which should arise with healing in his wings,” and render them triumphant; enjoining, till that day, an observance of the Law of Moses; till the advent of Elijah<sup>r</sup> the prophet, who, before the coming of that “great and dreadful day of the Lord, should turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children<sup>s</sup> to their fathers;” who should produce an entire amendment in the minds of the people. Thus Malachi sealed up the volume of prophecy in the description of that personage at whose appearance the evangelists begin the Gospel history:† and he who terminated the illustrious succession of the prophets, and predicted the coming of the Baptist, was in an especial degree entitled to a share of our Saviour’s testimony; who declared, in terms which defined the period and extent of prophecy, that “all the prophets prophesied until John.”‡ Malachi is likewise elsewhere frequently cited as a prophet by the writers of the New Testament.\*

° Chap. iii. 1—3; Isaiah i. 25.

† Chap. iii. 4. “As in the days of old.”

‡ Chap. iii. 16—18.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. iv. 5. John came in the spirit and power of Elias, (vid. Luke i. 17.) and resembled him in office and character. Vid. Mark ix. 12; Eccles. xlviii. 10. The Seventy, following the received Jewish tradition, add “the Tishbite.” In this sense, John denies himself to be Elias. John i. 21. He was not Elias himself, but another Elias, the antitype of the first.

\* It is proposed to translate <sup>ל</sup>ע, al; not “to,” but “with.” Vid. Exod. xxxv. 22. and Kimchi. And then the passage means, not that Elijah should reconcile religious differences between intimate relations, but that he should produce a general reformation. Vid. Arnald. in Eccles. xlviii. 10.

† Mark i. 1, 2.

‡ Matt. xi. 13; Luke xvi. 16. Jansen. in Eccles. xlviii. 2.

\* Matt. xi. 10; xvii. 10—12; Mark i.

The style of Malachi has been represented as of the middle kind: it is not remarkable for beauty, as he lived in the decline of the Hebrew poetry, which decayed much after the Jewish captivity.

## PREFACE TO THE APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

THE books which are admitted into our Bibles under the description of Apocryphal Books, are so denominated from a Greek word, which is expressive of the uncertainty and concealed nature of their original.<sup>a</sup> They have no title to be considered as inspired writings; and though in respect of their antiquity and valuable contents they are annexed to the canonical books, it is in a separate division; and by no means upon an idea that they are of equal authority, in point of doctrine, with them; or that they are to be received as oracles of faith, to sanctify opinions, or to determine religious controversies.

It is universally allowed, that these books were not in the Canon of the Jews, to whom alone "were committed the oracles of God;"<sup>b</sup> and, indeed, that they were composed after the closing of the sacred catalogue; though some writers, without a shadow of authority, have pretended that some of them, as Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and perhaps others, were received by the Jews into a second canon,<sup>c</sup> said to be made by a council assembled at Jerusalem in the time of Eleazar the high-priest, upon the occasion of sending the seventy-two interpreters to Ptolemy king of Egypt;<sup>d</sup> and that the rest were ca-

2; ix. 11, 12; Luke i. 17; vii. 27; Rom. ix. 13.

<sup>a</sup> Apocrypha, from ἀποκρυπτός, "to hide." The word seems to have been first applied only to books of doubtful authority; or, as it is used by Origen, to imply works out of the Canon. It was afterwards employed to characterize spurious and pernicious books. It has been thought, that books of doubtful character were first termed Apocryphal by the Jews, because they were removed ἀποκρυπτός from the ark of the covenant, where the canonical books were placed. Euseb. Lib. de Pond. et Mensur. p. 534; or because shut up from the generality of eaders, and concealed, as some assert, in

a chest of the temple. In the primitive church, some of these books, especially those of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, were imparted to catechumens, and all of them were allowed to be read under certain restrictions. Vid. Canon. Apost. Athan. Synops.

<sup>b</sup> Rom. iii. 2. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Hieron. Prol. Gal. Introduction, p. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Hence they are sometimes called Deutero-canonical by the Romanists.

<sup>d</sup> Genebard. Chron. lib. ii. p. 190. col. 2. and p. 284. col. 1. Maldonate de Sacram. Pœnit. q. de Purgat. p. 145. Serar. in Macc. Præloq. iii.

nonized by a third council, assembled in the time of Sammai and Hillel: but of these councils, the Jews, tenacious as they are of traditions, have no account or memorial; and the books in question were composed after the cessation of the prophetic spirit, by persons who displayed no characters of inspiration, and some of whom seem to have disclaimed its pretensions;<sup>e</sup> and therefore they were ranged by the Jews among the writings which they termed *Hagiographa*, in an inferior sense of that word.<sup>f</sup>

Tobit and Judith were indeed supposed, by the rabbinical conceits, to have been derived from that lower kind of inspiration which was called *Bath Col, filia vocis*.<sup>g</sup> But this was an absurd fancy, and none of the books are cited either as prophetic or doctrinal by our Saviour or his apostles:<sup>h</sup> and though some writers have pretended to discover a coincidence between certain passages contained in them, and others in the New Testament, it will be found that the evangelical writers on these occasions only accidentally concur in sentiment or expression with the authors of the apocryphal books; or that the resemblance results from an imitation of passages in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which the evangelical and the apocryphal writers might equally have had in view. But, indeed, if any occasional allusion, or borrowed expressions, could be proved, they would by no means establish the authority of the apocryphal books; which might be referred to, as were other books by the sacred writers, without any design to confer on them a character of divine authority.<sup>i</sup>

It is certain, that long after the time of our Saviour, the Hebrew Canon consisted but of twenty-two books;<sup>k</sup> and that at

<sup>e</sup> 1 Macc. ix. 27; 2 Macc. ii. 30, 31; xv. 38.

<sup>f</sup> The later Jews esteemed some of the prophetic books to be *Hagiographa* in a higher sense of the word; supposing them to be derived from the second degree in their scale of prophecy. Vid. Maimon. *More Nevoch*. p. ii. c. 45. Huet. in *Judith*. The word was, perhaps, first intended to describe the uninspired productions of holy men; and afterwards improperly applied to fanciful distinctions of the sacred books. Vid. *Introduct.* p. 6.

<sup>g</sup> Preface to the Prophets, p. 172, note e.

<sup>h</sup> Index Testimon. a Christ. et Apost.

citat. ex *Vet. Test.* in *fin. Bibl. Vulg.* edit. Sixt. V. et Clemen. VIII. Venet. 1616. Catharin. *opusc. de Script. Canon.* Stapleton de *Autor. S. Script.* lib. ii. c. 4. §. 14; and Preface to the second book of *Esdra*s, which was written or interpolated after the publication of the New Testament.

<sup>i</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 8; Heb. xii. 21; Jude, ver. 14. Origen. *Prol. in Cant.*

<sup>k</sup> Joseph. *cont. Apion.* Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. c. 9. R. Asarias in *Meor Enaim*, p. 29, 141, 169, 175. R. Gedaliah Ben-Jechajah in *Shalshelah Haccab.* p. 68, 99, 104. R. Abrah. Zachus in *Juchasin*,

this day the Jews adhere to the same list, though by separating books formerly united they increase the number; and it is not probable, or consistent with any authentic accounts, to suppose, that at any time before or after Christ, the Canon, which the Jews so religiously respected, should have been altered by them. It is not probable that they should have admitted any addition after the death of Simon the Just, who was the last of the great synagogue; or that, if such addition had been allowed, they should have expunged these writings, which contain nothing so favourable to Christianity as the prophetic books which they have suffered to continue inviolate. Had the books been erased before the time of Christ, the sacrilege must have excited his censures; and since the establishment of the Gospel, any endeavour to deface the Canon must have been detected and exposed.

These apocryphal books constituted no part of the Septuagint version of the scriptures, as set forth by the translators under Ptolemy. It is supposed that many of them at least were received by the Jewish synagogue established at Jerusalem, which possibly might have derived its origin from the period of that translation.<sup>1</sup> From the Hellenistic Jews they were probably accepted by the Christian church; but by whomsoever, and at whatever time they were communicated, it is certain that they were not received as canonical, or enrolled among the productions of the inspired writers, since they were not in any of the earlier catalogues,<sup>m</sup> and are excluded from the sacred list by the fathers of the Greek and Latin church, who flourished during the four first centuries;<sup>n</sup> though they are often cited by them

p. 136. R. David Gantz in *Tsemach David*, par. ii. p. 10. R. Menasse Ben Israel de *Creatione*, prob. x. p. 45.

<sup>1</sup> *Grabii Septuagint. Proleg. ad Lib. Hist. c. 1. prop. 24.*

<sup>m</sup> *Constit. Apost. lib. ii. c. 57. Canon. Apost. Can. ult.* The present copies of the Canons of the Apostles, which include the three books of Maccabees, are evidently corrupted, the Canons having formerly corresponded with the Canon of the Council of Laodicea. *Vid. Zonar. in Concil. Laodic. can. 59. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 25; lib. v. c. 24; lib. vi. c. 19. Cosin's Scholast. Hist. c. 4. sect. 45.*

<sup>n</sup> *Dionys. Hierarch. Eccles. c. 3. Melito, ap. Euseb. lib. iv. c. 25. Orig. ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 25. Demons. Evang.*

*lib. viii. Baïl in Orig. Philocal. c. 3. Ruffin. Vera. Euseb. lib. vi. Tertull. cont. Marcion. Carm. lib. iv. c. 7; who reckoning Ruth and Lamentations separately, makes the number twenty-four. Euseb. Demon. Evang. lib. viii. Athan. Epist. 39. Athan. Synopa. Hilar. Prolog. Explan. in Psalm. Cyrill. Catech. iv. Epiphan. Hærea. 8. cont. Epicur. et Hærea. 76. cont. Anomæos, et de Pond. et Mensur. Baïl. Philoc. c. 3. Gregor. Nazian. de ver. et genuin. Lib. S. Script. Amphiloc. Epist. ad Seleuc. Chrysost. Homil. iv. in Genes. et Homil. viii. in Epist. ad Hebræos. Hieron. in Prolog. Galeat. in Lib. Solom. et Pref. in Eadram, et in Paralip. Cosin's Schol. Hist. canon. vi. sect. 73. Ruffin. Symbol. Apost. sect. 35, 36.*

as valuable and instructive works, and sometimes even as divine, and as scripture in a loose and popular sense.<sup>o</sup> In the language of the primitive church they were styled ecclesiastical,<sup>p</sup> as contradistinguished from those infallible works which were canonized as unquestionably inspired, and also from those erroneous and pernicious writings which were stigmatized and proscribed as apocryphal.

The ecclesiastical books, under which division were contained other productions besides those now termed apocryphal, as the Shepherd of Hermas,<sup>q</sup> the Doctrine of the Apostles,<sup>r</sup> and the first Epistle of Clement,<sup>s</sup> though considered as human works, and as subordinate to the sacred books, were nevertheless approved and read by the church, as capable of furnishing much instruction. The fathers quote them as pious and venerable books, and as deservedly held in great estimation: they speak of them in high and hyperbolical terms, as sacred, as bearing some resemblance to the inspired writings, but not as certainly inspired, or as of sufficient authority in points of doctrine; for those passages which they are represented to cite from them as such, are cited in spurious or doubtful books, or from similar places in sacred writ. Abundant testimonies have been produced to prove that they were not received as canonical during the four first centuries; and they have never been generally admitted into the Canon of the Greek church; nor were they judged canonical in the same degree as the Law and the Prophets, even in the Western church, till the council of Trent, in contempt of all authority and consistency, pronounced them so to be. In the first general council held at Nice, A. D. 325, none of these books appear to have been admitted as canonical,<sup>t</sup> in any sense

<sup>o</sup> Origen cites Tobit and the Maccabees as scripture, (lib. viii. in Epist. ad Rom. de Princip. lib. ii. c. 1. Homil. iii. in Cant.) as he does likewise the Shepherd of Hermas, and the book of Enoch, without believing them to be canonical in the strict sense of the word. Origen, indeed, believed that the Shepherd of Hermas was inspired. Vid. Enarrat. in Epist. ad Rom. p. 411; but this was his peculiar opinion. Vid. Philocal. c. 1. The fathers in general who cite it as scripture, use the term only in a popular sense: as Irenæus, (adv. Hæres. lib. iv. et ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 8. et Athanasius de Incarnat. Verb. tom. i. p. 55,) who expressly says that it is not

strictly canonical. Epist. Pasch. tom. ii. p. 39, 40. So Eusebius quotes Josephus and Aristæus, as well as the Maccabees. Vid. Præp. Evang. lib. x. c. 8. Demonst. Evang. lib. ix. et x. Thus also Epiphanius calls the Apostolical Constitutions divine. Vid. Hæres. 8. and 10. Can. lib. v. c. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Ruffin. in Symbolum.

<sup>q</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 3.

<sup>r</sup> This book was probably the same which is now called the Apostolical Canons. Vid. Athan. Epist. xxxix.

<sup>s</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 14; lib. iv. c. 22.

<sup>t</sup> Cosin's Scholast. c. 6. sect. 54.

of that word; and they certainly were not received by the council of Laodicea, which was held about forty years afterwards, of which<sup>a</sup> the Canons were accepted into the code of the universal church,<sup>a</sup> and which acknowledged precisely the same books that we receive.

In the fifth century, St. Austin<sup>7</sup> and the council of Carthage<sup>a</sup> appear to have admitted (rather in deference to popular opinion, and in compliance with that reverence which had arisen from use<sup>a</sup>) most of the apocryphal books<sup>b</sup> as canonical; meaning, however, canonical in a secondary sense, as useful to be read; and still with distinction from those sacred and inspired books which were established on the sanction of the Jewish Canon, and on the testimony of our Saviour and his apostles. After this time, other fathers<sup>c</sup> and councils<sup>d</sup> seem occasionally to have considered these books as canonical, and inferior only to the sacred writings; but always with distinction, and with express declarations of their inferiority, when that question was strictly

<sup>a</sup> The Greek copies of this council reckon Baruch, the Lamentations, and the Epistle, as composing one canonical book with Jeremiah; and Athanasius and Cyril have been supposed to have received Baruch as canonical. But Baruch is mentioned in the catalogues referred to, not probably as the apocryphal book, but for a more full description of Jeremiah's work, in which Baruch is often mentioned, and in the writing of which he was employed; and the Epistle may mean that contained in the twenty-ninth chapter of Jeremiah's book. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. c. 6. sect. 61. and Preface to Baruch.

<sup>x</sup> Concil. Calced. can. 1. et can. 163. Concil. Constant. 6. in Trullo, can. 2. This last council confirmed also the council of Carthage, which admitted the Apocrypha; but it must therefore have confirmed that Canon only as it admitted them in a secondary sense, otherwise it could not have confirmed that of Laodicea, which rejected them as not equal. Vid. Justin. Novel. 131. Justellus Præf. in Cod. Eccles. Universal.

<sup>7</sup> August. cont. Epist. Gaud. Donat. cap. 23. epist. 61. ad Dulcet. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 36. Propter quorundam martyrum passiones vehementes atque mirabiles, qui antequam Christus venisset in carnem usque ad mortem pro lege Dei certaverunt.

<sup>a</sup> The forty-seventh canon, in which those books are consecrated, is erroneously attributed to the third council of Carthage,

which, as the titles say, assembled in 397; for it must have belonged to a later council, held during the time of Boniface, to whom it is referred; and it corresponds nearly with a canon framed by an African council, held under the consulate of Honorius XII. and Theodosius VIII. in 419, except that it receives Baruch and Maccabees, which the latter omits. Vid. Cod. Canon. Eccles. African. can. 24; et Bini, et Justelli, not. in Concil. Carthag. 3. can. 47, 48.

<sup>a</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 36. et c. 43. epist. 9. et 10. ad Hieron. "Quia a patribus," says the canon, "ista accepimus legenda." Vid. Cosin's Scholast. Hist. c. 7. not. 82.

<sup>b</sup> Neither Austin, nor the Canon attributed to this council, enumerate the fourth (that is, the second) book of Esdras, Baruch, nor the Prayer of Manasseh; and the Canon omits the books of Maccabees. Vid. Justellus in Notis a Can. xxiv.

<sup>c</sup> See also the suspected epistle of Innocent I. ad Exuper. and the decree attributed to Gelasius, ad omnes Episc. in Can. Vet. Eccles. Rom. edit. Par. 1609. Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. 1. et Proem. Sap. et Eccles.

<sup>d</sup> Sum. Caranze in Decret. 7. Concil. Florent. et Cosin's Scholast. Hist. c. 16. n. 159. The council of Florence was not properly œcumenical; the canon which represents the apocryphal books as inspired, is probably a forgery, as it is only in the epitomes.

agitated;° till at length the council of Trent, notwithstanding the testimony of all Jewish antiquity, and contrary to the sense of the primitive church, thought fit to pronounce them all, (except the Prayer of Manasseh, and the third and fourth books of Esdras,†) together with the unwritten traditions relative to faith and manners, as strictly and in every respect canonical, and of the same authority as those indubitate books which had been copied from the Jewish into the Christian Canon, and received the attestation of Christ and his apostles; of which the inspiration was manifested by the character of their composers, and proved by the accomplishment of those prophecies which they contain.‡

This Canon was confirmed by severe anathemas<sup>h</sup> against all who should reject it. And from this time, the Roman Catholics have endeavoured to maintain the canonical authority of these books, though their most strenuous advocates are obliged to allow that they were not received into the Canon of Ezra. They are compelled to yield a superiority, as to external sanctions, to those uncontroverted books which are exclusively canonized in the earliest and most authentic catalogues of the Christian church;<sup>1</sup> and labour to defend the decision of the council of Trent, as to the apocryphal writings, by appealing to the authority of preceding councils, of which the canons were never generally received, and which admitted the contested books as canonical only in a subordinate and secondary sense. It is therefore upon the most just and tenable grounds that our church has framed her sixth article, where, in agreement with all Protestant churches, she adheres in her catalogue to those writings of which there never was any doubt; and agreeably to the doctrine of the four patriarchal churches,<sup>k</sup> as recorded by Cyril, Athanasius, Anastasius, and Gregory Nazianzen, rejects those books which are styled apocryphal in our Bibles, though she read them, as,

\* Cosin's Canon of Scripture; where this is proved by numberless references to the authors who flourished from the first ages of the church, to the middle of the sixteenth century. Vid. also Raynold's *Censura Apocryphorum*.

† *Bib. Sac. Sixt. V. et Clement. VIII. Jusu edita Juxt. decret. Concil. Trid.*

‡ "Omnes Libros, &c. pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur." *Concil. Trident. Sess. 4.*

<sup>h</sup> "Siquis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, &c. pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, Anathema sit." *Vid. Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. et in Bulla P. Pii. IV. sup. forma Juram. Profess. fid.*

<sup>1</sup> *Sixt. Senens. Bib. lib. i. sect. 1. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, c. 10. Sect. itaque, c. 14. sect. 1.*

<sup>k</sup> Those of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople.



St. Jerom observes, did the Western church,<sup>1</sup> "for example of life, and instruction of manners:" and it must be confessed in general, that, notwithstanding some passages of exceptionable tendency, and some relations of improbable circumstances, they are books entitled to great respect, as written by persons who being intimately conversant with the sacred writings, had, as it were, imbibed their spirit, and caught their pious enthusiasm. Whoever reads them with attention, must occasionally be struck by the splendid sentiments and sublime descriptions which they contain. They sometimes likewise present us with passages borrowed from the sacred writings, and with the finest imitations of inspired eloquence; they include, perhaps, some scattered fragments of divine wisdom, and some traditional precepts derived from men enlightened by a prophetic spirit. They sometimes illustrate the accomplishment of prophecy; and throw light on the scriptures by explaining the manners, sentiments, and history of the Jews. They bear, then, an indirect and impartial testimony to the truth of our religion; they are venerable for their antiquity, recommended by long established approbation, and in some measure consecrated to our regard by the commendations of the church, and by being annexed to the inspired writings. Where they are defective, they may have been perhaps injured or corrupted by subsequent additions, as not being watched over with such religious care as the sacred books. It may be added, also, that many of those passages which appear to have a bad tendency, are capable of a good construction; and that, perhaps, some blemishes may be attributed to our translators, who in rendering the apocryphal books have been accused of much carelessness.<sup>m</sup> They who are disposed to profit by their perusal will find it not difficult, by the light of the inspired books, to discriminate and select what is excellent and consistent with truth, and to reject such objectionable particulars as prove them to be the production of unassisted, and sometimes mistaken men.

<sup>1</sup> Hieron. Prol. in Lib. Solom. ad Chrom. et Heliod.

<sup>m</sup> The learned Du Port, then Greek professor at Cambridge, was among the seven able persons employed under king James; but though his work has much merit, it is very often faulty and imperfect.

The translators seem to have attributed too little consequence to the apocryphal books, though Dr. Geddes affirms, that the apocryphal books are translated better than the rest of the Bible, and attributes it to the translators not having been cramped by the fathers of the Masora.

## OF THE FIRST BOOK OF ESDRAS.

THE first book of Esdras, or Ezra,<sup>a</sup> is generally supposed to have been the work of some Hellenistic Jew. It is uncertain at what time it was composed: the particulars contained in it are related by Josephus; it was therefore probably written before the time of that historian. The book, though in its style it has much of the Hebrew idiom, was probably never extant in that language; <sup>b</sup> at least, it certainly was not admitted into the Hebrew Canon. It was annexed, however, to some copies of the Septuagint,<sup>c</sup> and placed in some manuscripts before the book of Ezra,<sup>d</sup> that of Nehemiah being inserted between the two. Standing in that order, it was called the first book of Ezra; and the authentic work of Ezra, together with that of Nehemiah, which seems to have been joined with it, was called the second book of Ezra.<sup>e</sup> This arrangement was probably adopted in consideration of the chronological order of the events described in the books respectively.<sup>f</sup> In some Greek editions, it is however placed, with more propriety as to its character, between the Song of the Three Children and the Wisdom of Solomon.<sup>g</sup>

As this book was inserted in some copies of the Septuagint, it was read in the Greek church; and the council of Carthage, which canonized the vulgar translation made from the Septuagint,<sup>h</sup> appears to have admitted this book, together with other spurious additions, as canonical,<sup>i</sup> in that extended acceptance of the word which implied only, worthy to be read. St. Austin, like-

<sup>a</sup> The word is written עֶזְרָא in the Hebrew, and Ἐσδρας in the Greek.

<sup>b</sup> Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. 2.

<sup>c</sup> It was not in any of the Greek manuscripts used by the editors of the Complutensian Bible; but it was found in some Greek copies, when Aldus was printing his Septuagint at Venice. It was published from a manuscript in the library of St. Victor, at Paris, by Robert Stephens, as also in the London Polyglot. There is a Syriac version of this book.

<sup>d</sup> Luc. Brag. in 3 Esdras.

<sup>e</sup> Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. 20. sect. ad D.

<sup>f</sup> It stands in the same order in the Alexandrian code, and in the Syriac version.

<sup>g</sup> As in the Frankfort edition of 1597, and in that of Basil of 1518. The Latin manuscripts vary. In some it is placed after Nehemiah, and called the Second Book of Ezra. Vid. Calmet Dissert. sur le Troisieme Livre d'Esdras.

<sup>h</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xiii. c. 24.

<sup>i</sup> See the forty-seventh canon, improperly assigned to the third council of Carthage, but belonging to one held in a later period. Vid. Preface to Apocrypha, p. 276, note x.

wise, considered it as canonical in the same sense; that is, as an ecclesiastical book, attributed to Ezra; and which might even be thought to contain a prophetic passage, if by *truth*,<sup>k</sup> described as conquering all things, should be understood Christ. The book is also cited by others of the fathers as a work entitled the First Book of Esdras; as ascribed to him, and as a respectable work,<sup>l</sup> but never as of equal authority with the canonical books.<sup>m</sup> St. Jerom without scruple pronounced this and the following books to be visionary and spurious;<sup>n</sup> and it was rejected even by the council of Trent, though it was suffered to continue in the printed editions as the second or third book of Ezra, till the publication of the Bible by Sixtus the Fifth, when it was placed apart from the canonical books;<sup>o</sup> and notwithstanding Genebrard<sup>p</sup> still maintained its authenticity, the Romanists in general consider it as apocryphal. It certainly could not have been written by Ezra, whose authentic work it contradicts in many particulars; and it has no pretensions to be revered as the production of an inspired person, although great part of it be extracted from the sacred writings.

The name of Ezra was at all times particularly revered by the Jews, who were accustomed, in honour of his memory, to remark, that he was worthy that the Law should have been given by his hands unto Israel, if Moses had not been before him. In consequence of this reputation, numberless spurious works were published at different times under his name; and however they might at first, whether produced before or after Christ, have borne the palpable marks of forgery, they were yet received by the credulous and unlearned. If the boldness of the imposture provoked opposition, this was soon wearied and forgotten; and the books gradually rose into reputation, under the sanction of a great name.<sup>q</sup>

<sup>k</sup> Chap. i. 38; et August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 36.

<sup>l</sup> Cyprian. Ep. 74. ad Pompeian. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. ii. Justin. Martyr. Dial. cum Tryphon. p. 297. Basil. Epist. ad Chilon. Athan. Orat. iii. cont. Arian. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. 8.

<sup>m</sup> Joh. Driedo in Cat. Script. lib. i. c. 4. ad diff. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Hieron. Epist. and Domnion. et Rogatian. "Nec Apocryphorum tertii et quarti (Esdræ) Somniis delectetur," says Jerom.

<sup>o</sup> In some old copies of the Latin Bibles, this and the succeeding book, as also the Prayer of Manasseh, were marked with a *non legitur*; as an intimation that they were not to be publicly read in the church.

<sup>p</sup> Genebrard in Chron. ad An. 3730, p. 95, 96.

<sup>q</sup> Besides the books ascribed to Ezra in our Bibles, and other writings before mentioned, vid. Preface to Ezra, p. 114. Picus Mirandula professes to have read the *Cabala* of Esdras, written in seventy books,

The first book of Esdras includes a period of about ninety years. The short historical sketch of the time which intervened between the celebration of the passover by Josiah, and the captivity of the Jews, as furnished in the first chapter of this book, is taken chiefly from the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth chapters of the second book of Chronicles. The strange but lively story of the three competitors for the favour of Darius, which appears to have been introduced to recommend and embellish the character of Zerubbabel,<sup>r</sup> might have been founded on some popular traditions, as it is related by Josephus; but it is certainly fabulous in most of its particulars, and could not concern Zerubbabel, who at the period assigned was at Jerusalem.<sup>s</sup>

The rest of the work, which is chiefly compiled from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, is disfigured by many improbable and contradictory additions, and by many circumstances which appear to have been designedly introduced in order to disguise and vary the relation.<sup>t</sup> It contains, perhaps, nothing exceptional with respect to doctrine or precept; but its accounts are so incorporated with falsehood, that the compilers of our liturgy have not appointed any selections from it to be read in the service of the church. Many particulars, indeed, interpersed through the book, and too numerous here to be produced,<sup>u</sup> are utterly inconsistent with probability, chronology, and the relations of scripture. From fictitious circumstances, however, some instruction may be drawn, though we cannot but regret that the author of the fine encomium on truth<sup>v</sup> should have so departed from its principles, as to write under the assumed character of an inspired person.

and informs us that they contained many mysteries relating to Christianity. Sixtus the Fourth is said to have projected a translation of them, but only three were finished at his death: the learned dispute concerning the character, and even the existence of these books. Vid. Mirand. Apol. p. 82. 2 Ead. xiv. 46. Fabricii Codex Pseudepig. Petr. Cunit. de Honest. Discip. lib. xxv. c. 3. Sixt. Senena. Bib. lib. ii. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mens. §. 10.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. iii, iv, v.

<sup>s</sup> Ezra ii. 2. Josephus erroneously says, and perhaps on the authority of this book, that Zerubbabel returned from Jerusalem to Darius. Vid. de Antiq. lib. xi. c. 4.

<sup>t</sup> Comp. chap. ii. 15, with Ezra ii. 2; chap. iv. 48, with Ezra v. 13; chap. iv. 43, 46, with Ezra vi. 1; chap. iv. 44, 57, with chap. vi. 18, 19, and Ezra i. 7—11; chap. v. 40, with Nehem. viii. 9; chap. v. 47, 48, with Ezra i. 1—3, &c.

<sup>u</sup> Calmet and Arnald.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. iv. 38—40. The learned Thorndike, by *truth* here spoken of, understands the truth which God by his law had declared to his people; and supposes Zerubbabel to have intended to encourage the king to protect it, by countenancing the building of the temple. Vid. Thorndike's Epilogue, ch. 34. p. 212.

## OF THE SECOND BOOK OF ESDRAS.

SOME writers have conceived that this work was composed by the same person that assumed the character of Ezra in the preceding book ; but though it be equally uncertain by whom and at what period each book was produced, there is reason to think that they were not both derived from one person, since they differ in style, and have no connection or agreement with each other. Each author, however, has borrowed the same title, and each has inserted a genealogy in the character of Ezra ; with some difference, indeed, in the accounts, and both with variation from the lineage furnished by the inspired writer in his authentic book.<sup>a</sup>

The second book of Esdras is not now to be found in any Hebrew or Greek manuscripts. It is supposed to have been originally written in the Greek language ; but is extant only in a few Latin copies,<sup>b</sup> and in an Arabic version.<sup>c</sup> It is generally maintained that the work could not have been the genuine production of Ezra, as it seems to bear some intrinsic marks of having been composed after his time, and, indeed, after the period at which the prophetic spirit is reputed to have ceased ;<sup>d</sup> notwithstanding also the fine spirit of piety that pervades the work, and the author's confident assumption of the prophetic character, his pretensions to inspiration have not been admitted. It is not,

<sup>a</sup> The accounts in 1 Esdras viii. 1, 2, and in 2 Esdras i. 1—3, differ from each other, and both disagree with the genealogy inserted in Ezra vii. 1. They were, however, all designed for the same person, as is evident from the general agreement of the six first names ; and probably the variations arise only from accidental corruptions, or from different modes of calculation ; indeed, the author of the second book of Esdras enumerates three names more in this genealogy than do the authors of the preceding books.

<sup>b</sup> Calmet states that it was first printed in the Latin edition of Nuremberg, published in 1521. *Dissert. sur le Quatrieme Livre d'Esdras*, note 1.

<sup>c</sup> In the Arabic version, it is called the first book of Esdras. This version differs much from the Latin copies, and has many interpolations ; one particularly, concerning

the intermediate state of the soul.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. ii. 39, 40. The author, in the last of these verses, speaks of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi ; though the two former did not probably flourish as prophets till after the return from the captivity, and Malachi not till above one hundred years after the decree of Cyrus. Ezra, indeed, if he had been the author of the book, might, as speaking prophetically, have mentioned, even in the captivity, these prophets by name ; but besides other reasons that tend to prove that the work was written after his time, it may be remarked, that the prophets are here enumerated, not according to the order of the Hebrew Canon, but according to that of the Septuagint. Vid. also, chap. xv. 46 ; where Asia is mentioned, a name probably not known in the time of Ezra.

indeed, probable that an inspired writer would have claimed a name to which he was not entitled, or have interspersed in his work those extravagant conceits and apparent inconsistencies which occasionally disfigure and degrade this production. The book, it is true, contains much sublime instruction, many animated exhortations to righteousness, and many sentiments not unworthy of the sacred source from whence they are related to have flowed. It represents Ezra as commanded to remonstrate with the people for their disobedience; and, on their contempt of God's words, as addressing himself to the heathen, whom he enjoins to prepare for that "everlasting light" which should shine upon them. It describes the prophet as pleading, with submissive piety, to remove the afflictions of his captive countrymen; as anxiously inquiring why the chosen people of the Almighty should suffer severer punishments for their sins than the heathen, for whom they were seemingly rejected;\* as lamenting the effects of entailed corruption as bewailing the evil propensities and condition of men, of whom a few only appear to be marked out and distinguished as objects of divine favour.<sup>†</sup> He is said to have been honoured with visions and divine communications in answer to those inquiries. The boasted revelations are described in a lofty and prophetic style; in a manner similar to that adopted by Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John. They discountenance, with becoming dignity, the presumptuous curiosity and complaints of man,<sup>‡</sup> contain very elevated descriptions of God's attributes,<sup>§</sup> and rest the equity of his proceedings on the projected decisions of a future judgment. They impart consolatory assurances of returning favour; and represent, in an interesting vision, Jerusalem re-established on its foundations.<sup>¶</sup> The angel, likewise, in these pretended visions, reveals many striking prophecies relative to the Messiah,<sup>||</sup> the destruction of the Roman empire,<sup>Ⓜ</sup> and the fate of Egypt, of Babylon,<sup>Ⓝ</sup> and

\* Chap. iii. 28; iv. 28—31.

† Chap. iii. 20—22; iv. 30—32; vii. 48. The author speaks, indeed, of the extent of Adam's transgression, with a clearness that argues an acquaintance with the evangelical account of its effects.

‡ Chap. iv. 12; vii. 4—54; ix. 15, 16.

§ Chap. iv. 5—11, comp. with John iii. 12.

¶ Chap. vii. 62—70; viii. 20—23, 39; xvi. 54—63.

|| Chap. ix; x. 27, &c.

Ⓜ Chap. ii. 34—48.

Ⓝ Chap. xi, xii. The prophecies relative to the eagle might have been written by an uninspired writer acquainted with Daniel's book, either before or after Christ. The prophecy concerning the lion, which denounced destruction to the eagle, is said, by the Arabic translator, to be "a prophecy of the Lord the Messiah." Vid. chap. xi. 37.

Ⓜ Chap. xv, xvi. In some ancient copies, these two last chapters seem to constitute a distinct book, called the fifth book of Esdras, and divided into seven chapters.

of other nations, besides others of very obscure and uncertain interpretation.<sup>o</sup>

So far there appears nothing incompatible with the character of Ezra; and we should be inclined to consider the work as his production, or at least as a compilation of some fragments written by him, were it not for the deficiency of external sanctions, and for the intermixture of particulars seemingly inconsistent with the character and period of that prophet. The author's pretensions, indeed, to inspiration, as well as to the name of Ezra, are destroyed by many false and absurd particulars,<sup>p</sup> which are so incorporated with the work, that they cannot always be considered as subsequent interpolations. The book was never admitted into the Hebrew Canon; and there is no sufficient authority to prove that it was ever extant in the Hebrew language.<sup>q</sup> Its pretended prophecies are not produced in evidence by Christian writers, striking as such testimony must have been, if genuine; and the book was never publicly or generally acknowledged either in the Greek or Latin Church; nor was it ever inserted in the sacred catalogue, by either councils or fathers; but is expressly represented as apocryphal by St. Jerom, who describes it as rejected by the church.<sup>a</sup>

The many wild and preposterous fancies with which the work abounds, seem to prove that it was the production of a rabbinical

Lee thinks that they have all the characters of antiquity, and resemble the prophetic style. They speak of the destruction of nations, and of some general troubles from which the faithful only should be delivered. The twenty-ninth and following verses of the fifteenth chapter, have been thought to relate to the victories of the Saracens; and Lee, by dragons, understands those who lived in dens and caverns of the earth. Vid. Lee, p. 45 and 156, with note annexed to fifth book of Esdras. None of the pretended prophecies, however, in this book, are so clear and original, (except those relating to the Messiah, which were probably written after the time of Christ,) that they might have not been framed by an uninspired writer conversant with the prophetic books.

<sup>o</sup> Chap. v. 1—13; vi. 7—28.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. iv. 45—52; v. 5; vii. 11; xiii. 40—47. Baanage Hist. of the Jews, b. vi. c. 2. Chap. xiv. 10—12. St. Cyprian and others, who believed that the end of the world was near at hand in their time, are supposed to have derived the notion from

this and other passages in this book. Vid. Cyprian. ad Demetrian. George Hakewill on Providence, London, 1627. fol. Freinshem Orat. vii. and ix. See other idle tales in chap. xiv. 21—48.

<sup>q</sup> Lee supposes that Picus Mirandula and Leo Judæus had seen, and relates that Petrus Galatinus had heard of an Hebrew copy; as also, that Scaliger had boasted of having the book or books of Esdras in the Syriac; but the presumptions of its having ever existed in the Hebrew are but slender. Lee's Disa. p. 152.

<sup>r</sup> Bib. Sac. Sixt. V. and Clement. VIII.

<sup>a</sup> Hieron. Epist. ad Donnion. et Rogat. et Præf. in Lib. Esd. In answer to Vigilantius, who had produced some passages from this book, he says, "Tu vigilans dormis, et dormiens scribis: et proponis mihi Librum Apocryphum qui sub nomine Esdræ, a te et similibus tui legitur." Vid. also, Athan. Synop. de Lib. Esd. Wolfius Bib. Heb. tom. i. n. 1768. p. 941; et tom. ii. p. 194, 196, 209.

Jew.<sup>1</sup> The learned Mr. Lee is inclined to think that it was written or compiled by an Egyptian Jew, before the time of Christ; and it has been observed, in support of this opinion, that it is cited or referred to as a Jewish book by very ancient writers;<sup>2</sup> and that it may be supposed to treat of that traditional and mysterious knowledge which was said to have been derived as an oral explication of the Law from Moses, and which was taught in the Alexandrian school of the Jews. Mr. Lee observes, that in many particulars it resembles other apocryphal books, undoubtedly written before the time of our Saviour;<sup>3</sup> and that there is some ground for supposing that the book of Enoch,<sup>4</sup> and that of the Shepherd of Hermas,<sup>5</sup> might have proceeded from the same author as the present work.

On a supposition that this work was written before the period of Christ, we must admit, that those particulars which appear to be prophetic of circumstances relative to the Messiah and his kingdom, were collected from an acquaintance with the inspired books of the Old Testament; or that the work has been interpolated by some writer who lived under the Gospel dispensation.<sup>6</sup> But it exhibits, in every part, such a manifest resemblance to the doctrines, sentiments, and expressions of the evangelical

<sup>1</sup> Chap. iii. 6, 19; v. 5, 52—55; vi. 42, 44, 49—52, 55. Raynold's *Praelect.* 27.

<sup>2</sup> Tertull. *Lib. de Habit.* Mul. c. 3. et cont. Marcion. *Carm. lib. iv. c. 7.* Clemens Alex. *Strom. lib. iv. et lib. i. et Euseb. lib. vi. c. 12.* Ambrose de bono Mortis, c. 10. n. 45, et lib. ii. in Lucam. St. Ambrose cites ch. vii. 32. as scripture, and he professes to cite on this occasion from Extra, in order to shew that the heathens had drawn their best maxims from our books.

<sup>3</sup> As to the two last chapters of Tobit, and likewise the books of Baruch and Wisdom. The book bears, likewise, some resemblance to passages in the ancient Targums, as those of Jonathan and Onkelos. See Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*, and Allix's *Defence of the Unity and Distinction of the Divine Nature*.

<sup>4</sup> This book is cited by St. Jude, ver. 14, if not by St. Peter; and an interpretation is borrowed from it by the targumist Jonathan. It is supposed to have been known in the age of Alexander Polyhistor, above an hundred years before the birth of Christ, or even earlier.

<sup>5</sup> The visions of Hermas much resemble those of Esdras, in many striking particulars. They are thought to have been

written about seventy-five years after the vulgar era. The book of Hermas was highly esteemed in the Greek, and hardly known in the Western church, though now extant only in Latin. Vid. Lee's *Disc.* p. 138.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Lee seems to insinuate that the book might have been corrupted by the Cerinthians, or even by Cerinthus himself, who, in his religious system, combined with the doctrines of Christ the opinions of the Jews, and the errors of the Gnostics. Some, indeed, have imagined, that this book is the very apocalypse of that heretic referred to by the ancients, as it seems to contain some notions favourable to the Cerinthian heresy; and Cerinthus is related to have written a kind of apocalypse, upon the model of St. John's Revelation. Vid. Lee's *Disc.* p. 87. Dr. Allix supposed that the second book of Esdras was the production of a Jew, who had adopted the opinions of Montanus; a rigid and enthusiastic sectary of the second century, who predicted calamities and destruction to the Roman empire. Vid. Allix de *Usu et Praestant. Num. Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. cent. 2. part ii. §. 23.*



writers, and corresponds so much with passages of the New Testament as to particulars interwoven in the contexture of the book, that we must suppose it to have been written after the publication of the Gospel, unless we admit that the evangelical writers have borrowed more from this apocryphal book than from almost any canonical book of the Old Testament, since in none, except in the Psalms, can we discover such frequent coincidence of thought and expression;<sup>b</sup> and the author, indeed, treats so clearly of particulars brought to light by the Gospel dispensation; portrays so expressively and characteristically our Saviour, who is imaged out as "the Son of God, exalted on Mount Sion,<sup>c</sup> crowning and giving palms to them who, having confessed the name of God, had put off the mortal clothing;" describing, likewise, the character and comprehensive design of Christ's kingdom,<sup>d</sup> and the death of our Saviour;<sup>e</sup> and speaking so distinctly of a resurrection and future judgment,<sup>f</sup> that he must have been enlightened by divine inspiration, if he had lived previously to the promulgation of the Gospel doctrines.

That the book was written after the appearance of Christ, will be deemed farther probable, if we consider the particulars of that passage in which the author declares, in the name of the

<sup>b</sup> Comp. chap. i. 30, with Matt. xxiii. 37; chap. i. 32, with Matt. xxiii. 34, and Luke xi. 49, 50, where the evangelist refers probably to some prophecy now lost; chap. i. 33, with Luke xiii. 35, &c.; chap. i. 37, with John xx. 29; chap. ii. 8, 9, with Mark vi. 11, &c.; chap. ii. 11, with Luke xvi. 9; chap. ii. 12, with Matt. xi. 28; chap. ii. 13, with Matt. vii. 7, and Matt. xxiv. 22, and chap. xxv. 34, and Mark xiii. 37; chap. ii. 16, with John v. 28, 29; chap. ii. 26, with John xvii. 12; chap. iv. 21, with John iii. 31, 32; chap. iv. 28, with Matt. xiii. 30; chap. iv. 30, with Matt. xiii. 30, 39; chap. iv. 31, 32, with Mark iv. 28, 29; chap. v. 1, with Luke xviii. 8; chap. v. 2, with Matt. xxiv. 12; chap. v. 2, 3, with John xv. 1; chap. vi. 23, with Matt. xxiv. 31; chap. vi. 24, with Luke xii. 53; chap. vi. 25, with Matt. xxiv. 13; chap. vi. 26, with Matt. xiv. 28; chap. vii. 7, with Matt. vii. 14; chap. vii. 55, with Matt. xiii. 43; chap. viii. 8, with Matt. xx. 16, and vii. 14; chap. viii. 22, with John xvii. 17; chap. ix. 5, Matt. xxiv. 6, 7, xiii. 32, with John vii. 19; chap. ix. 37, with Matt. v. 18; chap. xv. 4, with John iii. 36, and viii. 24; chap. xvi. 18, with Matt. xxiv. 8;

chap. xvi. 53, 54, 76, with Luke xvi. 15; chap. iii. 11, with 1 Pet. iii. 20; chap. vii. 64, with 2 Pet. iii. 15; chap. viii. 39, with 1 Pet. i. 17; chap. viii. 59, with 2 Pet. iii. 9; chap. ix. 15, with 1 Pet. iv. 18, and Matt. vii. 13; chap. ii. 41, with 2 Thess. ii. 13; chap. v. 4, with Rev. viii. 10, 12. See, also, the book of Revelation passim, and many other collated references in Lee, p. 124—127.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. ii. 34—36, comp. with John x. 11—14, and Matt. xi. 29; Esd. ii. 42—48, comp. with Matt. x. 32, xvi. 16, Luke i. 35, 1 Pet. v. 4, and 1 Cor. xv. 53; Esd. vii. 28, comp. with Luke i. 31; Esd. xiii. 1—38, comp. with Matt. xxiv. 30, and xxv. 31. Vid. also, Esd. xiv. 9, and xv. 6.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. ii. 34—41; chap. ii. 18, 19, where, by the twelve trees and twelve fountains were designed, probably, the twelve apostles.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. vii. 29.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. ii. 16, 23, 31, iv. 42, vi. 20—28, vii. 31—35, comp. with John v. 25, 29, Matt. xvi. 27, and xxv. 31. Vid. also, chap. vii. 42—45, 55; viii. 61; ix. 10—13; xiv. 35.

Almighty, that "Jesus,<sup>g</sup> his Son, should be revealed with those that be with him; and that they that remain should rejoice within four hundred years; that after these years should his Son Christ die, and all men that have life;" for it is not probable that an uninspired writer, however conversant with the prophetic books, should have been able to etch out a prophecy so clear and descriptive.

There appears, then, to be some reason, on a collective consideration of these circumstances, to suppose that the book, or at least that the greatest part of it, was produced after the promulgation of the Gospel. The work is, however, of too mixed and mysterious a character to authorize any positive determination. It is a collection of pretended prophecies, cabalistical fancies, and allusions to evangelical particulars. Amidst spurious fabrications, and passages transcribed from the Gospel, it may contain fragments of works written before the time of Christ;<sup>h</sup> and many writers have considered it as a compilation of pieces, of which some, at least, may have been the genuine production of Ezra.

Among the various opinions that have been entertained concerning this book, some have imagined that it might have been composed, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, by a Christian writer; who, as was customary among the ancients, might have assumed a borrowed title, not with intention to impose on the world, but to exhibit, under the name of Ezra, as that of a great doctor of the law, a specimen of what might be said on the principles of the Jewish synagogue, concerning the more inward and spiritual religion that had been concealed from common observation under the veil of Moses; and that the author might design to develop the more secret wisdom of God in his government of the world, and of his church, with the more notable

<sup>g</sup> Chap. vii. 28, 29. The name of Jesus is wanting in the Arabic Paraphrase; but it must have been in the ancient manuscripts, as particularly in the Latin copies in the time of St. Ambrose, which was about seven hundred years prior to the supposed date of the Laudean manuscript. This name, though synonymous with the word Redeemer, is nowhere applied to the Messiah in the Old Testament. Vid. Matt. i. 21. The word Christ is synonymous with that of the Messiah, or the Anointed;

which words are often used by the prophets in predictions respecting our Saviour. Vid. 1 Sam. ii. 35; Psalm ii. 2; Dan. ix. 25. The Seventy, in these places, translate *Mashiach*, by *Xpuroos*.

<sup>h</sup> Mr. Lee conceives the two first chapters to be an extrinsic work. He considers them as a fragment of some book held sacred among the Egyptian Jews, though not admitted into the Canon. They are not in the Arabic version, nor in some of the most ancient Latin copies. Lee's Diss. p. 54.

events relative to the introduction and establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah, in order to facilitate the reception of the Gospel and its mysteries.

It is probable, that the author's intention was to promote the success of Christianity; and Calmet has conjectured, that he lived during the time of some persecution of the Christians, whom he appears desirous of exciting to faith and fortitude.<sup>1</sup> But however pious the design of the author, it will not apologize for the guilt of endeavouring to impose a spurious for an inspired work on the world, and for the presumption of speaking in the name and with the authority of God. The work, however, may be admired as a production of the most curious and interesting character; as valuable for many devout and instructive sentiments, and for precepts modelled on the perfection of Christian morality.<sup>k</sup> It may be admired, likewise, for the beauties of its composition, for its lively and elegant illustrations, and for that majestic eloquence which breaks forth through the disadvantages of a barbarous Latin translation. The Romish church, though it admit not its canonical authority, has adopted some passages from it into its offices;<sup>1</sup> and it is properly suffered to continue in our Bibles as a profitable book, if discreetly and cautiously used, but not as having any authority in point of doctrine. It may be observed, however, in vindication of the book, even in that respect, at least in one instance, that the Roman Catholics who have endeavoured to countenance the notions of purgatory by the authority of this writer, have perverted his words; for the passage in which he speaks, agreeably to the representation of St. John,<sup>m</sup> of the souls of the righteous, as set apart in expectation of God's final judgment, makes no mention of purification, or of their being placed in a state of expiatory punishment.

Clemens Alexandrinus has quoted,<sup>n</sup> in his explication of Daniel's prophecy, a passage as from the book of Esdras, which is no longer to be found in this or the preceding book; if it ever existed in this, it must have tended still farther to prove that it was written after the appearance of Christ. The words of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. ii. 44—47.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. ii. 20—23; iv. 7.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Esdras ii. 36, 37, *Missa in Fer.*  
post Pentacostem. *Missa. Rom.* p. 316.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. iv. 35—41, comp. with Rev. vi. 9—11.

<sup>n</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i. p. 330.

Clemens may be thus rendered: "For it is written in Esdras, and thus the Messiah, the Prince, the King of the Jews, was in Jerusalem, after the accomplishment of the seven weeks; and in the sixty-two weeks all Judæa was in peace, and was without wars; and the Lord our Christ, the most Holy, being come, and having fulfilled the vision and prophecy (prophet), was anointed in the flesh, by the Spirit of his Father."

### OF THE BOOK OF TOBIT.

THIS book was probably written by, or at least compiled from the memoirs of Tobit and Tobias,<sup>a</sup> whom Raphael the angel had commanded to record the events of their lives.<sup>b</sup> The work appears to have been begun by Tobit; who, in the Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac editions, speaks in the first person to the fourth chapter; and by whom other parts in the book, as the prayer in the thirteenth chapter, are said to have been written: what he left unfinished was probably completed by his son; the two last verses of the book being afterwards added by some compiler,<sup>c</sup> who digested the materials into their present form.

It is uncertain whether this work were originally written in the Hebrew or in the Chaldaic language,<sup>d</sup> with both of which Tobit and his family must have been well acquainted. The Hebrew copies published by Munster and Fagius, appear to be translations comparatively modern; <sup>e</sup> and as the book was extant in the Chaldaic language in the time of St. Jerom, it is possible

<sup>a</sup> The Greek calls the father *Τωβητ*, (Tobet,) or *Τωβιτ*, (Tobit,) and the son *Τωβιας*, (Tobias;) in the Chaldee, both are called *טוביא*, (Tobija.)

<sup>b</sup> Chap. xii. 20.

<sup>c</sup> It is called *βιβλος των λογων*, "The Book of the Words," or of the acts of Tobit, ch. i. 1.

<sup>d</sup> Origen professes to have heard that the Jews had Tobit and Judith in their language among the apocryphal books, (vid. Epist. ad African.) but he probably meant in the Chaldaic language, which is sometimes called the Hebrew. The names of the angels and of the months are of Chaldaean derivation; but these might have been equally used by a Jew, as the Chaldaean expressions and reckonings were ge-

nerally adopted, during and after the captivity, by the Jews. Vid. Bereschit. Rabb. et Talmud. Hier. Huet. Dem. Evan. Prop. iv.

<sup>e</sup> The Hebrew obtained by Fagius from Constantinople, and published by him, seems to have been translated from the Greek; that of Munster, which he professes to have found in Germany, was probably rendered chiefly from the Vulgate. They both, however, vary from the copies from which they are supposed to have been respectively translated. Huet was in possession of an Hebrew manuscript, which differed from both, and especially from that of Fagius. Vid. Fabric. Bib. Græc. Huet. Prop. iv. et Calmet. Pref. sur Tobie.

that it was originally written in that language, though no Chaldaic copy be now extant. The most ancient copy that is known to exist is a Greek version, which was probably made by some Hellenistical Jew,<sup>f</sup> and before the time of Theodotion, as it is quoted by Polycarp:<sup>g</sup> from this our English translation, and probably the Syriac version, was made; as also the Latin version, which was in use before the time of St. Jerom.

All the versions of this book vary so much from each other, that they must have suffered many corruptions. St. Jerom's Latin version especially, which he professes to have translated from the Chaldee, differs so much from the Greek, that it has been supposed to have been drawn from a more extended history of Tobit.<sup>h</sup> But if we consider that St. Jerom was at that time, by his own account, ignorant of the Chaldee, and that he executed the work by the assistance of a Jew in one day,<sup>i</sup> we may attribute many of the adventitious particulars to inaccuracy, and to the redundancies that must have resulted from verbal circumlocution. The Greek is probably most entitled to respect, and on that account it was preferred by the translators of our Bible;<sup>k</sup> and, indeed, there are some mistakes in the Latin, which, if not rejected, would entirely destroy all the authority which the book may claim, and make it utterly inconsistent with the times to which it is assigned. This, however, is canonized by the church of Rome.

The book, if it ever existed in the Hebrew language, was certainly never in the Hebrew Canon, and has no pretensions to be considered as the production of an inspired writer. It was probably composed after the closing of the Canon; but perhaps before the time of our Saviour; though, as far as may be argued from the silence of Philo and Josephus, it does not seem to have been known to those historians, and it is not cited in the New

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. *Praef. in Tobiam*; and Whiston's *Sac. Hist.* vol. i.

<sup>g</sup> Polycarp. *Epist. ad Philip.* §. 10. This Greek translation was composed, however, long after the period assigned to the history, for the sixth verse of the eighth chapter is transcribed almost verbatim from the Septuagint version of Gen. ii. 18.

<sup>h</sup> Fabian Justiniani supposed that there must have been two originals, and Serarius contends for three; but the varieties arise from corruptions in the copies. *Vid. Justin. Praef. in Tob.* He mentions an Arabic

version which corresponds much with the Vulgate, and which was probably made from it.

<sup>i</sup> "Unius Diei laborem arripui, et quicquid ille mihi Hebraicis verbis expressit, hoc ego accito notario sermonibus Latinis exposui," says St. Jerom; *vid. Praef. in Tobiam.* We are not therefore to look for accuracy in a translation so made.

<sup>k</sup> Coverdale's translation appears to have been made from that of St. Jerom, altered as in the Vulgate.

Testament. It is not to be found in the most ancient catalogues of the canonical books, as furnished by Melito, Origen, and the council of Laodicea; and it must be added, that Athanasius,<sup>1</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem,<sup>m</sup> Gregory Nazianzen,<sup>n</sup> Epiphanius,<sup>o</sup> Hilary,<sup>p</sup> and St. Jerom,<sup>q</sup> exclude it from the sacred code.

Though Tobit has no canonical authority, it is a book respectable for its antiquity and contents. In the Alexandrian manuscript, and in the best editions of the Septuagint, it is placed among the hagiographical books; and it is cited from the Greek with great respect by Polycarp,<sup>r</sup> Clemens Alexandrinus,<sup>s</sup> Chrysostom, and other writers<sup>t</sup> of considerable authority; and some councils, indeed, as those of Carthage,<sup>u</sup> Florence, and Trent,<sup>v</sup> esteemed it canonical, upon an erroneous notion of its being dictated by inspiration, and upon a supposition that it was classed by the Jews among the Hagiographa, as a work of secondary rank.<sup>w</sup>

Houbigant imagines, that the only reason why it was not admitted into the Canon was, because, being a private history, there were probably but few copies; and that these being kept at Ecbatana in Media, where Tobias retired, the work, though then written, might not have been known to Ezra: but, indeed, if it had been then written, and known to the compiler of the Canon, it could have had no title to be classed among the canonical books as of the same authority with them. The author does not pretend to prophesy himself, but collects only what had been delivered by the prophets;<sup>x</sup> describing the fate of Nineveh,<sup>y</sup> the dispersion of his countrymen, the destruction of

<sup>1</sup> Athan. Epist. festal. et in Synop.

<sup>m</sup> Cyril. Catech. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Greg. Nazianz. Carm. de Veris Scrip.

<sup>o</sup> Epiphanius. de Pond. et Mens.

<sup>p</sup> Hil. in Prolog. Psalm.

<sup>q</sup> Hieron. Prolog. Gal. Præf. in Tob. in Prov. &c. passim.

<sup>r</sup> Polycarp. Epist. ad Philipp.

<sup>s</sup> Clemens. Alex. Strom. 1.

<sup>t</sup> Clem. Constit. Apost. lib. i. cap. 1; lib. iii. cap. 15; lib. vii. cap. 2. Irenæus Insinuat. lib. i. cap. 30. Cyprian. passim. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. iii. cap. 18. Ambros. Lib. de Tobia. Hilar. in Psalm cxxix. n. 7. Basil. Homil. de Avarit.

<sup>u</sup> Concil. Carthag. iii. An. 397. c. 47. also Concil. Hippon. A. 393, can. 38. Vid. also, P. Innocent I. epist. 3. ad Exuper. et Cosin's Schol. Hist. §. 83.

<sup>x</sup> Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

<sup>y</sup> Hieron. Prolog. Gal. Præf. in Proverb. et in Tobit. In the present copies of this last preface, St. Jerom is represented to have said, that the Jews reckoned Tobit among the Hagiographa; but the word Hagiographa is probably, as many of the Romanists allow, a corruption, and substituted for Apocrypha. Those, however, who contend for the authenticity of the expression, must at least admit, that Hagiographa is used only in an inferior sense; for St. Jerom in the same place affirms, that the Jews excluded it from the catalogue of the divine writings, and censured him for translating a book not in their Canon. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. §. 73. p. 83.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. xiv. 4, 5.

<sup>w</sup> Grotius thinks that Jonas is inserted

Jerusalem and of the temple, in the same manner that Jonah and other prophets had foretold them.

There are no circumstances mentioned in this book which are inconsistent with the period in which Tobit is related to have lived;<sup>b</sup> nor is there any internal objection to the supposition of its being compiled soon after the events therein described, or at least before the time of Christ. In the Vulgate, indeed, the temple of Jerusalem is spoken of as already burnt;<sup>c</sup> and it has been supposed that part of Tobit's prophetic assurance was drawn from the writings of Jeremiah; but, as in the Greek version from which our translation is made, that destruction is spoken of prophetically<sup>d</sup> as yet to happen; and as all the predictions which are here inserted might have been drawn from prophets who preceded his time, there is no reason to dispute the antiquity ascribed to Tobit, or to his book.<sup>e</sup> From the same sacred source of the earlier prophets might have been derived those predictions which Tobit records relative to the calling of the Gentiles,<sup>f</sup> and the restoration of Jerusalem to a magnificence prefigurative of its future spiritual glory in the establishment of the Christian church.<sup>g</sup>

With respect to the history contained in this book, there is no reason to question its truth, at least as to the main particulars; and the Jews do not appear to have entertained any doubts on the subject.<sup>h</sup> It is written with much simplicity, and with an air of verity. The characters are described with great sincerity and effect; and the minute detail of genealogy, of time,

in chap. xiv. 4, 8. by mistake for Nahum. But Jonah's prophecy, in ch. iii. 4. of his book, may be supposed to include the destruction of Nineveh by the Medes and Babylonians. Its accomplishment was protracted, but not frustrated.

<sup>b</sup> It should be remarked, that Nebuchodonosor, mentioned in chap. xiv. 15, was Nabopolassar. Vid. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 9. comp. with lib. i. cont. Apion. et Juchasin. fol. 136. Assuerus was Astyages, or his son, the Caxares of Herodotus. Nineveh was taken A. M. 3392. Vid. Prid. An. 612. Preface to Nahum, p. 252.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xiv. 7. and xiii. 11. Vulgate.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xiv. 4. drawn perhaps from Micah iii. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Aman, mentioned in chap. xiv. 10, was not Haman the proud enemy of Mordecai and the Jews, mentioned in the book of Esther, nor Judith's husband, but some

predecessor or contemporary of Tobit, with whose history we are unacquainted.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. xiii. 11; which perhaps alludes to the offering of the wise men, described in St. Matt. ii. 11. The prediction may be drawn from David's prophecy in Psalm lxxii. 10, of which the very words are introduced in the Hebrew copy published by Fagius. See, also, chap. xiv. 6, 7; which might be grounded on the prophecies in Micah v. 12, 14; Isaiah ii. 18; xxxi. 7; Zechar. xiii. 2, &c.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. xiii. 16—18; xiv. 5—8; which figurative passages resemble some metaphorical descriptions of St. John. Vid. Rev. xxi. 10—27; xxii. 3—6; but which were probably borrowed from Isaiah liv. 11—17.

<sup>h</sup> Juchasin. Hieron. ad Chron. et Heliod. Grot. Præf. ad Tob. Sixt. Senens. Bib. lib. viii.

place, and personal circumstances,<sup>1</sup> while they heighten the interest, tend to demonstrate the truth and reality of the relation. Tobit, then, is to be considered as a real character; he was born probably during the reign of Ahaz; he was of the tribe of Naphtali, in the city of Thisbe,<sup>2</sup> in Upper Galilee; he was carried captive to Nineveh after the extinction of the kingdom of Israel, by Enemassar, or Salmanesser, about A. M. 3283.<sup>1</sup>

The history of this captive and of his family is here related in a very interesting manner; it is enlivened with much variety of incident, and decorated by the display of many virtues. Some of the incidents, as the ministry of the angel, the influence and defeat of the evil spirit, as well as the blindness and recovery of Tobit, have appeared so improbable to many writers, that they have chosen to consider the whole book merely as an instructive fiction,<sup>m</sup> designed to illustrate the relative and social charities of life, and to exhibit a pattern of virtue exercised in trials, and recompensed in this world: but there are no physical objections to the causes assigned either for the deprivation<sup>n</sup> or restoration<sup>o</sup> of sight to Tobit; or if they are not naturally capable of

<sup>1</sup> Chap. v. 16. The mention of Tobias's dog has been frequently represented as a ludicrous and unnecessary particular. But there is often as much want of taste as of candour in criticism of this nature. The introduction of such incidental particulars is not unusual in the most admired works of antiquity. Vid. Odyss. lib. ii. 11. Æneid. lib. viii. 463. It deserves to be remarked, that in the eleventh chapter of the Vulgate, the dog is said to have first appeared as the harbinger of the son's return; and the Syriac version represents Anna to have first perceived the dog; and, indeed, the Greek has been thought to intimate nearly as much, for it says, not that she saw Tobias himself, but *προσενοησεν αυτον ερχομενον*, "perceived that he was coming," as possibly by the dog. In this there is nothing low or ridiculous, but an incident familiar and elegant. Comp. with Odyss. lib. xvii. 301, 302.

<sup>2</sup> Thisbe was at the right hand (that is, to the south; for the Jews, in the description of places, suppose the speaker to face the east) of Kadesh. Nephthali, (*Κυθιας*, or *κυριας*, or *καδως της Νεφθαλι*), the same place, perhaps, with Cades, the capital of Nephthali, and possibly the Cadytes of Herodotus. It was one of the three cities of refuge on the west side of the Jordan. The

Vulgate represents Tobit to have been born at Nephthali. Vid. Calmet and Arnald on the place.

<sup>3</sup> The tribe of Naphtali in general had been carried into captivity about twenty years before by Tiglath-Pileser. Vid. 2 Kings xv. 29. The year of Tobit's death is uncertain; all the copies differ. The Vulgate supposes him to have lived one hundred and two years; the Greek, one hundred and fifty-eight. Both accounts are erroneous.

<sup>m</sup> Paul Fagius. It has been compared to the Cyropædia of Xenophon, and the Telemachus of Fenelon.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. ii. 10. Tobit appears to have slept in a court-yard, because polluted by the dead body which he had buried, and his eyes might have been open habitually, or from accident. The excrement of sparrows (swallows) is hot and acrimonious, (vid. Plinii, lib. xi. c. 37. Gesner. Hist. Animal. lib. iii.) and may cause blindness.

<sup>o</sup> It is uncertain of what species was the fish mentioned in this book. The gall of the fish called Callionimus is efficacious in removing specks and obstructions of the sight. Vid. Galen de Simplic. Medicam. Facult. lib. x. c. 12. Ælian. lib. xiii. c. 4. Plin. lib. xxviii. c. 11. Aldrovand. Ornithol. lib. xvii. Vales de Sac. Philosoph.



producing such effects, they might still be miraculously rendered instruments in the hands of Providence.

With respect to the agency of the angels, there is nothing inconsistent with reason, received opinions,<sup>p</sup> or scripture, in supposing a limited superintendence of superior beings. We know, indeed, that under the peculiar circumstances of the Jewish economy, the ministry of angels was manifestly employed in subserviency to God's designs; and that particular personages were occasionally favoured with their familiar intercourse. It is likewise unquestionable, that before the power and malevolence of evil spirits were checked and restricted by the control of our Saviour, their open influence was experienced;<sup>q</sup> and though in the accounts of this book, invisible beings be represented as endued with corporeal affections, and described, under traditional names of Chaldæan extraction, and though the whole history of their proceedings, as here furnished, be in some measure accommodated to vulgar conceptions,<sup>r</sup> yet it would be a violation of all just rules of criticism to consider the agency of these beings as a mere allegorical machinery. Indeed, the events recorded are so dependent on their supposed interference, and the miraculous circumstances are so incorporated with the history, that the truth of the whole account rests on the same foundation, and the particular parts cannot be separately removed.

Still, however, those who consider the whole book as a moral invention, designed for the particular consolation of the Jews in

But this fish appears to be too small to correspond with the description of that of Tobit. Bochart contends for the *Silurus*, the sheat-fish, or sturgeon, called also, the *Glania*. This the naturalists describe as large and voracious, (vid. Ray and Johnston;) and its liver was famous for removing suffusions and dimness. Vid. Houbigant. But it is objected, that this fish, as having no scales, could not be eaten consistently with the restrictions of the Levitical law. Vid. Lev. xi. 10. The livers of many other fishes may have the same sanative qualities.

<sup>p</sup> Hesiod *Oper. et Dies*, lib. i. Plato *de Legibus*, lib. x. Apulæus *de Deo Socratis*. Buxtorf. *Synag. Jud.* c. 10. Orphei *Hymn ad Mus.* Plutarch in *Brut.* Acts xii. 15. Barnab. *Epist.* c. 18.

<sup>q</sup> Luke xiii. 16; 1 Pet. v. 8; Rev. xx. 1—3.

<sup>r</sup> Chap. vi. 17; viii. 2, 3. The supposed effect of fumigation on demons was agreeable to vulgar notions. Vid. Joseph. *de Bell. Jud.* lib. viii. c. 2. The perfume was rendered efficacious by faith, prayer, and continence; vid. Matt. xvii. 21; and the burning of the entrails of the fish was enjoined rather as a sign and intimation, than as a physical cause of the defeat of the evil spirit, as in John ix. 6. We reason, however, upon preconceived conjectural notions, when we assert, that devils cannot be affected by the operation of smells. The flight of the evil spirit, and his being bound by Raphael, implies only that he was circumscribed and restricted in his power by an expulsion to the supposed sphere of demons. Vid. Luke viii. 29; Matt. xii. 43. Hieron. in *Hierem.* c. 28.

captivity, or for their general instruction and encouragement in affliction, may derive the same profit from that fine spirit of piety and benevolence which breathes through every part of the book; and which occasionally breaks out into those beautiful sentiments that have been imitated by succeeding writers, and copied out into the Liturgy of our church; and which sometimes approach even the refined precepts of Christianity."

In the old Roman Missal, and in the Missal of Sarum, there is a proper mass of Raphael the archangel; and in the prefatory rubric it is directed, that the office be celebrated for pilgrims or travellers, as also for sick persons and demoniacs, upon notions of the archangel's character, built on the relations of this book. Afterwards follow two short prayers, one addressed to God, and one to Raphael himself.

## OF THE BOOK OF JUDITH.

THE author and the period of this history are both uncertain.<sup>a</sup> Some commentators imagine that it was written by Joacim, or Eliakim, whom they conceive to have been high-priest in the reign of Manasseh;<sup>b</sup> and that it was translated into Chaldee for the use of those Jews in the captivity at Babylon, who had forgotten their own language. Others attribute the work to Joshua, the son of Josedech,<sup>c</sup> the companion of Zerubbabel. But by whomsoever, or in whatever language it was produced, the original is not now extant. The Hebrew copy, which some have professed to have seen at Constantinople,<sup>d</sup> was probably a work of modern composition; and our English translation, as well as the Syriac, is made from a Greek version which existed probably long before the time of Theodotion, as it seems to have been known to Clemens Romanus.<sup>e</sup> The most probable opinion

<sup>a</sup> Chap. iii, viii, xiii.

<sup>b</sup> Tobit iv. 7—9. and the Communion Service.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. iv. 7, comp. with Luke xi. 41; chap. iv. 15, with Matt. vii. 12, and Luke vi. 31; chap. iv. 16, with Luke xiv. 13; chap. iv. 8, 9, comp. with 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

<sup>e</sup> Arnald's Dissert. on the Demon Asmodæus.

<sup>a</sup> Isidor. Orig. lib. vi. c. 2. Serar. Prolog. in Jud. St. Jerom seems to consider it as the production of Judith. Vid. in Agg. i. 6.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. iv. 6.

<sup>c</sup> Pseudo-Philo. Lib. de Temp. R. Asarias, Sixt. Senens. Jul. Roger. de Lib. Can. c. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Lib. Munster. Præf. in Tob. Hebræum.

<sup>e</sup> Clemens Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. c. 55.

is, that the book was originally written in Chaldee<sup>f</sup> by some Jew of Babylon; and it might possibly have been designed to enliven the confidence of the Jews during the captivity, and to invigorate their hopes of a deliverance.

Upon a supposition of the truth of the history, the circumstances described must have occurred previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, since the Persians are represented as still subject to the Assyrian empire;<sup>g</sup> and Nineveh, which is here mentioned as the capital of Nebuchodonosor's empire,<sup>h</sup> was overthrown before that destruction; and upon the impending invasion of Holophernes, the Jews are said in this book to have been troubled "for the city and temple of their God." Usher, therefore, Lloyd, and Prideaux, have agreed on considering the history as coeval with the time of Manasseh;<sup>i</sup> placing it in about the forty-fourth year of his reign, A. M. 3348. And Prideaux, with other writers, after a judicious investigation of the several opinions that have been entertained upon the subject,<sup>k</sup> maintains that the Arphaxad of this book was Deioeces;<sup>l</sup> and Nebuchodonosor, Saosduchinus, who ascended the throne of Babylon, A. M. 3336; and the learned author places the expedition of Holophernes in A. M. 3349, making the twelfth year of Saosduchinus to coincide with the forty-fifth of Manasseh.<sup>m</sup>

Vid. also, Polycarp. et Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Jud.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. i. 7—10.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. i. 1.

<sup>i</sup> Some place it in the reign of Amon, or in that of Josiah, and others contend for the time of Jehoiakim. Some writers, who place it in the reign of Zedekiah, conceive that Nebuchodonosor was the same person with Nebuchadnezzar; upon which supposition, Jerusalem must have been taken in the same year that Bethulia was besieged, if we follow the accounts of the Greek copies of this book, which place the expedition of Holophernes in the eighteenth year of Nebuchodonosor's reign; for the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar coincides with the ninth year of Zedekiah.

<sup>k</sup> The ancient tradition among the Jews was, that the circumstances of the history happened under the reign of Cambyses. Vid. Euseb. Chron. Hist. Scholast. Dionys. Carthus. Suidas, verbo Holophernes. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 16. But the capital of Cambyses was Babylon, and he reigned but seven years and three months. Vid. Herod. lib. iii. cap. 66.

Others place the history in the time of Xerxes. Vid. Suidas, verbo Judith. Riber. in Nahum ii. Estius and others place it in the time of Darius Hystaspes; and Sulpicius Severus assigns to it a still later period, placing it under the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus, king of Persia. Vid. Hist. Sac. lib. ii. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. 12.

<sup>l</sup> Deioeces founded Ecbatana; and the beginning of the twelfth year of Saosduchinus coincides with the last year of Deioeces. These and other concurrent circumstances seem to prove, that Deioeces and Arphaxad must have been the same person; though some writers relate that Deioeces lived long, and died old, in prosperity. Calmet supposes Arphaxad to be the Phraortes of Herodotus; the circumstances of whose life and death, as he conceives, correspond better with the accounts of this book, and who may be supposed to have finished the fortifications of Ecbatana, as described in chap. i. 2—4. Vid. Herod. lib. i.

<sup>m</sup> Prid. Con. vol. i. part i. p. 36. Calmet's Preface. Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. cap. 12.

But though the history cannot with consistency be assigned to any other time than that of Manasseh,<sup>p</sup> there are still so many objections to this period, that many writers have chosen to consider the whole work as a religious romance. It must be confessed, indeed, to be extraordinary, that neither Philo nor Josephus should make any mention of this signal deliverance; for the latter especially, though he professed to confine himself to such accounts as were contained in the Hebrew (that is, the authentic canonical) books,<sup>o</sup> yet by no means adheres so strictly to his plan, that he might not have been expected to have mentioned so remarkable an interposition of God in favour of his country; but as this omission can only furnish a presumptive argument against the truth of the history, and as the apparent inconsistencies may be accounted for without destroying the credibility of the chief particulars, it is more reasonable to consider it as the history of real events;<sup>p</sup> since many of its circumstances correspond with the accounts of Herodotus;<sup>q</sup> and the Jews, as well as the earlier Christians, believed it to be a relation of historical truths.

Many, also, of the difficulties which occur in considering the history, and many of the objections to the period which is assigned to it, are to be attributed to corruptions that have taken place in the Greek version;<sup>r</sup> and which are among the

<sup>a</sup> Manasseh himself is not mentioned in this book, (nor, indeed, any king,) whence some have supposed that the siege of Bethulia happened during his captivity at Babylon; or that he was withheld from an active part from cautious or prudential considerations; or, lastly, that he was then engaged in sequestered repentance. But as Bethulia was on the frontier, the defence of it might have been entrusted to the high priest. The precise situation of Bethulia is not known; some place it in the territory of Zebulun, in which there appears to have been a town of that name, but Judith, Manasseh, and Onias were of the tribe of Simeon. There might have been a frontier town in the hilly country of Simeon, towards Syria, named Bethulia, though we have no other mention of it in history. We cannot, however, suppose it to have been the same place with Bethel, or Bethuel, mentioned in Joshua xix. 4, and 1 Chron. iv. 30, without allowing that the author has been guilty of some geographical mistakes. Vid. chap. iii. 9, 10, and iv. 6. Calmet in chap.

vi. 7, and Arnald in chap. vi. 10.

<sup>o</sup> Procem. Antiq. et lib. x. c. 11.

<sup>p</sup> Mountfaucou Verité de l'Histoire de Judith. Howel's Hist. of Bible, ch. 174. Houbigant Præf. et Notæ. Herod. lib. i. c. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Nebuchodonosor is styled Saouduchinus by Herodotus and Ptolemy. Nebuchodonosor was, indeed, properly the name of the Babylonian kings; but the Jews seem to have called all the princes who reigned beyond the Euphrates by that name, as in Tobit, Nabopolassar is so called. Vid. Tobit xiv. 15.

<sup>r</sup> The third verse of the fourth chapter represents the Jews as newly returned from the captivity; but this is not in St. Jerom's version. So, likewise, the words in the eighteenth verse of the fifth chapter, which speak of the temple as being cast to the ground, are rescinded as a corruption by St. Jerom; though the original Greek words, *ἐγενήθη εἰς ἔδαφος*, might mean only that the temple was profaned and trampled on; as it was at several times, and, perhaps, by

inconsistencies that St. Jerom professes to have lopped off as spurious, when he made his translation which is now extant in the Vulgate.\* Some originate in the obscurity that necessarily hangs over a period so distant, and so little illustrated by the remains of ancient history;† and some must be charged probably on the ignorance of the author, who compiled the book from such materials as he could procure; and who, to give importance to his history, and to magnify the characters which he describes, has embellished his history, sometimes at the expense of chronology and truth.‡

If these causes of inconsistency be admitted, there will be no necessity to question the truth of the principal circumstances in this history, and to have recourse to such imaginations as Grotius\* and others have entertained; who have amused themselves by considering it as an instructive fiction, or ingenious allegory: in speculations they may serve to prove the fertility of their invention, but which conduce but little to illustrate truth, or to increase our reverence for works respectable at least for their antiquity and sanctions, and valuable for the instruction which they afford. It may be observed also, as an intrinsic mark of

the Assyrians, when Manasseh was taken prisoner. The captivities and dispersion spoken of both in the Greek and Latin, may be understood of the Assyrian captivities under Manasseh. Vid. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—13.

\* Chap. i. 13, which differs five years from the date given in chap. i. 1. In St. Jerom's version there is no apparent inconsistency. In chap. ii. 1, the eighteenth year is placed, in consequence of the same calculation, instead of the thirteenth, as it stands in St. Jerom's version. It is, however, possible, that there is no mistake, and that five years might have intervened between the preparations for war, and the attack on Arphaxad.

† Joacim, or Eliakim, is represented in this book as high-priest, though no high-priest of that name is mentioned before the captivity by Josephus, or in the scriptures, unless we attribute that character to the Eliakim spoken of by Isaiah, ch. xxii. 20—25. But the catalogue of Josephus is corrupted, and the scriptures nowhere profess to furnish an exact succession of the priests. Vid. Prid. Con. vol. i. part i. p. 39.

‡ It is said in chap. xvi. 23, that none made Israel afraid in the days of Judith, nor a long time after her death. Now as we cannot suppose her to have been more

than forty years old when she captivated Holofernes, (probably not so old, especially as she is called fair damsel, Καλή παῖσκα, chap. xii. 13.) and as she lived to the age of one hundred and five, there must have been a sixty years peace at least after the deliverance; which was a longer space of time than intervened between the forty-fifth year of Manasseh, and the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, (not to mention the dangers under Josiah, and the defeat and death of that monarch,) or, indeed, than any period of uninterrupted peace in the course of the Jewish history. We must therefore suppose the author to have spoken hyperbolically of the effects of Judith's heroism.

\* Grot. Præf. ad Annot. in Lib. Jud. Grotius fancies that it is a parabolical or enigmatic fiction, written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, to encourage the Jews under the persecution carried on by him. He imagines that Judith is Judæa; Bethulia the house of God; and that by Nebuchodonosor and Holofernes, are meant the devil and his agent; and has other whimsical conceits to explain this supposed allegory. Vid. similar notions in Luther, Reineccius, and Capellus. Limborchi, Theolog. lib. i. cap. 3. p. 9.

the truth of this history, that the author appears to speak of Achior's family as living at the time when the book was written; and that in the last verse of the Vulgate it is said, that the day of Judith's triumph had ever since been celebrated as a sacred festival.<sup>7</sup>

It appears, from the accounts of Origen<sup>a</sup> and St. Jerom,<sup>b</sup> that the Jews reckoned this book among their apocryphal writings. It is nowhere cited by our Saviour or his apostles;<sup>c</sup> it is not in the catalogues furnished by Melito, Origen, and Athanasius; nor was it received by Hilary, Gregory Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, or the council of Laodicea; but being cited with respect by many ancient writers,<sup>d</sup> and considered as canonical in a secondary sense by St. Austin<sup>e</sup> and the African church,<sup>f</sup> it was received indiscriminately, and as of the same authority with the inspired books, by the council of Trent,<sup>g</sup> which canonized St. Jerom's translation; and since that time it has been generally revered as an inspired work by the writers of the Romish church; who are, however, much perplexed and distressed for want of arguments to support its pretensions.

The book presents an interesting scene of ambition frustrated,

<sup>7</sup> Chap. xiv. 10.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. xvi. 31. Vulgate. This verse is not in the Greek, Syriac, or ancient Latin versions, nor is the festival mentioned in any authentic Hebrew calendar. Some writers, however, suppose that it was anciently observed. Vid. Selden de Syned. lib. iii. c. 13. Scaliger de Emend. Temp. lib. vii. p. 633; et Calmet in loc.

<sup>b</sup> Epist. ad African.

<sup>c</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Jud. Some manuscripts of St. Jerom read improperly Hagiographa. Vid. Preface to Tobit, p. 291. note y.

<sup>d</sup> There is a resemblance between Elisabeth's salutation of Mary, in Luke i. 42, and the encomium bestowed on Judith by Ozias, in chap. xiii. 18. of this book; as likewise between the exhortation of St. Paul, and a passage in chap. viii. 24, 25. of the Vulgate copy of Judith. The coincidence of expression is probably accidental in both parallels. St. Paul, in the last, alludes to the circumstances mentioned in Numb. xxi. 6. and xiv. 37.

<sup>e</sup> Clem. Epist. ad Corinth. c. 55. Clem. Constit. Apost. Origen. Homil. xix. in Jerom. ad lib. iii. in Johan. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iv. Tertull. de Monog. c. 17. Ambros. de Offic. lib. iii. et de Vid. August.

de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. 8.

<sup>f</sup> St. Austin expressly remarks, that this book was said not to have been admitted into the Hebrew Canon. Vid. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 26.

<sup>g</sup> Concil. Carthag. 3. canon 47. See also the suspected epistle of Pope Innocent I. where the books of Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees are reckoned as scripture.

<sup>h</sup> Some controversialists have asserted, that St. Jerom allowed that the book of Judith was canonized by the council of Nice. Vid. Bellar. de V. Dei, lib. i. c. 10. Baron. Annal. tom. iii. Ann. 325. sect. 157. But in the Acts of this council, the book is not mentioned; and in the place referred to, (vid. Hieron. Præf. in Judith.) St. Jerom only says, that the council of Nice was reported (legitur) to have reckoned this book in the number of the sacred writings; and he remarks in the same place, that the Hebrews (that is, the Hellenists, or the converted Jews) considered it as hagiographical; and elsewhere, (vid. Præf. in Lib. Salom.) that the church, though it read Judith, did not receive it as canonical. Vid. also, in Prol. Gal. Epist. ad Fur. et Bellarm. de Verbo Dei, lib. i. c. 10. Erasm. in Censur. Præf. Hieron.

and of intemperance punished. The history is written with great grandeur and animation, and the Assyrian and Hebrew manners are well described. The prayer and the hymn of Judith are composed with much piety.<sup>b</sup> The book contains nothing exceptionable in point of doctrine; for where Judith celebrates God's justice in punishing the crime of the Shechemites,<sup>c</sup> she by no means attempts to justify Simeon for his vindictive and indiscriminate cruelty. If the address with which she accomplished her designs should be thought to partake of too much of an insidious character, it may be permitted, at least, to admire the heroic patriotism and piety which prompted her to undertake the exploit; the urgency and importance of the occasion, will likewise excuse the indiscreet exposure of her person to intemperate passions; and in the general description of her character, she may be allowed to have presented an exemplary display of the virtues which become the widowed state.<sup>d</sup>

### OF THE REST OF THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

THE chapters entitled the Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther, are not extant in the Hebrew, nor in the Chaldaic language, but only in the Greek and Latin copies. Origen was of opinion, that they had formerly existed in the Hebrew,<sup>e</sup> though omitted in the copies that remained in his time; and Huet, upon a very improbable supposition, conceives them to have been the production of the great synagogue, and to have been translated from some more copious manuscripts by the Septuagint translators;<sup>f</sup> but these translators certainly confined themselves to the canonical books.

It is at least very doubtful whether these chapters did ever

<sup>b</sup> Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. ix. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Ambrose de Vit. Fulgent. Epist. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Origen in Johan. tom. ii. et Epist. ad African.

<sup>f</sup> Origen, indeed, quoting some passage from the fourteenth chapter of the book of Esther, says, "in the book of Esther, according to the Seventy;" the spurious parts

being annexed to some copies of the Septuagint, though, indeed, long after that version was made, as Origen must have known, however he might think it unnecessary there to distinguish the canonical from the spurious parts. Vid. Epist. ad African. Origen elsewhere rejects these additions as apocryphal. Vid. Sixt. Senens. Bib. Sanct. lib. i. sect. 3; et lib. v. an. 250.

exist in the Hebrew language; and it is unquestionable that they never were in the Hebrew Canon. If, likewise, we are to rely on the accounts of this book, there is reason to believe that even the authentic book of Esther was not translated by the authors of the Septuagint into Greek; for in the first verse of the second chapter of this apocryphal part, it is said, that the epistle of Phurim, by which was probably meant the book of Esther, was interpreted into Greek by Lysimachus,<sup>c</sup> who was possibly an Hellenistical Jew residing at Jerusalem; and the apocryphal parts contained in this book were, perhaps, added to the Greek translation by Dositheus and Ptolemeus, or by some other Hellenists of Alexandria. They appear to have been subsequent additions interpolated in various parts of the Greek copies by some person desirous of giving embellishment to the history, and who inserted into the body of the work such traditionary or fanciful circumstances as his inquiry or invention could furnish. From the Greek, these additions were translated into the old Italic version.<sup>d</sup> They were not, however, considered as canonical by the ancient church,<sup>e</sup> though they might sometimes pass uncensured as annexed to the canonical book. St. Jerom, who confined himself to what was in the Hebrew, did not admit them into his translation,<sup>f</sup> but represents them as rhetorical appendages and embellishments annexed to the Italic version. Since that time, the most judicious writers<sup>g</sup> have not scrupled

<sup>c</sup> According to this account, it was translated in the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy; who, if he were Ptolemy Philometor, lived long after the Septuagint translation was made. Some conceive that Ptolemy Philadelphus was meant, in the seventh year of whose reign that version is supposed to have been executed; and Huet imagines, that the Seventy adopted this work of Lysimachus into their translation of the scriptures, on an idea that it was executed before the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

<sup>d</sup> This differed both from the Hebrew and Greek copies.

<sup>e</sup> Melito ap. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 26. Athan. Epist. 39. Gregor. Nazianz. Carm. de Script. Sixt. Senens. Bib. lib. i. sect. 3. Even the canonical book of Esther, indeed, is not expressly enumerated in these catalogues: either because of these spurious additions; or, as the generality of writers suppose, because the authentic book was reckoned as one book with those of Ezra

and Nehemiah; the three being attributed to the same author. The fathers profess to receive the whole of the Hebrew Canon exclusively; and in the synopsis attributed to Athanasius, the apocryphal part of Esther, which is described as beginning with the dream of Mordecai, is rejected; and the authentic part is there said to be reckoned as one book with another; which other must have been that of Ezra. Vid. also, Hieron. Pref. in Ezram. et Nehem. The book is reckoned in the catalogues of Origen, Hilary, Cyril, and Epiphanius; and in that of the council of Laodicea.

<sup>f</sup> Hieron. Pref. in Esther. In the Greek church they are still suffered to constitute a part of the book of Esther.

<sup>g</sup> Grotius Pref. ad Addit. Esther. Dionys. Carthus. Cajetan. Raynold Heidegger, lib. ii. c. 10. Kenthii. Proleg. ad Lib. Apoc. Vet. Test. p. 27. Sixtus Senensis calls them, "laceras Appendices et pannosa Additamenta." Vid. Bib. Sanct.



to consider them as extrinsic and spurious appendages; though they are canonized, together with the authentic chapters, by the council of Trent; and passages from them are inserted into the offices of the Romish church.

It is manifest, on considering the canonical book, that it is a complete and perfect work; and these apocryphal parts, which are introduced into the Greek copies, will appear to be superfluous and cumbrous additions, to those who take the pains to examine them. They are in a different style from that of the authentic chapters, and consist partly of a repetition of particulars contained in them. The first chapter, which in the Greek copies is annexed to the tenth of the canonical chapters, consists of an interpretation of a pretended dream of Mordecai, which contains some fanciful conceits, and was furnished probably by the same person that fabricated the dream which follows in the next chapter. The intimation contained in the first verse of the second or eleventh chapter, was possibly written by some Jew of Alexandria; it was not in the ancient Italic version. The dream which is related in this eleventh chapter, and which in the Greek is placed before the canonical part, is evidently the reverie of some inventive writer, and afterwards prefixed to the work. It does not form a proper introduction to the book; and in the fifth verse of the second canonical chapter, Mordecai is introduced as a person not before mentioned; and his genealogy, and other particulars, are described there, and in the succeeding verse, with a minuteness which must have been quite redundant, if the second verse of the eleventh chapter had been authentic.

The account of the devices, and of the discovery of the two eunuchs who conspired against the life of Artaxerxes, is a repetition, with some alterations, of what is related in the second chapter of the authentic part;<sup>b</sup> and could not properly be prefixed (as it is in the Greek) to the canonical book, which opens the history as if nothing had been previously communicated. The sixth or fifteenth chapter contains a description of Esther's appearance and reception by the king, which is borrowed from the fifth chapter of the genuine history,<sup>1</sup> and embellished with

<sup>b</sup> Esther ii. 21—23.

<sup>1</sup> The fifteenth chapter is in the Greek and Vulgate inserted immediately after

Esther's prayer, (as given in the fourteenth chapter,) instead of the two first verses of the fifth chapter.

some extraneous particulars. So likewise the prayers of Mordecai and Esther, contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters,<sup>k</sup> as well as the letter in the thirteenth chapter,<sup>l</sup> and that in the sixteenth,<sup>m</sup> which concludes the apocryphal book, are all obviously fictitious inventions designed by some rhetorical writer,<sup>n</sup> to decorate and complete the history. They are probably accounts fabricated in designed conformity to particulars alluded to by the inspired writer in his book, and are interwoven with some ingenuity into the body of the work. The forgery is, however, occasionally betrayed by the introduction of circumstances incompatible with the genuine parts,<sup>o</sup> and rather inconsistent with the period assigned to the history.<sup>p</sup> Some Greek and Latin copies contain still more extraneous particulars; and the Chaldee Paraphrase is loaded with accumulated additions. The copies, indeed, vary so much from each other, that Bellarmine<sup>q</sup> fancied that there must have been two original histories; the largest of which he conceived to comprise the Greek additions. Our church judiciously adheres to the chapters which are contained in the Hebrew; which are indisputably authentic, and furnish an entire and valuable history. The adventitious parts are, however, suffered to continue in our bibles as profitable in a subordinate degree. They deserve not to be incorporated with the genuine history, though they illustrate the characters, and dilate on the virtues displayed for our instruction by the sacred writer.

<sup>k</sup> These prayers are placed in the Greek immediately after the seventeenth verse of the fourth chapter.

<sup>l</sup> This in the Greek is added after the thirteenth verse of the third chapter. It might be grounded on some authentic accounts, as the substance of it is related by Josephus.

<sup>m</sup> This edict in the Greek copies follows the twelfth verse of the eighth chapter. It appears, from the style, to have been originally written in Greek; and both the letters are mentioned in the authentic book in a manner that shews they were not inserted in the history. Vid. Esth. iii. 14; viii. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Hieron. ad Paul. et Eustoch. Sixt. Seneca. Bib. lib. viii.

<sup>o</sup> Comp. chap. vi. 3, with xii. 5; chap. v. 2, with xv. 4; chap. iii. 12, with xiii. 6;

chap. ix. 1, with vi. 8.

<sup>p</sup> The king is made, in chap. xvi. 10, to style Aman a Macedonian; and afterwards to talk of his desire "to translate the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians;" particulars that lead us to suspect an anachronism, as they were more adapted to the sentiments and circumstances of a later period, when the Persians and Macedonians were at war. In the ninth chapter of the canonical book, Haman is in the Greek called a Macedonian, but the Hebrew word מַמְלֵכִי, should have been rendered, as by St. Jerom and in our translation, the Agagite; that is, of the race of Agag, king of the Amalekites. Josephus describes Haman as an Amalekite. Vid. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 6. Esther ix. 24; iii. 10.

<sup>q</sup> Bellarm. de Verb. Dei, lib. i. c. 7.

OF THE BOOK OF THE WISDOM OF  
SOLOMON.

THE works of Solomon in general were emphatically styled the Books of Wisdom, and were so cited by the fathers; \* and in the ecclesiastical language, the book of Wisdom comprehends not only all the authentic books of Solomon, but also Ecclesiasticus, and this which is called the Book of Wisdom, or, according to the Greek, the Wisdom of Solomon. The author of this book assumes the title, and speaks in the character of that monarch; <sup>b</sup> but though it may, perhaps, contain some sentiments selected from his works, and others ascribed to him by tradition, <sup>c</sup> it cannot be received as an inspired book; and it was certainly composed long after the time of Solomon. It never was in the Hebrew Canon, <sup>d</sup> and probably never in the Hebrew language. <sup>e</sup> It is not reckoned in the sacred catalogues of the earlier church; and the generality of ancient writers confess that it is not to be considered as the work of Solomon. It contains citations of scripture from the Septuagint, even where that version differs from the Hebrew text; <sup>f</sup> and borrows from books written long after the time of Solomon. <sup>g</sup>

The copy which has the highest pretensions to be considered as the original, is in Greek prose. Some learned men have fancied that they have discovered in this book, as well as in that of Ecclesiasticus, the Hebrew measure, which obtains in the authentic works of Solomon. <sup>h</sup> The sentences have, indeed, often a poetical turn; and in the Alexandrian manuscript, they are written stitch-wise, like the book of Job, of Psalms, and those

\* Melito ap. Euseb. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 25. Clem. Epist. ad Cor. Epist. 57. Origen. Hom. xvii. Cyprian. Test. lib. iii. c. 16. Ambrose de Parad. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. c. vii. 7—21, compared with 1 Kings iii. 13; xiv. 29—34. Vid. c. viii. 14, 15, 19, 21; ix. 7, 8, &c.

<sup>c</sup> Barto Cocceius Biblioth. Rabb. tom. i. p. 249.

<sup>d</sup> Melito Epist. ad Onesim. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 25. Athan. Synop. Epiphani. de Pond. et Mensur. Hieron. Prol. in Lib. Solom. Joh. Damascen. de Fid. Orthod.

lib. iv. c. 18.

<sup>e</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. 18. Hieron. Prol. Gal.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. v. 10, 11, from Prov. xxx. 19; ch. xi. 12, from Isaiah iii. 10.

<sup>g</sup> Compare Wisd. iii. 14, with Isaiah lvi. 4, 5; Wisd. ix. 13, with Isaiah xl. 13; Wisd. xiii. 11, with Isaiah xlv. 13; Wisd. v. 18, with Isaiah lix. 17; Wisd. ii. 6, 7, with Isaiah lvi. 12.

<sup>h</sup> Vid. Grabe's Proleg. tom. ult. c. i. 2. Calmet's Diet. in Wisd. Epiphani. de Pond. et Mensur.

of Solomon, to which this was subjoined in some old Latin translations, and by Dr. Grabe in his edition. Hence some have conceived that it was translated from the Hebrew into Greek; and some, with less reason, suppose it to have been translated from the Chaldee, in which language R. Moses Ben Nachman professes to have seen it,<sup>i</sup> though probably what he saw was a translation from the Greek into that language.

But in whatever language it was written, it has always been deservedly esteemed as a treasure of wisdom. It was composed in imitation of the style of Solomon, though, perhaps, not designed to pass for his work, but to communicate such instructions as might be consistent with his assumed character. Many ancient writers have cited it as a work attributed to Solomon,<sup>k</sup> and as not unworthy, from its resemblance to his writings, to be considered as the performance of that enlightened monarch; and some appear to have considered it as his genuine production. Lactantius, with other writers, represents, in loose citation, the description of the just man persecuted, which is contained in the second chapter, to be a prophecy delivered by Solomon concerning our Saviour's sufferings.<sup>l</sup> It is certain, however, that the book was not written by Solomon, as St. Austin, who likewise considers this passage as prophetic, allows.<sup>m</sup> The antiquity and high importance of the book appear to have excited great reverence in the ancient church;<sup>n</sup> and some of the fathers seem to have thought that the book of Wisdom, and that of Ecclesiasticus, contained passages, at least, that were inspired. St. Austin affirms that the Christian writers who immediately succeeded the apostles, adduced its testimony as divine;<sup>o</sup> but it

<sup>i</sup> R. Moses Ben Nachman, Prol. Com. in Pentat.

<sup>k</sup> Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vi. p. 669. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 7. Tertul. cont. Marcion, lib. iii. Origen. cont. Cels. lib. iii. et Homil. 8. in Exod. Hieron. in Psalm lxxiii.

<sup>l</sup> Lactant. de Ver. Sap. lib. iv. §. 16. Wisd. ii. 12—21.

<sup>m</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. 20.

<sup>n</sup> St. Austin says, "Non debuit repudiari sententia Libri sapientiæ, qui meruit in Ecclesia Christi de gradu lectorum, tam longâ annositate recitari." From this it should seem, that the apocryphal books were read in a lower place by the lecturers, or inferior officers of

the church; whereas the inspired books were read by the priests and bishops from a more conspicuous place. De Gradu Episcoporum. Vid. August. de Prædest. c. 14. §. 27. edit. Antwerp.

<sup>o</sup> St. Austin may be understood to mean, that they who cited Wisd. iv. 11, cited it as a faithful saying, and as grounded on divine authority. Vid. de Prædest. Sanct. c. 14. §. 28. et Cyprian. L. de Mortal. et L. Testim. 3 ad Quirin. St. Austin says, likewise, of this book, in an hyperbolic encomium, that it deserves "ab omnibus Christianis, cum veneratione divinæ auctoritatis audiri." Vid. also, de Doct. Christ. lib. ii. c. 8.

does not appear that they, or St. Austin himself, considered the book as really the work of an inspired penman, since he allowed that neither this book, nor that of Ecclesiasticus, were produced against gainsayers with the same authority as the undoubted writings of Solomon. And he elsewhere admits, that after the death of Malachi, the Jews had no prophet till the appearance of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.<sup>p</sup> And the fathers, indeed, in general, however they might be dazzled by particular passages, or consider them as fragments of inspired writings, represent the book of Wisdom as inferior to the canonical books; they esteem it as a work of admirable tendency, and as of a scriptural character, but not as absolutely derived from the suggestions of the Holy Spirit.<sup>q</sup>

Some partial councils<sup>r</sup> admitted it as canonical in a secondary interpretation of that word; but it was always considered as inferior to the books contained in the Hebrew catalogue, till by the peremptory decision of the council of Trent it was received as a work of equal authority with them. Still, however, the most zealous defenders<sup>s</sup> of the Romish church acknowledge, that it never was in the Hebrew Canon as composed by Ezra;<sup>t</sup> at the closing of which we have every reason to believe that the spirit of inspiration ceased.

The book was probably written by an Hellenistical Jew; but whether before or after Christ, has been disputed. Grotius is of opinion, that it was originally written in Hebrew by a Jew who lived at some time intermediate between Ezra and Simon the Just; and that it was translated by a Christian, with some freedom and additions of evangelical doctrine. But the style, as

<sup>p</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 24.

<sup>q</sup> It is expressly represented as inferior to the sacred books by many writers. Vid. Hierarch. de Divin. Nomin. c. 4. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 12. Athan. Epist. 39. et Synop. Epiphani. de Pond. et Mensur. Philast. de Hæres. Prodiant. Basil. Præf. Com. in Prov. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. 20. Hugo de S. Vict. de Script. et Scriptor. Sac. c. 6. Thom. Aquinas, in Dionys. de Divin. Hom. c. 4. lect. ix. Du Pin, Diss. Prel.

<sup>r</sup> As the third council of Carthage, that of Sardis, and that of Constantinople in Trullo; the eleventh of Toledo, and that of Florence, provincial synods, or corrupt councils unduly influenced, of which the canons relative to the scriptures were some-

times afterwards forged or altered, and which were not received by œcumenical councils. Vid. Cosin's Schol. Hist. Du Pin, Hist. Eccles. et Bib. Pat. tom. i. p. 1. et Arnald's note to Calmet's Preface.

<sup>s</sup> As Isidore, Nicephorus, Rabanus Maurus, Hugo, Lyran, Cajetan. Vid. Niceph. lib. iv. c. 33. Limborch. Theolog. Christ. lib. i. c. 3. Melch. Canus Loc. Theolog. lib. v. cap. ult. Baron. Ann. tom. viii. ad Ann. 692. Calmet's Preface.

<sup>t</sup> Isidore in one place relates, that some persons reported that it was expunged from the Jewish Canon because it contained a clear prophecy of Christ: an idle fable, which Isidore must have discredited. Vid. Offic. lib. i. c. 12.

St. Jerom has observed, indicates rather the artificial contexture of Grecian eloquence, than the terseness and compressive simplicity of the Hebrew language. The book is also replete with allusions to Greek mythology, and with imitations of Grecian writers; with whose works, and especially with those of Plato, the author appears to have been intimately acquainted.

St. Jerom informs us, that many ancient writers affirmed that the book of Wisdom was written by Philo Judæus; by whom the generality of commentators<sup>a</sup> suppose to have been meant the Philo senior, who is mentioned by Josephus as having furnished some relations concerning the Jews which were tolerably faithful,<sup>z</sup> and who is generally supposed to have flourished before or about the time of the Maccabees; and there are many reasons which should lead us to suppose that the book<sup>y</sup> was written before the birth of Christ. But as some passages in the book seem to indicate an acquaintance with the particulars of the Gospel dispensation, and to be imitative of parts of the New Testament, many persons have maintained that the author must have lived after the publication of the evangelical writings; and some have supposed, from a conformity between the principles and sentiments contained in this book and those dispersed through the works of Philo<sup>z</sup> of Alexandria, which we now possess, that he was the author of it.<sup>a</sup> Dr. Rainolds imagines that it was composed about A. D. 42, upon the occasion of an order from the emperor Caligula, that his statue should be set up and adored in the temple of Jerusalem,<sup>b</sup> when Philo was sent to Rome by the Jews to plead against this profanation, but without effect. This supposition the learned

<sup>a</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Proverb. Salom. Huet. Prop. iv. Bossuet Præf. in Lib. Sap. Driedo de Eccles. Dogm. c. 4.

<sup>z</sup> Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Josephus remarks, that Philo, and some other historians of whom he speaks, were entitled to indulgence, as they had it not in their power to become accurately acquainted with the Hebrew writings; from which we may collect, that he was ignorant of the Hebrew language, and probably he was an Hellenistic Jew, which is consistent with the account of St. Jerom. Some poetical fragments of Philo relative to the patriarchs are cited by Alexander Polyhistor. Vid. Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. ix. c. 20. et 24. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. i.

This Philo was a different person from Philo Biblius, who flourished under Adrian and Trajan.

<sup>y</sup> Origen. cont. Cela. lib. i. Euseb. Demonst. Evan. lib. i. c. 6. Selden de Pentateuch.

<sup>a</sup> First published at Paris, by Turnebus, in 1552; afterwards at London, by Dr. Mangey, in 1742, 2 vols. Vid. collated passages in Calmet's Dissertation sur l'Auteur du Livre de la Sagesse.

<sup>b</sup> Basil. Epist. ad Amphiloeh. Joh. Beleth. de Div. Offic. c. 60. Whitaker's Origin of Arianism, p. 132—136.

<sup>c</sup> Sueton. in Vita Caligulæ, c. 22. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 8. Rain. Censur. Apoc. Prælect. 22.

writer defends, as consistent with the argument and drift of the book of Wisdom; and to this idea he refers those precepts in the first and sixth chapters, which describe the duty of princes, as well as the denunciations against tyrants and idolatry, and conceives that they were designed to convey admonition and reproof to Caligula.

But notwithstanding the many presumptive arguments that have been urged in support of this opinion, there is some reason to believe that the work was not written by Philo of Alexandria,<sup>c</sup> but, indeed, previously to the birth of Christ. Some passages in it appear to be cited by writers who were nearly contemporary with Philo;<sup>d</sup> and it is probable that a work professing to be the production of Solomon, was published under the Jewish dispensation; as, indeed, by the generality of writers it was supposed to be.

The correspondence which has been conceived to exist between this book and the works of Philo, might, it is said, be occasioned by the imitations of the latter; and the supposed resemblances between passages in this book and others in the New Testament, may be thought, on examination, to be either imitations of similar passages in the sacred books of the Old Testament,<sup>e</sup> or such casual coincidences<sup>f</sup> of sentiments or expressions as may be found between all works treating on the same subject.

<sup>c</sup> This Philo was very conversant with the sacred writings, and indulged himself too much in the fanciful explications of them. His works, which blend the principles of Plato with the doctrines of scripture, are supposed to have been the source at which Origen and the mystical writers imbibed an extravagant spirit of figurative interpretation. Philo is represented to have lived in friendship with St. Peter at Rome in the reign of Claudius; to have been converted to Christianity, and to have afterwards apostatized. Vid. Joseph. lib. viii. c. 10. Euseb. Hist. lib. ii. c. 2, 17, 18. Phot. Cod. 105. Hieron. de Script. Eccles. c. 11. Euseb. Præp. lib. vii. c. 12. Some authors maintain that the book of Wisdom differs widely from the style of Philo, and contains some principles very opposite to those laid down in his works. Vid. Calmet, Preface sur le Livre de la Sagesse.

<sup>d</sup> Barnab. Epist. from Wisd. ii. 12. Clem. Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. c. iii, from Wisd. ii. 24; c. xxvii, from Wisd. xi. 22,

and xii. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Thus Wisd. ii. 18, and Matt. xxvii. 43, might both be derived from Psal. xxii. 8, 9; so Wisd. iii. 7, and Matt. xiii. 43, might be from Dan. xii. 3; Wisd. ii. 7, 8, and 1 Cor. xv. 32, from Isa. xxii. 13, and lvi. 12; Wisd. v. 18, 19, and Ephea. vi. 14, from Isa. lix. 7; Wisd. vi. 7, and Acts x. 34, &c. from 2 Chron. xix. 7, or from Job xxxiv. 19; Wisd. ix. 9, and John i. 1—3, 10, from Prov. viii. 22; Wisd. ix. 13, and Rom. xi. 34, or 1 Cor. ii. 16, from Isa. xl. 13; Wisd. xv. 7, and Rom. ix. 21, from Isa. xlv. 9, and Jerem. xviii. 6; Wisd. xvi. 26, and Matt. iv. 4, from Deut. viii. 3; Wisd. iii. 8, and 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, from Dan. vii. 18—22.

<sup>f</sup> Comp. Wisd. vi. 3, with Rom. xiii. 1; Wisd. vii. 26, with Heb. i. 3; Wisd. xii. 24, with Rom. i. 23; Wisd. xiii. 1, with Rom. i. 19, 20. There is, however, no reason why the evangelical writers should not be supposed to have occasionally adopted the expressions, or even the sentiments of a pious though uninspired writer.

It need not, however, be supposed, that the beautiful passage contained in the second chapter, though written before the coming of Christ, can confer any character of inspiration on the book; for if we consider the description of the just man persecuted and condemned to a shameful death by his conspiring enemies, as bearing a prophetic aspect to the sufferings and condemnation of our Saviour by the Jews, it might still have been framed by a writer conversant with the prophetic books,<sup>g</sup> without any inspired knowledge. But it is, perhaps, only applicable by casual accommodation and undesigned resemblance to our Saviour, who might be eminently styled "the just man," and who was, in an appropriate sense, the Son of God. The picture seems, indeed, to be copied and applied to others by subsequent writers.<sup>h</sup>

The passages in which the author seems to impersonate the word of God,<sup>i</sup> and to attribute to it distinct powers and effects, need not be considered as intentionally prophetic of the attributes and operations of the second person in the Trinity; but were probably designed as generally descriptive of God's omnipotent proceedings, or were accidentally figurative of Christ's character, by being borrowed, as to their expressions, from parts of the sacred writings.<sup>k</sup> So, likewise, those beautiful encomiums on wisdom with which the book abounds, though written with a piety highly enraptured and sublime, are not to be considered as inspired and concerted illustrations of that perfect wisdom which dwells in an especial degree in Christ; but were designed only to celebrate that created wisdom, which being derived as an emanation from God, reflects his unspotted perfections, and irradiates the minds of those to whom it is imparted. The author, however, in imitation, perhaps, of Solomon's attractive imagery,<sup>l</sup> personifies this divine wisdom; and

<sup>g</sup> Comp. chap. ii. 12, especially as cited by Barnabas, with Isaiah iii. 10; chap. ii. 18, with Psal. xxii. 8, or xxi. 9, in the Septuagint. See also Matt. xxvii. 43, where David's prophetic expressions are used. The righteous are often called the sons of God, in a general sense. Vid. Exod. iv. 22; Prov. i. 8, 10; Wisd. xviii. 13; v. 5.

<sup>h</sup> Plato de *Repub.* lib. ii. Cicero de *Repub.* lib. iii. Lactant. *Institut.* lib. vi. §. 17. ex Senecæ *Lib. Moral. Philosoph.*

<sup>i</sup> Chap. ix. 1; xvi. 12, 13, 26; xviii. 15.

<sup>k</sup> Deut. viii. 3; xxxii. 39; 1 Sam. ii. 6; Psal. cvii. 20.

<sup>l</sup> Prov. viii. The magnificent description which Solomon here gives of the divine wisdom, was often applied by the ancient Christians to that eternal wisdom which was revealed to mankind in Christ, or rather to our Saviour's person, who was himself the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father. But it was, perhaps, only generally applicable to God's revealed wisdom. Vid. *Just. Mart.* p. 267. edit. Thirlb.



therefore the description necessarily bears a resemblance to the character of Christ, in whom the fulness of wisdom personally resided.

But though the work be not derived from that infallible spirit of which the stamp and character are to be discovered only in the sacred books, it was evidently the production of a pious and enlightened writer; of one who, by application to revealed wisdom, had acquired some portion of its excellence, and learnt to imitate its language. And except in some few passages, where we are tempted to suspect a taint of false philosophy,<sup>m</sup> or fictitious additions to the accounts of sacred history,<sup>n</sup> there is nothing in the book inconsistent with the accounts, or unfavourable to the designs of revelation; it offers much sublime admonition to the princes and leaders of mankind; it paints, in very eloquent description, the folly and consequences of idolatry; overthrows many pernicious errors, and delivers just information concerning a future life and judgment. The six first chapters, which form, as it were, a preface to the book, are a kind of paraphrase of the nine first chapters of the book of Proverbs; in the seventh and eighth chapters, the author proposes himself as an example, under the name of Solomon; the ninth chapter is a paraphrase of the prayer which Solomon made to the Lord at the beginning of his reign;<sup>o</sup> and from the tenth chapter to the end, is a continuation of the same prayer dilated; which, though extended to a considerable length by the intermixture of nice disquisitions and extraneous discourse, is still apparently imperfect. The style of this book is various; it is often tragical, and sometimes turgid, and not seldom elegant and sublime; it abounds in epithets and poetical imagery. The author often imitates the sententious periods of Solomon, but with less success, says bishop Lowth, than the author of the succeeding book.<sup>p</sup>

## OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTICUS.

THIS book, like the preceding, has sometimes been considered as the production of Solomon, from its resemblance to the inspired

<sup>m</sup> Chap. viii. 20. Arnald. et Calmet.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xvi. 17—19; xvii. 3—6.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings iii. 6—9.

<sup>p</sup> Prælect. Poet. 24.

works of that writer.\* In the Latin church it was esteemed the last of the five books attributed to him. It is cited as the work of that enlightened king by several of the fathers; was joined with his books in most of the copies; and, like them, is written with a kind of metrical arrangement in the Alexandrian manuscript, being supposed to have been composed originally in metre.<sup>b</sup> Still, however, it must have been written long after the time of Solomon, who with the succeeding prophets, that flourished before and after the captivity, is here mentioned; since the high-priest Simon, who lived a little before the Maccabees, is spoken of; since the words of Malachi are cited;<sup>c</sup> and since the author describes himself in circumstances that could not have occurred to Solomon.\* The book can only be supposed to contain some scattered sentiments of Solomon, industriously collected,<sup>f</sup> with other materials for the work, by an Hebrew writer styled Jesus; who professes himself the author,<sup>g</sup> and who is represented to have so been by his grandson;<sup>h</sup> but who, indeed, imitates the didactic style of Solomon, and, like him, assumes the character of a preacher.

Jesus was, as we learn from the same authority, a man who had travelled much in the pursuit of knowledge; who was very conversant with the scriptures, and desirous of producing, in imitation of the sacred writers, some useful work for the instruction of mankind; and who having collected together many valuable sentences from the prophets and other writers, their successors, compiled them into one work, with some original additions of his own production. What this Jesus produced in the Syriac, or vulgar Hebrew of his time, his grandson translated into Greek for the benefit of his countrymen in Egypt, who by long disuse had forgotten the Hebrew tongue. To this grandson we are indebted for the possession of a valuable work, of which the original is now lost, though St. Jerom professes

\* Origen. Homil. in Lib. Numer. Hom. i. in Ezekiel. Chrysostom. in Psal. cxxxiv. Cyprian. lib. iii. epist. 9. Testim. lib. iii. §. 96, 113. et Hilar. in Psal. cxliv.

<sup>b</sup> Epiphan. de Pond. et Mensur.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xlvii. 13, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. xlviii. 10, from Malach. iv. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xxxiv. 11, 12; li. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Drua. Observat. lib. i. cap. 18. Athanasius calls Jesus Ὁραδός του Σολομώντος, *Salomonis Asseda*. Vid. Athan. Synop.

Bartoloc. Bib. Rabb. tom. i. p. 249.

<sup>g</sup> Chap. l. 27.

<sup>h</sup> See the second prologue. This prologue is in all the copies of the Vulgate, and in the Roman edition of the Greek. It is probably the authentic work of the grandson, though it is not in the Syriac or Arabic versions. Vid. Euseb. in Chron. Hieron. in Dan. ix. Epiphan. Hæres. 8. In the Roman edition of the Greek, it is entitled simply "the Prologue."

to have seen it.<sup>1</sup> The copies of which Munster and Paulus Fagius speak, were probably Ben Sira's alphabet, or modern translations from the Greek.

It has been a subject of some dispute, whether the grandfather or grandson be the person who should be described as the son of Sirach. The book is entitled the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach; and this title must apply to the author, as the book cannot be supposed to have been denominated by the name of the translator. The author likewise describes himself as the son of Sirach in the fifty-first chapter, which appears to be the work of the same author.<sup>1</sup> The translator, who is usually called Jesus, is likewise styled the Son of Sirach by Epiphanius;<sup>1</sup> and by the author of the Anonymous Prologue, which is supposed to have been written by Athanasius, as it is extracted from the Synopsis attributed to him, and prefixed to this book,<sup>m</sup> in some Greek, and in all the Latin editions, as well as in our translation; and it is not improbable, that the younger Jesus might likewise have been a son of Sirach, as names were often so entailed in families.

Genebrard says,<sup>n</sup> that Jesus, the author of this book, was a priest of the race of Joshua, the son of Josedech;<sup>o</sup> and Isidore represents him as his grandson, though he must have lived much too long after Joshua to have been so nearly related to him.<sup>p</sup> Huet and Calmet, in agreement with some rabbinical writers, suppose that the author was the same person with Ben Sira, a Jewish writer, of whom an alphabet of Proverbs is extant, both in Chaldee and Hebrew,<sup>q</sup> which corresponds in so many par-

<sup>1</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Lib. Salom. St. Jerom informs us, that the Hebrew copy which he saw was entitled Parables, (or Proverbs,) on account, probably, of the proverbial and sententious form in which its precepts were conveyed.

<sup>2</sup> Grotius, without any reason, attributes it, together with the three last verses of the foregoing chapter, to the grandson.

<sup>1</sup> Epiphan. de Pond. et Mensur. Isidor. de Ecclea. Offic. in lib. i. c. 12. Euseb. de Præp. lib. viii. c. 2. Hieron. in Dan. ix. August. de Doct. Christ. lib. 2. Grotius, Drusius, &c.

<sup>m</sup> This Prologue is prefixed to the Greek in the Antwerp Polyglot, and to some other Greek editions; but it is not in the Roman edition, nor in the most ancient copies, nor in the Arabic or Syriac versions. Its accounts can therefore be received only

as of the same authority as that of the Synopsis, which was probably written by Athanasius bishop of Alexandria, who lived between A. D. 458 and 490, above a century after the great Athanasius.

<sup>n</sup> Chronol. p. 16.

<sup>o</sup> Haggai i. 1.

<sup>p</sup> Some Greek manuscripts make the author a grandson of Eleazar. Vid. ap. Drus. ad ch. i. 3. Others make him a contemporary with Eleazar; and some writers pretend that he was one of the seventy interpreters sent by Eleazar to Ptolemy Philadelphus, a person of the name of Jesus being mentioned in the list given by Aristæus. Huet fancies that Jesus, the grandson, was the same person with Josephus, the son of Uziel, and grandson of Ben Sira.

<sup>q</sup> Both were published with a Latin

ticalars with the book of Ecclesiasticus, that Huet and other writers have considered it as a corrupted copy of the Hebrew work of Jesus. If, however, as others contend, Ben Sira is to be considered as a different person, and, according to traditionary accounts, the nephew of Jeremiah,<sup>r</sup> it must be admitted that the author of Ecclesiasticus has borrowed many things from his work, since such a conformity as exists between them could scarcely be accidental.<sup>s</sup>

The author of this book is by Calmet and others supposed to have flourished so late as under the pontificate of Onias the Third; and to have fled into Egypt on account of the afflictions brought on his country by Antiochus Epiphanes, about one hundred and seventy-one years before Christ, to whose persecution they conceive that some parts of the book refer.<sup>t</sup> As, however, the passages produced in support of this opinion bear no direct relation to particular calamities, but contain only general supplications for prosperity, and for the triumphant restoration of their tribes, which the Jews expected to experience in the advent of the Messiah; as the eulogium contained in the fiftieth chapter was probably designed for Simon the Just, the first high-priest of the name of Simon, whom the author appears to have remembered, and who died A. M. 3711;<sup>u</sup> and as the younger Jesus went into Egypt in the reign of Euergetes the Second, surnamed Physcon, who was admitted to a share in the throne A. M. 3835;<sup>v</sup> it is more probable that, agreeably to the calculations of other chronologists, the book was written about A. M. 3772, when the author was, perhaps, about seventy years of age; and that it was translated about sixty or sixty-three<sup>w</sup>

translation by Fagius, at Iana, in 1542. Ben Sira's book is said to have been received by the Jews, among the Hagiographa of secondary rank. Vid. David in Baba Cama, C. Hachobel.

<sup>r</sup> Buxtorf. et Bartoloc. Bib. Rabbin.

<sup>s</sup> Cornel. a Lapid. Com. in Ecclus.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. xxxvi. Vid. also, ch. xxxiv. 12; xxxv; and li; which, however, contain no particulars exclusively applicable to the time of Antiochus.

<sup>u</sup> Two Simons, both sons of Onias, and both high-priests, are mentioned by Josephus. The first, surnamed Justus, who, as the last of the great synagogue, is supposed to have revised and completed the Canon, is celebrated in this book. Vid.

Joseph. Ant. lib. xii. cap. 2. Euseb. in Chronic. Genebr. Cornel. a Lapide. Drusius, Prid. ad An. 292. The second Simon is mentioned in Antiq. lib. xii. c. 4. He opposed Ptolemy Philopater's entrance into the sanctuary. See the third book of Maccabees. Prid. Con. Ann. 217. p. 82. par. ii.

<sup>v</sup> He reigned twenty-four years in conjunction with Philometor, and twenty-eight years alone, after the death of his brother. Vid. Usher's Annals, A. C. 145. Vaillant in Ptolem. vii. ad An. Lagid. 192. Prid. Con. A. C. 169.

<sup>w</sup> Usher supposes it to have been translated thirty-eight years earlier.

years after, nearly at the time that it is supposed by Calmet to have been written.

The translator professes to have found the book after he had continued some time in Egypt,<sup>a</sup> where it might have been deposited by his grandfather:<sup>a</sup> it was called Ecclesiasticus<sup>b</sup> by the Latins, which title, though nearly synonymous with the Preacher, was designed to distinguish it from the book of Ecclesiastes. In Greek, it is called the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.<sup>c</sup> It is much to be admired for the excellency of its precepts, and none of the apocryphal books furnish such admirable instruction as this. But it has no title to be considered as an inspired work, though it contains many passages derived from the sacred writings, and especially from those of Solomon;<sup>d</sup> and some which have a slight resemblance to parts of the New Testament,<sup>e</sup> by accidental coincidence of thought and expression, or by concurrent imitation of the early writers of the Old Testament. The book never was in the Hebrew Canon; nor was it received by the primitive church of Christ, since it is not in the most ancient and authentic catalogues, and is expressly represented as an uncanonical book by many ancient writers.<sup>f</sup> It is however cited with great reverence by the fathers of the Greek and Latin church,<sup>g</sup> many of whom endeavoured to strengthen their religious opinions by the sentiments contained in a book so deservedly and so generally approved. It is cited as scripture, in a general sense of the word, by many provincial synods, and received as in a lower degree canonical by some councils after

<sup>a</sup> It is uncertain from what era the eight and thirtieth year mentioned in the prologue is reckoned. It might be that of the translator's age. If we suppose it to have been the thirty-eighth year of Ptolemy's reign, above one hundred years must have intervened between the time of writing, and that of translating the book.

<sup>b</sup> It is probable that Jesus, by *ἐφομοιον*, or *ἐφομοιον*, meant a copy of this book. In the anonymous Prologue it is said, that Jesus received the book from his father; which perhaps he might, either in Egypt or elsewhere; for he does not say absolutely that he found the book in Egypt, but that being in Egypt, and having found the book, he judged it worthy a translation.

<sup>c</sup> Some think that it was called Ecclesiasticus by way of eminence, as the most valuable of the ecclesiastical books.

<sup>d</sup> In the Roman edition, it is improperly styled the Wisdom of Sirach.

<sup>e</sup> Eclus. passim, and Huet. Prop. iv.

<sup>f</sup> Huet. and marginal references in our Bible.

<sup>g</sup> Prol. of Jesus. Can. Apost. can. ult. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. c. 12. Athan. Epist. 39. et Synop. Epiphan. de Pond. et Mens. Philast. Hæres. Prodiant. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. 20. Hieron. Prol. in Lib. Solom. Niceph. lib. iv. c. 33.

<sup>h</sup> Barnab. Epist. Consist. Apost. lib. vii. c. 11. Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vii. Origen in Esek. Hom. ix. cont. Cels. lib. vi. Cyprian. de Hæret. Baptix. §. 27. Hilar. in 7 ca. sup. S. Matt. Epiphan. Hæres. 76. cont. Aetium. August. Lib. de Grat. et Lib. Arbit. c. 2.

the fourth century.<sup>h</sup> It was, however, universally considered as inferior to the books derived from the Hebrew Canon, till received as of equal authority by the unadvised and indiscriminating decree of the council of Trent.<sup>i</sup>

All the copies of this book now extant vary considerably from each other; and the Latin, of which the date and author are uncertain, has many repetitions and additions, interwoven, seemingly, as paraphrastic ornaments, by the translator, or some subsequent writer. The Greek version, as made early and immediately from the original, is most entitled to consideration. This translation, however, seems to have been composed with too servile adherence to the original, and has often the obscurity of a literal construction.

The translator was sensible of its defects, and apprehensive, as he has been since accused, of misinterpreting his author.<sup>k</sup> There has been a derangement of chapters between the thirtieth and thirty-sixth;<sup>l</sup> which, as well as many corruptions and variations, may be imputed to the carelessness of transcribers.<sup>m</sup> The old English versions, as those of Coverdale and the Bishops' Bible, by a too rigid adherence to the Vulgate, adopted many errors. Our last translators, though not servilely attached to any copy, seem chiefly to have regarded the Complutensian: which, though suspected of conforming its Greek to the Vulgate, is by Dr. Grabe<sup>n</sup> mentioned with praise, as derived from the most ancient manuscripts. Their version is, however, in some places inaccurate and obscure, and sometimes erroneous.

The work begins with an eulogium on wisdom; and many important instructions are delivered to the twenty-fourth chapter, when Wisdom herself is introduced, and is supposed to continue to speak, to the fifteenth verse of the forty-second chapter. Here the collection of wise sayings, which are obviously written in imitation of the Proverbs of Solomon, concludes: and the author solemnly enters upon a pious hymn, in which he celebrates God's wisdom, in a strain highly rapturous and sublime; and finishes his work with a panegyric on the illustrious characters of his own nation, and with a prayer or thanksgiving for some deliverance which the author had personally experienced.<sup>o</sup>

<sup>h</sup> Concil. Carth. 3. can. 47.

<sup>i</sup> Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

<sup>k</sup> Prologue of Jesus and Drusius.

<sup>l</sup> Calmet Comm. in chap. xxx. 27.

<sup>m</sup> Hæschelius.

<sup>n</sup> Grabe's Proleg. cap. 3. §. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Prideaux, with Grotius, attributes this prayer to the grandson, because Ptolemy

This division, says Valesius,<sup>p</sup> is a manifest copy of the method and order of Solomon's writings, and exhibits an imitation of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles; though some maintain that the author left his work imperfect.<sup>q</sup> The book contains a fine system of moral, political, and theological precepts, arranged in a less desultory manner than the Proverbs of Solomon; and distributed under certain heads, which seem to have been formerly classed under different titles, many of which are still extant in some of the Greek copies. Some learned men have pretended to discover in the book the more secret and abstruse wisdom ascribed to Solomon, and taught in the schools of the Jewish doctors.<sup>r</sup> But it is chiefly valuable for the familiar lessons which it affords for the direction of manners, in every circumstance and condition, and for the general precepts which it communicates towards the daily regulation of life. Its maxims are explained by much variety of illustration, and occasionally exemplified in the description of character. The ancient writers entitled it *Παναρετος*, considering it as a complete compendium of moral virtues; and, perhaps, no uninspired production ever displayed a morality more comprehensive, or more captivating and consistent with the revealed laws of God. The book furnishes, also, an instructive detail of the sentiments and opinions that prevailed in the time of the author; it shews the impatience that then prevailed for the appearance of the expected Messiah;<sup>s</sup> and the firm confidence in the hope of a future life and judgment, which had been built upon the assurances of the Law and the Prophets. It serves, likewise, to prove,

Physon was a greater tyrant than his predecessors, in whose reigns the grandfather might have resided in Egypt: but the author speaks only of false accusation to the king, which by no means implies that the king countenanced the persecution; and, indeed, if he had, the author would hardly have escaped from, or at least have complained of the cruelty. The grandfather might likewise have been accused before a king of some other country.

<sup>p</sup> Not. ad Script. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 22.

<sup>q</sup> The Anonymous Prologue says, "almost perfected."

<sup>r</sup> Lee's *Disa.* on the Second Book of Esdras, p. 58.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. xxxvi. 1—17, the first part of which is cited by St. Austin, as a kind of prophetic prayer for the arrival of Christ. Vid. August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xvii. c. 20.

See, also, chap. i. 22, 23. These pious supplications for some future blessings indistinctly described, proceeded from a confidence in the promises of the prophets; and the Jews, who, in the expectation of their Messiah, had at first regard only to one advent, looked to the full accomplishment of the prophecies in his arrival, and therefore allude in their prayers to the expected conversion of the Gentiles, the final congregation of the tribes, and their triumphant victories, which remain yet to be fulfilled. The prayer spoken of in chap. li. 10, is stated by Mr. Whitaker to contain an acknowledgment of the second person in the Godhead, and is adduced as a proof of the belief of the Jews in that essential doctrine before the incarnation of our Lord. See the *Origin of Arianism Disclosed*, p. 122.

that as the Gospel dispensation approached, the Jews were prepared for its reception, by being more enlightened to understand the spiritual import and the figurative character of the Law.

OF THE BOOK OF BARUCH,  
WITH THE EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH.

THE author of this book professes himself to be Baruch, a person of very illustrious birth, and distinguished by his attachment to Jeremiah, and who was employed by that prophet as a scribe or secretary to write his prophecies,<sup>a</sup> and on some occasions to read them to those against whom they were directed. St. Jerom, Grotius, and others are however of opinion, that the book was not written by Baruch, nor in the Hebrew language, but by some Hellenistical Jew, who assumed the character of Baruch; and that the letter, which forms a part of the book, was fabricated by his own invention.<sup>b</sup> But there is, perhaps, no sufficient reason to dispute the authenticity of the five first chapters; and the sixth chapter, which is probably spurious, did not originally belong to this book. The Greek version of these five chapters abounds with Hebraisms; and they were probably written in Hebrew, though not now extant in that language, nor ever admitted into the Hebrew Canon;<sup>c</sup> because Baruch, however he might have aspired to the prophetic character, and have sought great things for himself,<sup>d</sup> was not endowed with the gift of inspiration, though he was on one occasion made the subject of a divine revelation, and honoured by a consolatory assurance from God.

The author, in consistency with the character of Baruch, whether rightly or falsely assumed, describes himself as the son of Nerias, and as the grandson of Maasias, who were men of eminence in their country. He affirms, that he wrote the book at Babylon, in the fifth year, and in the seventh day of the month,<sup>e</sup> after the Chaldeans had taken and burnt Jerusalem;

<sup>a</sup> Chap. i. 1. Jerem. passim. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11. and Preface to Jeremiah.

Hieron. Prom. in Com. et Grot. Com. in Baruch.

<sup>e</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Hierem.

<sup>d</sup> Jerem. xlv. 5; which some conceive to allude to a fruitless desire of Baruch that he might be favoured with the prophetic spirit. Vid. Maimon. More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 32.

<sup>e</sup> The name of the month is not specified;



by which must be understood the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which corresponds with the fifth year of the reign of Zedekiah, and A. M. 3409; when Baruch accompanied his brother Seraias to Babylon,<sup>f</sup> who was deputed from Zedekiah to solicit the restoration of the sacred vessels of the temple, which had been carried away among the spoil.<sup>g</sup> It has been objected, as inconsistent with this account, that Jerusalem is in this book represented as burnt, and in circumstances of distress, greater than should seem to have occurred at the time that Jehoiachim was taken prisoner and slain. But allowing for those aggravations, which are customary in the description of great afflictions, there is no particular in the detail of circumstances that might not have happened during the siege of Jerusalem in the reign of Jehoiachim; when the Jews might have seen part of their city burnt, and have suffered from the most cruel extremities of famine.<sup>h</sup>

It is probable that Baruch was more immediately commissioned by Jeremiah to utter at Babylon those prophecies which were entrusted to Seraias;<sup>i</sup> and that he actually did read to Jehoiachin, and others whom they concerned, those prophecies contained in the fiftieth and fifty-first chapters of Jeremiah, which promised deliverance to the Jews from their captivity, and future destruction to Babylon; though when Baruch speaks of having read the words of this book to the people by the river Sud,<sup>k</sup> he seems to allude only to the epistle that forms the chief subject

it probably means the month Cisleu, or November, the same month in which Jerusalem was taken five years before.

<sup>f</sup> Some would place Baruch's journey to Babylon in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, when Baruch was carried into Egypt; when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed; when no high-priest remained, and no feasts were celebrated, contrary to the circumstances of the period of this book. The fifth year cannot be referred to Nebuchadnezzar, who had obtained his empire seven years before Jehoiachin was carried into captivity.

<sup>g</sup> The vessels which Seraias obtained, appear to have been silver vessels, which Zedekiah had made to supply the place of the golden vessels which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, the rapacity of the conquerors having soon afterwards seized on these also: vid. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7—10. Jeremiah had declared that the golden vessels should not be soon brought again, chap.

xxvii. 16; and the most valuable were not restored till the expiration of the captivity. Vid. Dan. v. 2; Ezra i. 7. Grotius considers the latter part of chap. i. 8, as an interpolation.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. i. 2; ii. 2—5.

<sup>i</sup> Jer. li. 59—64.

<sup>k</sup> Chap. i. 4. This river is not mentioned by geographers. As the Hebrew word Sodi, which might have been the original, means *pride*, some writers have considered it as a figurative expression for the Euphrates, on which river the Jewish captives were placed. Vid. Jerem. li. 63. Bochart thinks, that the word should be Sori, or Suri, (which in the Hebrew is written in nearly the same manner,) because there was on the banks of the Euphrates a city called Sura, or Sorat, (as also Mahasia,) from which that part of the Euphrates might have taken its name. Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. lib. i. c. 9. Cellarii Geogr. lib. iii. c. 16. p. 460.

of this book, which was sent to Jehoiachin and his associate captives in Babylon, to Joachim, the son of Chilcias,<sup>1</sup> and the people at Jerusalem; for Baruch, being probably employed to compose the letter, may well be conceived to have read it to the king and the nobles for their approbation.

The captives, who appear to have been tutored by affliction to a sense of their own unworthiness, and to have felt a pious satisfaction at the success of the deputation of Seraias, sent back with the sacred vessels a collection of money to purchase burnt-offerings and incense for the altar of the Lord; and accompanied it with a letter to their countrymen, in which they expressed their sentiments of humility and repentance, and their confident hopes of that restoration which the prophets had encouraged them to expect, and which prefigured the future glories of Jerusalem.<sup>m</sup>

The letter, which, after the short historical preface, begins at the tenth verse of the first chapter, contains a confession which the captives recommended to their brethren, to be used upon solemn days. It exhorts them to pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar, who had complied with their request, and possibly been indulgent to the captives; to acknowledge that God's judgments were righteous, and that by their own disobedience they had provoked the accomplishment of those curses which God had threatened,<sup>n</sup> and they then experienced; and, lastly, to supplicate his mercies with sorrow and contrition. This prayer was probably used, also, by the captives themselves, and the sentiments which it contains were similar to those which Daniel and Nehemiah continued to inculcate during and after the captivity.<sup>o</sup> In the third chapter is contained a passage,<sup>p</sup> which Grotius hastily pronounces to be an addition by some Christian, and which others consider as an inspired prophecy of the incarnation and human intercourse of the Messiah; but which is, perhaps, only an acknowledgment of the divine wisdom, which had manifested

<sup>1</sup> This person was probably the same with Eliakim, or Hilkiah, who was high-priest under Manasseh and Josiah, and perhaps under their successors. Vid. Isaiah xxii. 20; 2 Kings xxii. 4—8; xxiii. 4, 24; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9; and Calmet. Dissert. sur les Grand Prêtres.

<sup>m</sup> Irenæus Adv. Hæres. lib. v. c. 35.

<sup>n</sup> Deut. xxviii. 15—53, and the Prophets

passim.

<sup>o</sup> Comp. chap. i. 15, 17, with Dan. ix. 5, 7, 9; chap. ii. 7—11, with Dan. ix. 13—15; chap. ii. 15, with Dan. ix. 19; chap. ii. 19, with Dan. ix. 8; chap. ii. 7, 9, with Nehem. ix. 32, 34; chap. ii. 11, 12, with Zech. ix. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Comp. chap. iii. 35—37, with John i. 14.

itself to the patriarchs, and conversed by revelation with mankind.<sup>9</sup> It has, however, so far a prophetic cast, as it is imitative of passages<sup>r</sup> which, under praises of wisdom, figuratively celebrate that Eternal Wisdom which dwelt among us in the person of the Son of God. So likewise Baruch speaks with an almost prophetic confidence of those blessings which Jeremiah and other prophets might have taught him to expect from "the everlasting Saviour" who should soon appear;<sup>s</sup> of that joy which should come from the East;<sup>t</sup> and of the triumphant glory with which Jerusalem should be exalted, and her sons assembled from all kingdoms in righteousness and peace. These, however, were prospects of future exultation with which all in the captivity must have consoled their affliction; they were general characters of the kingdom of the Messiah which every one conversant with the sacred writings was capable of describing; and by no means confer the stamp of inspiration on the book, which was not received as canonical by the Jews or the primitive church of Christ,<sup>u</sup> though it be cited with respect, and even as divine scripture, by many of the earlier writers.<sup>v</sup>

Some, indeed, have imagined that St. Athanasius<sup>w</sup> and St. Cyril received it as canonical. In the catalogues, it is true, of the sacred books furnished by these fathers, as also in the Greek copies of the canons of the council of Laodicea, Baruch and the epistle are enumerated with Jeremiah and the Lamentations: but it is probable, and generally supposed, that by this exegetical detail were meant only those parts of Jeremiah which we receive as inspired; that the epistle in the twenty-ninth chapter of his prophecies is specified as a distinct part of the work; and that Baruch is mentioned because he was considered as a collector of Jeremiah's writings, and by some thought to have added the fifty-second chapter to his prophecies. It is certain that Baruch and the epistle are not mentioned in the catalogue of St. Austin, nor in that of the council of Carthage.<sup>x</sup> It is expressly excluded,

<sup>9</sup> Erod. xxiv. 9—18.

<sup>r</sup> Comp. chap. iii. 27, with Prov. viii. 31. The passage is perhaps in this respect cited as prophetic by St. Austin, who says that it was generally attributed to Jeremiah. Vid. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 33.

<sup>s</sup> Chap. iv. 22—30.

<sup>t</sup> Comp. chap. iv. 36, 37, with Jerem. xxiii. 5, and Zech. vi. 12; where the word "Branch" is in the Septuagint rendered

'Ανατολή, "the East." Vid. also, Ezek. xliii. 4, and Mal. iv. 2.

<sup>u</sup> Hieron. Præf. in Hierem. et Proem. in Com. Hierem.

<sup>v</sup> Clem. Alex. Pæd. lib. ii. c. 3. Euseb. Demon. lib. vi. c. 19. Ambrose de Fide, lib. i. c. 2. Hilar. Præf. Com. in Psalm. Cyril. in Jul.

<sup>w</sup> Athan. Epist. 39.

<sup>x</sup> Concil. Carthag. can. 47. et Cod. Can.

with the rest of the apocryphal books, from the catalogue received from their ancestors, by the Greek church;<sup>a</sup> and the members of the council of Trent were more perplexed, and deliberated longer about the admission of Baruch, than of any of the apocryphal books,<sup>b</sup> because they allowed (as it was not in the Latin copies of the catalogue) that it was not received by the council of Laodicea, by that of Carthage, or by the Roman pontiffs;<sup>c</sup> and the Tridentine fathers were withheld from rejecting it, only by the consideration that parts of it were read in the service of the church.

Many ancient writers have cited Baruch under the name of Jeremiah:<sup>d</sup> not that they believed that what we now possess under the name of Baruch was actually composed by Jeremiah, but that they considered Baruch as a disciple of the prophet; and imagined, perhaps, that the epistle in the last chapter of his book was really written by Jeremiah, to whose canonical works it was formerly joined. In the Romish church, the book is read at the feast of pentecost, under the name of Jeremiah;<sup>e</sup> but many of the Romanists do not scruple to deny its authority.<sup>f</sup>

Besides the Greek copy of this book, there are two Syriac versions, one of which corresponds with, and the other differs much from the Greek.<sup>g</sup>

The letter which constitutes the sixth chapter of this book is in some editions of the Greek, and in the Arabic which is translated from the Greek, subjoined to the Lamentations. It is omitted by Theodoret in his commentary, and it is not to be found in several Greek manuscripts, and in none of the Hebrew copies of Jeremiah's writings. It is probably a spurious work, and is rejected as such by St. Jerom,<sup>h</sup> though cited by Cyprian<sup>i</sup> and others as an epistle of Jeremiah; and supposed by some to

Eccles. African. can 24; in neither of which is Baruch mentioned. It is, however, probable, that the council or councils to which these canons belonged, received Baruch as canonical in a secondary sense; for though it is not mentioned in the list, it might be included under the name of Jeremiah, and received as the other apocryphal books.

<sup>a</sup> Metroph. Critopyl. Epitom. Confess. Orient.

<sup>b</sup> History of the Council of Trent. lib. ii.

<sup>c</sup> It is not specified in the suspected epistle of Pope Innocent the First. Vid. Epist. 3. ad Exuper.

<sup>d</sup> Irenæus Hæres. lib. v. c. 35. Clemen. Alex. Pædag. lib. i. c. 10. Chrysost. cont. Judæ. Ambrose in Psalm cxviii. Octon. 18. Basil. Adver. Eunom. lib. iv. Epiphani. Hæres. 3. Cyprian. Adv. Judæ. c. i. §. 6.

<sup>e</sup> Office du Samedi de la Pentecote, Prophetic vi.

<sup>f</sup> Driedo Script. et Dogm. ad Eccles. lib. i. cap. ult. Lyran. Dionys. Carthua.

<sup>g</sup> The Latin translation also differs much from the Greek.

<sup>h</sup> Hieron. Præm. Com. in Hierem. who calls it *ψευδεπιγραφορ*.

<sup>i</sup> Cyprian. de Orat. Domin.

be alluded to by the author of the second book of Maccabees,<sup>k</sup> who, however, only speaks of Jeremiah's general exhortations against idolatry. The letter certainly never was in the Jewish Canon. It was probably fabricated by some writer who had studied the character and writings of Jeremiah; and it contains judicious and spirited strictures against idolatry, of which the vanity is forcibly exposed. There is, besides these works in the Syriac language, an epistle attributed to Baruch, which is called his first epistle, and feigned to have been written to the nine tribes and a half, said to be carried beyond the Euphrates. It appears to be a spurious production of a writer acquainted with the Gospel doctrines, and is interspersed with many fictitious inventions. It was probably fabricated by some of those monks who, during the first ages of the Christian church, flocked in numbers to inhabit the deserts of Syria.<sup>l</sup>

Baruch, after the execution of his commission, appears to have returned to Jerusalem; where, in conjunction with Jeremiah, he encountered much persecution,<sup>m</sup> and witnessed the total destruction of Jerusalem: after which he was drawn by Johanan, with Jeremiah, and the remnant of Judah, into Egypt;<sup>n</sup> from which country he probably never returned, though some pretend that he went a second time to Babylon, and died there about A. M. 3428.<sup>o</sup> In the martyrologies, his death is placed on the 28th of September, apparently without any authority.

## OF THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

In some copies of the Greek version of Theodotion, and in the vulgâr Latin edition of the Bible, this book is inserted between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses of the third chapter of Daniel, as at the beginning of the book is prefixed the History of Susannah, and at the end is added that of the destruction of Bel and the Dragon; but none of these additions are to be

<sup>k</sup> 2 Macc. ii. 1, 2.

<sup>l</sup> Huet. Prop. iv.

<sup>m</sup> Jerem. xliii. 3.

<sup>n</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11. Hieron. in Esaim.

<sup>o</sup> Jerem. xliii. 5—7.

<sup>o</sup> Talm. Megill. cap. 1. R. Abrah. Za-

cut. in Lib. Juchas.

found in any Hebrew copy, nor do they appear ever to have existed in the Hebrew or Chaldaic language.<sup>a</sup> The pretended Hebraisms which have been alleged to prove their authenticity, are such as an Hellenistical Jew might be expected to have used; or were, perhaps, designedly adopted to facilitate the reception of spurious works. These apocryphal parts appear to have been first inserted into the Septuagint version;<sup>b</sup> and they were certainly in Theodotion's edition, though there distinguished by an Obelus, to intimate that they were not in the Hebrew. It is probable that the same author invented, or composed from traditional accounts, all these apocryphal additions, which he interwove with the genuine work of Daniel. Annexed to or incorporated with the inspired book, they gradually rose into reputation; and being safe from censure under the sanction of the prophet's name, and the approbation of the church, which suffered them to be read for instruction of manners, they were, perhaps, sometimes considered, in a loose and popular representation, as a part of the genuine work of Daniel.

It is, however, universally admitted, that they never were in the Hebrew Canon,<sup>c</sup> and they were rejected as spurious by Eusebius and Apollinarius. St. Jerom, who considers them as apocryphal, professes to have retained them with a mark prefixed, lest he should appear to the unskilful to have rescinded a great part of Daniel's book; since, though they were not in the Hebrew, they were generally dispersed and known:<sup>d</sup> and St. Jerom, under the character of a Jew, endeavours to expose the absurdity of some particulars which they contain. There can, indeed, be no doubt that they were written long after the time of Daniel, by some writer desirous of imitating and of embellishing the sacred history, though as they were not expressly severed from the canonical part by any positive decree, they were received by the preposterous decision of the council of

<sup>a</sup> Origen. *Epist. ad African.* p. 14, edit. Par. not. a.

<sup>b</sup> The Song of the Three Children is not in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint.

<sup>c</sup> Hieron. *Præf. in Dan.* Calmet's *Præface in Dan.* Du Pin. *Diss. Prelim. lib. i.* c. 1.

<sup>d</sup> *Præf. in Daniel, et Procem. in Com. Dan.* When St. Jerom. in his *Apology*

against Ruffinus, professes to have delivered only the sentiments of the Jews, and not his own, with respect to these additional parts of Daniel, he does not retract his sentiments, but evades the discussion of their authority: and as the Scholiast observes, "Vafre respondet." Vid. *Apol. Adv. Ruff. et Scholia in Præf. ad Dan.*

## 324 OF THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

Trent as genuine, and in every respect canonical.<sup>e</sup> It is uncertain at what time they were composed. They are in the Arabic and Syriac version of the scriptures, and are mentioned very early by Christian writers.

The present book, which contains only a song in praise of God, said to have been uttered by the three companions of Daniel when thrown by Nebuchadnezzar into a burning furnace, is to be admired for its instruction and tendency. These righteous persons, whose reputation was founded on the authentic accounts of Daniel,<sup>f</sup> appear by their pious fortitude to have contributed with the prophet to the final suppression of idolatry. The veneration entertained for their character, of which the memory was highly celebrated among the Jews,<sup>g</sup> probably induced some Hellenistic Jew to fabricate this ornamental addition to their history. It must have been inserted at a very early period, as it is cited by many ancient writers.<sup>h</sup> The work is composed with great spirit, and the sentiments attributed to the holy children are consistent with the piety for which they were distinguished. The hymn resembles the cxlviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm of David, as to its invocation on all the works of creation to praise and exalt the Lord. It was sung in the service of the primitive church; and in the liturgy of Edward the Sixth it was enjoined by the rubric, that during Lent, the Song of the Three Children should be sung instead of the *Te Deum*.

## OF THE HISTORY OF SUSANNAH.

THIS history, which in some Greek copies is entitled the Judgment of Daniel, is said, in the short intimation prefixed to the book by our translators, to have been set apart from the beginning of Daniel, where it stands in the Roman and other editions of the Greek. The Complutensian, however, and some Latin editions, place it as the thirteenth chapter of that book, though

<sup>e</sup> Concil. Trid. Sess. 4.

<sup>f</sup> Dan. iii. 23.

<sup>g</sup> There was an ancient tradition, that the Three Children were descendants of Hezekiah. Vid. Nazianz. Orat. 47. And some accounts report, that at last they suf-

fered martyrdom; as also, that their bodies which had been interred at Babylon, were afterwards removed to Rome. Some Jews at Rome boasted of a descent from them.

<sup>h</sup> Cyprian. de Lapsis, et de Orat. Domin.

certainly with less regard to chronology; for the history, if founded on truth, must be supposed to have taken place when Daniel was very young, and probably, according to some accounts,<sup>a</sup> not above twelve years of age.

The book has no sufficient pretensions to be considered as canonical. Some writers, indeed, and even Origen, in a suspected epistle attributed to him,<sup>b</sup> have conceived that it might originally have been written in the Hebrew or Chaldee, and drawn from the Canon by the Jews; and that the original copies were industriously suppressed by them, because they contained a relation of particulars discreditable to the Jewish nation. But there is certainly no foundation for this improbable fancy; for not to mention the impracticability of such a measure,<sup>c</sup> it is evident, that if the Jews could have been tempted, by any solicitude for their national character, to mutilate the sacred writings, they would rather have expunged those passages in the inspired books which reflect on them the disgrace, not of individual profligacy, but of general misconduct, or those which record the crimes and occasional offences of favourite characters. But we know with what jealous veneration the Canon was preserved inviolate; and perceive in the whole history of a perverse and disobedient people, with what sincerity they composed, and with what fidelity they preserved the records and annals of their country.

The present book appears to have been written in Greek, by some Jew who invented the history, or collected its particulars from traditionary relations, in praise of Daniel. And, indeed, the author is supposed to betray himself to be a Greek, by some quibbling allusions which do not seem to apply in any other language than the Greek,<sup>d</sup> and which are not likely to be the conceit of a translator. There are two Syriac versions, which differ in their contents.

The history might, perhaps, have some foundation in truth, though it is not mentioned by Josephus; who, indeed, has not noticed any of the particulars contained in these apocryphal ad-

<sup>a</sup> Ignat. Epist. ad Magnæ. Theodor. in Ezek. cap. i. Sulpit. Sever. Sac. Hist. lib. ii. p. 265. edit. Lugd. Bat. 1647.

<sup>b</sup> Origen Epist. ad Jul. African.

<sup>c</sup> See Introduction, p. 7, &c.

<sup>d</sup> When the first elder affirms that he beheld Susannah under a tree called *σχίμων*,

Daniel, playing on the word, declares that the angel should *σχίωσαι*, cut him in two; and when the second represents the tree to have been *πρινον*, Daniel denounces his sentence by an expression from which *πρινον* was derived, *πρισαι*.



ditions to the book of Daniel. The Jews in general rejected it as an improbable fable: and remarked, that it was an obvious absurdity to suppose that their countrymen in the captivity were in possession of the power of inflicting punishment on their judges and prophets.\* The Jews had, however, some traditional accounts of the story, and many fancied that it was alluded to by Jeremiah, in the twenty-ninth chapter of his book<sup>1</sup> of prophecies; where they supposed the two elders to be described under the names of Zedekiah and Ahab, though these persons are there said to have been put to death by the king of Babylon. Origen, who defends the truth of the account,<sup>2</sup> maintains that the Jews were suffered to continue in the exercise of their own judicial laws during the captivity; and, indeed, they appear to have experienced, in many respects, considerable indulgence from their conquerors. Origen adds likewise, as a confirmation of the veracity of the account, that he had heard from a Jew, as a popular notion, that the elders attempted to seduce Susannah by assurances that the Messiah should spring from them: to which profane dealing Daniel is supposed to allude in the fifty-seventh verse.

The book seems to have been received by the Christian church as containing a relation not inconsistent with the sacred history, but not as the production of Daniel; though as forming an appendage to his work, and containing an account of circumstances in which he was concerned, it was sometimes cited under his name;<sup>3</sup> and being read by the church, was considered with reverence. Africanus, however, in his epistle to Origen, represents it as confessedly spurious; and Origen himself allows that it had no canonical authority.<sup>4</sup> Eusebius and Apollinarius, in answer to Porphyry, consider it as a part of the prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi: for which, however, they do not appear to have any authority, except that of the Greek title prefixed to Bel and the Dragon; which probably belonged exclusively to that book.<sup>5</sup> It is received, together with the other spurious additions, as canonical by the Romish church; but is suffered to continue in our Bibles only as a work from

\* Hieron. in Hierem. ch. xxix. 22.

<sup>1</sup> Chap. xxix. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Epist. ad African. Tract. 31. in Matt. Athan. Synop. Sixt. Seneca. lib. v.

<sup>3</sup> Irenæus Hæres. lib. iv. c. 44. Tertull.

de Coron. Milit. c. 4 Cyprian. Epist. 43.

Ambrose in c. xiii. Dan.

<sup>4</sup> Origen Epist. ad Jul. African. et Grabe de Vitiis. Sept. Interpret.

<sup>5</sup> Huet. Prop. iv. in Dan.

which moral improvement may be drawn. It illustrates the confidence of truth, and the security of innocence. It exhibits, by an instructive contrast, chastity in its most attractive colours, and licentiousness in its most hideous form.

## OF THE HISTORY OF BEL AND THE DRAGON.

THIS book, which in Theodotion's version of Daniel and in the Vulgate is annexed as a fourteenth chapter to the book of Daniel, is properly rejected by our church; having never been in the Hebrew Canon, or received as authentic by the earlier Christians. In the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, into which these spurious parts of Daniel appear to have been first foisted, there was prefixed to this book a title, in which it was called the Prophecy of Habakkuk, the son of Jesus, of the tribe of Levi;\* whence some attributed the book to the prophet whose inspired work is now extant in the Canon; but he lived much earlier than the period which must be assigned to this history, if its truth be admitted. There is reason, however, to suspect that this title was a subsequent addition by some person who attributed the book to Habakkuk, on account of the agency which is assigned to him in the history; and Theodotion was induced, probably, in consequence of such suspicion, to change the title in his edition, though he substituted, with as little reason, that of Daniel. If, however, the author's name really were Habakkuk, he was in all probability some Hellenistical Jew, or, at least, a different person from the sacred writer.

It is most reasonable to suppose, that the book was never extant in the Hebrew language, though it might, as Lightfoot<sup>b</sup> has conceived, be a parabolical story, founded on a passage in Jeremiah,<sup>c</sup> who threatens punishment to Bel, the great national idol of Babylon,<sup>d</sup> in terms that might have suggested the circumstances of his destruction as described in this book.

\* Hieron. Proem. Comm. in Dan. Sixt. Senena. Bib. lib. i.

<sup>b</sup> Lightfoot Stud. p. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Jerem. li. 44. Seld. Syntag. ii. de Belo et Dragon.

<sup>d</sup> Bel was originally Belus, the successor of Nimrod, said to be the first deified man,

his son Ninus having erected a statue, and prescribed worship to him; which was the beginning of idolatry. From Bel was derived the Hebrew idol Baal. Vid. Hieron. in Ezech. xxiii. et in Osee xi. The magnificent temple of Bel, with other particulars relative to his worship, is spoken of by

It is certain, that in all these apocryphal additions, the same Daniel was meant as the prophet whose writings we possess in the Canon: though annexed to the suspected title before mentioned, which, according to St. Jerom, was in the Septuagint copies,<sup>e</sup> there is an exordium, or, as it were, a first verse, which describes Daniel improperly as a priest, the son of Obadiah, a guest of the king of Babylon; and inconsistently with the sacred accounts of the prophet, by which Daniel appears to have been of the tribe of Judah. Still, however, as that title and exordium were probably subsequent additions, we may conceive the author of this book to speak of the prophet Daniel; but not, as some have imagined, that he gives us only an enlarged account of the events related in the sixth chapter of the authentic book of Daniel: for the circumstances are totally different, except in the particular of his being thrown into the lions' den; and the history recorded in the sacred account is assigned to the reign of Darius; whereas in the first verse of this book, which undoubtedly is properly placed,<sup>f</sup> the events appear to be assigned to the reign of Cyrus.<sup>g</sup>

Many persons object to the improbability of the circumstances related in this book; as particularly to the destruction of the dragon,<sup>h</sup> and to the conveyance of Habakkuk from Jerusalem to Babylon, merely to furnish a dinner to Daniel. The book, indeed, though it be cited as historical by the most respectable writers in the earliest ages of the church,<sup>i</sup> is considered as fa-

Herodotus and other historians. Vid. Herod. lib. i. Diodor. lib. iii. c. 10.

<sup>e</sup> St. Jerom calls the book, on account of this inscription, *ψευδοπυραφον*, "falsely entitled." It is rejected as apocryphal, under the title of the Book of Habakkuk, by the author of the Synopsis attributed to Athanasius.

<sup>f</sup> As it stands in the Arabic, Syriac, and Alexandrian copies.

<sup>g</sup> It must be observed, that the author in this verse speaks of Cyrus as of the immediate successor of Astyages; agreeably to the account of Herodotus and his followers. But it is certain, from profane and sacred history, that there was an intermediate king of Media who reigned two years, called Cyaxares by Xenophon, and Darius by Josephus and Daniel. Vid. Xenophon. Cyroped. lib. i. c. 19. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 12. Dan. v. 31. Messieurs Du Port Royal, on an idea that the particulars recorded in this book are such as were not

likely to have occurred under Astyages, Darius, or Cyrus, assign the history to the beginning of the reign of Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, placing it about A. M. 3442.

<sup>h</sup> By the dragon is to be understood a serpent, of which, to the triumph of our great deceiver, the worship prevailed among many nations in early times. Vid. Ælian. de Animal. lib. xi. c. 17. et lib. xvii. c. 5. Origen. cont. Cels. lib. vi. Valer. Max. i. 8. Ovid. Metam. lib. xv. Wied. xi. 15. Fragm. Philo, tom. ii. p. 646. Stillingfl. Orig. Sac. lib. iii. c. 3. Messrs. du Port Royal suppose that the dragon was burst, not by any specific power of the composition, but by the suffocation which it occasioned in a narrow throat. Vid. Seld. Syntag. ii. de Bel et Drag. c. 17. Ben Gorion gives a very different account of the destruction. Vid. lib. i. c. 10. ap. Seld. Syntag. ii. c. 17.

<sup>i</sup> Irenæus Hæres. lib. iv. c. 11. Tertull.

bulous by St. Jerom; and it must be allowed to contain some extraordinary and incredible relations. It is, however, canonized by the council of Trent. Daniel, probably, by detecting the mercenary contrivances of the idolatrous priests at Babylon, and by opening the eyes of the people to the follies of that superstition into which they had been seduced, might have furnished some foundation for the history; and the writer of the book appears to have introduced some additional circumstances to enliven the narration, and to illustrate the providence of God in protecting and providing for those who adhere to his service.

### OF THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH.

THIS short prayer is inscribed to Manasseh, and is said to have been composed by him during the captivity at Babylon; where, agreeably to God's threats by his prophets,<sup>a</sup> he was carried in fetters, by Esarhaddon, king of Assyria and Babylon,<sup>b</sup> in the twenty-second year of his reign, A. M. 3227;<sup>c</sup> and where, according to some traditionary accounts, being severely treated by the conqueror,<sup>d</sup> and having vainly entreated protection from the false deities whom he worshipped, he remembered the advice which he had received from his father in the words of Moses, "When thou art in tribulation, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee."<sup>e</sup> It appears from the sacred history, that he was awakened by his afflictions to a due sense of his crimes, and induced to turn with humility and repentance to the God of his fathers; and that he prayed unto the Lord, who was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again after a short captivity to his kingdom, into Jerusalem; where, as he continued stedfast in his adherence to God, and zealously laboured to extirpate idolatry, he enjoyed a long reign of prosperity and peace, being

de Jejun. adv. Psychicos, c. 8. De Idolat. c. 18. Cyprian. de Exhort. Martyrii. de Orat. Domin. et de Oper. et Eleemosyn. Ambrose de Jacob. et Vit. beat. c. 8. et in Epist. ad Rom. i. 23.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings xxi. 12—16.

<sup>b</sup> Prid. Con. An. 680. Manass. xix.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

<sup>d</sup> Some writers fabulously relate, that he was shut up in an heated brazen calf; that on the prayer of Manasseh the image burst, and he was carried by an angel to Jerusalem. Eutyech. Alexand. Annal.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. iv. 30, 31. Tradit. Hebr. in Paralip. et Targum in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

permitted to continue on the throne fifty-five years; which was a longer period than was allowed to any preceding or subsequent king, and an indulgence which serves to illustrate the efficacy of that contrition of which the sacred writers strongly inculcate the necessity, and minutely detail the effects.

The prayer, in our Bibles, though it contain nothing inconsistent with the circumstances and period of Manasseh, is not supposed to be the authentic production of that monarch. The prayer which he is related in the book of Chronicles to have uttered, is there said to have been written in the book of the kings of Israel, and in the sayings of the Seers,<sup>a</sup> in some larger and uninspired records which have perished. The present work is not in any of the Hebrew copies. It is uncertain in what language it was originally composed; but it cannot be traced higher than in the Vulgate, into which, probably, or into some Greek copies, it was inserted by some writer desirous of supplying the loss of the authentic prayer. It was not received as genuine by any of the fathers or councils, and was rejected even by the council of Trent.

It is, however, written in a style of much piety and humility; and the Greek church has inserted it into its euchology, or collection of prayers. The author of it speaks of repentance as requisite to sinners, in a manner similar to the declaration made by our Saviour; that he came not to call the just, but sinners to repentance.<sup>b</sup>

## OF THE FIRST BOOK OF THE MACCABEES.

THE first book of the Maccabees contains a collection of historical particulars relating to the Jews, from the beginning of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, A. M. 3829, to the death of Simon the high-priest, A. M. 3869. It is supposed to have been originally written in the Hebrew, or rather in the Chaldaic

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1, 12, 13. Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 4.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Or of Hosai, as it is rendered in the margin of our Bibles. The word Hosai signifies Seers, as the Seventy render it. Some understand it to

be the name of a prophet, and some have thought that Isaiah is meant. The Syriac reads Hanan, the Arabic Saphan. Vid. Grot.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. ix. 13.

language of the Jerusalem dialect, as used by the Jews after the return from captivity. The author is by some thought to have been John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon, who was a prince and high-priest of the Jews near thirty years, and who began his government at the period at which this history concludes. Josephus,<sup>a</sup> indeed, informs us, that the high-priests were intrusted with the care of writing the annals of their country; and at the period of the Maccabees, great attention seems to have been paid to preserve them.<sup>b</sup> The author of the present book, who was probably some person publicly appointed to digest the history, appears to have had recourse to the national records, and sometimes refers to them.<sup>c</sup> He reckons from a Greek era, but according to the Hebrew mode of computation.<sup>d</sup> St. Jerom professes to have seen the book in the Hebrew, under the title of "Sharbit Sar Bene El,"<sup>e</sup> that is, "the sceptre of the Prince of the children of God;" a title which obviously alludes to Judas, the valiant defender of God's persecuted people. This original is, however, now lost. The Greek version, from which our English translation was made, is denominated Maccabees, from the persons whose actions are described in the book. It was probably executed before the time of Theodotion, for it appears to have been used by authors who were his contemporaries.<sup>f</sup> In the Paris and London Polyglots, there are two Syriac versions of both the books of the Maccabees, which were made from the Greek, though they differ from it in some respects.

The two books of the Maccabees were certainly composed after the succession of prophets had ceased among the Jews;<sup>g</sup> and were never reckoned by them in the catalogue of the sacred writings. They are not cited by our Saviour, or his apostles; and were considered as apocryphal by the primitive church, since they are not mentioned in the list of the canonical books furnished by Melito, the council of Laodicea, Hilary, and Cyril of Jerusalem;<sup>h</sup> they are expressly represented as books of a

<sup>a</sup> Cont. Apion. lib. i.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Macc. xvi. 14; 2 Macc. ii. 14.

<sup>c</sup> Chap. xvi. 24.

<sup>d</sup> The author calculates from the month Nisan, (March or April,) the Greeks reckon from October.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Origen. Com. in Psalm. vol. i. p. 47. ap. Euseb. lib. vi. c. 25. Hieron. Prolog. Gal.

Some read שר בכי אל

"the sceptre of the rebels against the Lord." Vid. Drus. Præf. in Lib. Vet. Test.

<sup>f</sup> As by Origen and Tertullian.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Macc. iv. 46; ix. 27; xiv. 41. Joseph. cont. Apion. lib. i. Parker's Introduction. ad Bib. Vossius, Kidder, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Preface to the Apocryphal Books, p. 274, notes m and n.

secondary rank by many very ancient writers,<sup>1</sup> and were received as such by St. Austin, and the council of Carthage;<sup>k</sup> notwithstanding which, they were pronounced to be in every respect canonical by the council of Trent.

This first book is cited as a respectable history by the fathers.<sup>1</sup> It was probably written by a contemporary author, who had, in part, witnessed the scenes which he so minutely and graphically describes, and who wrote under a lively impression of the revolutions which his country had recently experienced. It is composed, at least, with great accuracy and spirit, and perhaps approaches nearer to the style of sacred history than any work now extant. St. John has been thought to substantiate the truth of a relation herein furnished;<sup>m</sup> and Josephus appears to have copied most of its accounts into his Jewish Antiquities; and though the author has been represented in a few instances as betraying some ignorance in treating of foreign affairs,<sup>n</sup> yet, in other respects, many heathen writers corroborate his reports.

The book contains the history of Mattathias and of his family, and of the wars which they, at the head of their countrymen, maintained against the kings of Syria, in the defence of their religion and lives. From the death of Alexander, who had conquered Persia, and the countries dependent on that empire,<sup>o</sup> Judæa followed the fate of Syria; and for a space of near one hundred and fifty years was exposed to all the ambitious contests which prevailed between the kings of Syria and Egypt. After various revolutions, and alternate subjection to each of these kingdoms; and after having occasionally suffered all the oppression and exactions that tyranny could enforce by means of the high-priests, and those princes who were appointed by the interest,

<sup>1</sup> Origen. in Psal. i. et ap. Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. 25. Athan. Synop. Hieron. Præf. in Prov. Salomon. Gregor. Mag. Moral. Expos. in Job. lib. xix. c. 17. Junil. African. de Part. Div. Leg. lib. i. c. 3.

<sup>k</sup> August. de Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 36. Concil. Carthag. 3. can. 47. In the printed copies of the pretended decree of pope Gelasius, only one book of the Maccabees is mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> Tertull. Adv. Jud. c. 4. Cyprian. de Exhort. Martyr. §. 5. Test. lib. iii. §. 4, 15, 53.

<sup>m</sup> St. John represents Jesus to have been present at the feast of the dedication; by

which has been understood, the feast of the dedication of the altar, of which the institution is recorded in this book. Some have thought, that as this feast commenced on the twenty-fifth of December, it might have been pre-ordained with a reference to our Saviour's birth. The Jews celebrated this feast, which they called the feast of the lights, for eight days, with illuminations and great joy. Vid. John x. 22; 1 Macc. iv. 56—59. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 11.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. i. 5, 6; viii. 6, 7. Rainold's Censur. Apoc. Prælect. 98, 104.

<sup>o</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. c. 18.

and subject to the control of the conquerors, Judæa was, at the time that this history begins, a tributary province of Syria, under Antiochus Epiphanes, and cruelly harassed and pillaged by him. The severe persecution which he exercised, and his avowed designs, which tended to exterminate the religion, and indeed the whole nation of the Jews,<sup>p</sup> inflamed the zeal of Mattathias to resentment and revolt; and upon his death excited Judas, in compliance with the dying injunctions of his father, to attempt the deliverance of his country. The successive victories, and prudent conduct of Judas and his brethren, which effected the accomplishment of their designs, constitute the chief subject of the present book. The relation affords a lively picture of a nation inspired by the patriotic heroism of its leaders, and struggling with enthusiasm for civil and religious liberty. It represents Judas and his brethren,—anxious to “restore the decayed estate of the people,” and to purify the polluted sanctuary of their God,—as endeavouring, by measures concerted in piety, and conducted with steady fortitude, to conciliate the divine countenance. It describes, likewise, the gradual recovery of Judæa from desolation and miseries to importance and prosperity,<sup>q</sup> and, at the same time, the worship of the true God re-established on the ruins of idolatry.

The author, like the sacred historians, selects individual characters for consideration, and describes the misconduct as well as the virtues of his heroes. He treats of the affairs of other nations only so far as connected with the circumstances of the Jewish history; and exhibits the changes and vicissitudes of other governments, as they tended to affect the interests of his country.

The particulars recorded in the book often afford a key to prophecy,<sup>r</sup> and especially explain the mysterious visions contained in the eighth and eleventh chapters of Daniel, relating

<sup>p</sup> Chap. i. 44—64; iii. 34—36.

<sup>q</sup> Chap. i. 25—28; iii. 42—51, comp. with chap. x; xii. 19—23; xiv. 8—23; xv. 1—9, 24, 32.

<sup>r</sup> Comp. 1 Macc. x. 88, 89, with Zech. ix. 14—18, and Jackson's Works, tom. ii. p. 844. Vid. also, 1 Macc. vii. 17; where the second and third verses of Psalm lxxix. are cited, either by way of accommodation to the circumstances before described, or as intentionally prophetic (perhaps in a

secondary sense) of the slaughter effected by Alcimua. The Hebrew word Chasidim, indeed, which is translated *saints* in the second verse of the psalm, has been considered as descriptive of the Assidæans, who were eminently pious. The psalm might, perhaps, have been historical of the calamities occasioned by Nebuchadnezzar, and yet, like many others, have borne a prophetic aspect to future circumstances.



to the horn, by which emblem was presignified Antiochus,\* who set up the abomination of desolation on the altar.†

Mattathias, the father of Judas, was of the sacerdotal race, of the course of Joarib;‡ and, as is generally supposed, a descendant of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, to whom God had given the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.§ He himself does not appear to have enjoyed that exalted office,¶ though it was conferred on his sons, and restricted as an exclusive privilege to his descendants, till the typical office was virtually evacuated by the institution of a spiritual priesthood in the time of Herod; who, except in the case of Aristobulus, the grandson of Hyrcanus, did not respect the pretensions of the Asmonæan family, but conceded the priesthood to any of the sacerdotal lineage.‡

Judas, whose exploits are celebrated in this history, has been thought to have derived his title of Maccabæus from the initial letters of the four words with which his standard is supposed to have been decorated,§ and which were taken from the eleventh verse of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, *Mi Camo-ka Baelim Jehovah*; “Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah!” From this Judas, his descendants were called Maccabees. They were called, likewise, Asmonæans; either because, as Josephus informs us, Mattathias was a descendant of Asmonæus,¶ or by an honourable and eminent distinction, as the Hebrew word signifies princes.‡ Many writers maintain, that they were de-

\* Joseph. Antiq. lib. x. c. 11. Hieron. in Dan. c. viii.

† Chap. i. 54, 55. By “the abomination of desolation,” which, as Daniel had predicted, was set up on the altar, we may understand the idol that was placed there by order of Antiochus. It is supposed to have been the statue of Jupiter Olympius. Vid. 2 Macc. vi. 2. Idols in scripture are commonly called abominations. Vid. 1 Kings xi. 5, 7. And the idol might be said to make desolate, as it expelled the worship of the true God, and occasioned the destruction of his servants. Comp. Dan. xi. 31, with 1 Macc. i. 54, and 2 Macc. vi. 1, 2.

‡ Chap. ii. 1. or Jahoiarib. This was the first of the twenty-four courses which served in the temple. Vid. 1 Chron. xxiv. 7.

§ Numb. xxv. 11—13; 1 Macc. ii. 54. Jurieu's Critic. Hist. vol. i. part iii. c. 1. p. 372.

¶ Calmet. Dict. word *Mattathias*.

\* Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. c. 8.

‡ Others, who think that Judas was named Maccabæus before he erected his standard, or who collect from monuments that a lion was imprinted on the standard of the Maccabees, derive the word Maccabæus from מַכְבֵּי בַי, “per me est plaga.” Vid. Godwyn de Repub. Jud. lib. i. c. 1. Some derive it from Macchabeth, or Macchubeth, “hidden,” because Mattathias and his companions concealed themselves in the wilderness. Vid. chap. ii. 28—31. Others, lastly, derive it from Makke-Baiah, which signifies “Conqueror in the Lord.” Vid. Prid. An. 167. et Calmet. on 1 Macc. ii. 4. Ben Gorion, lib. iii. c. 9.

§ Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 8.

¶ Charsamanim. Vid. Psalm lxxviii. 32. It is rendered *Προβεις* in the Septuagint of Psalm lxxvii. p. 31. Vid. Kimchi. Drus. Præf. in Maccab. Euseb. Demonstr. Evang. lib. viii.

scended maternally from the race of Judah.<sup>d</sup> Aristobulus, the son of Hyrcanus, was the first who assumed the title of king after the captivity. He bequeathed the crown to his son, after whose death it was a subject of contest to his children; and on the capture of Hyrcanus the Elder, by the Parthians, conferred by the Romans on Herod.<sup>e</sup>

## OF THE SECOND BOOK OF THE MACCABEES.

THIS book contains a compilation of historical records extracted from different works; but especially an abridgment of an history of the persecutions of Epiphanes and Eupator<sup>a</sup> against the Jews, which had been written in Greek in five books, by an Hellenistical Jew of Cyrene, named Jason; a descendant probably of those Jews who had been placed there by Ptolemy Soter,<sup>b</sup> and which is no longer extant. The name of the compiler is not known. He was doubtless a different person from the author of the preceding book. He dates from an era six months later than that chosen by him, and not only writes with less accuracy, and in a more florid style, but likewise relates some particulars in a manner inconsistent with the accounts of the first book;<sup>c</sup> from which, nevertheless, he has in other instances borrowed both sentiments and facts. Some writers have attributed this second book to Philo of Alexandria,<sup>d</sup> and others to Josephus, on grounds equally conjectural and fallacious. Neither Eusebius nor St. Jerom speak of it as among the works of Philo; and the discourse of the Maccabees, or the Empire of Reason, which Eusebius and St. Jerom suppose to have been written by Josephus,<sup>e</sup> is a very different work, though it mentions many particulars contained in this book.

<sup>d</sup> Hieron. in Osee, cap. iii. in Sophon. c. 1. August. cont. Faust. lib. i. c. 72, &c. Preface to Hist. Books, p. 74. note o.

<sup>e</sup> Sulpit. Sever. Sac. Hist. lib. ii. p. 262. edit. Lugd. Bat. p. 1647.

<sup>a</sup> Chap. ii. 19—29. Clemens Alexandrinus calls it the epitome of Maccabaic history. Vid. Strom. lib. v. p. 595.

<sup>b</sup> Prid. Con. par. i. book 8, An. 320. The Cyreneans were of Greek extraction. Callimachus, the poet of Cyrene, wrote in

Greek. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. c. 13. lib. xvi. c. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Comp. 1 Macc. vi. 13—16, with 2 Macc. i. 16, and ix. 28; 1 Macc. ix. 3, 18, with 2 Macc. i. 10; 1 Macc. iv. 36, with 2 Macc. x. 2, 3, and Usher.

<sup>d</sup> Honor. Augustod. de Scriptor. Eccl. in Philone.

<sup>e</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. c. 10. Hieron. adv. Pelag. lib. i. c. 3. et Lib. de Script. Eccles. in Joseph. This book,

Serarius<sup>f</sup> maintained that the second book of Maccabees was the production of Judas, the Essenian, who is described by Josephus<sup>g</sup> as a man of great authority for his wisdom; who, likewise, according to the historian's account, was endowed with the infallible spirit of prophecy,<sup>h</sup> and predicted the death of Antigonus, the second son of John Hyrcanus the priest; and whom Serarius imagines to be mentioned in the fourteenth versè of the second chapter of this book. But that passage is generally allowed to relate to Judas Maccabæus, and affords no light with respect to the author of this book. It is, with more probability, though with equal uncertainty, assigned to Simon, or Judas Maccabæus; while some have fancied that the whole book is only a letter written by the synagogue of Jerusalem to the Jews in Egypt, not distinguishing the historical from the epistolary parts.<sup>i</sup> By whomsoever it was composed, it should seem to have been originally written in Greek; and the compiler, as well as the author whose work he abridged, follows the Syrian mode of computation, reckoning by the years of the Seleucidæ.<sup>k</sup>

The two epistles which are contained in the first and second chapters, and which are there said to have been written by the Jews at Jerusalem to their brethren at Alexandria, exhorting them to observe the feast of the tabernacles and that of the purification, are by Prideaux considered as spurious; the second, indeed, is said to have been written by Judas, who was not living at the time of the date;<sup>l</sup> and it contains many extravagant and fabulous particulars. It begins at the tenth versè of the first chapter, and terminates with the eighteenth of the second; from thence to the end of the chapter is a short preface of the compiler

whether properly or improperly attributed to Josephus, is entitled, *εις Μακκαβαϊους λογος, η περι αυτοκρατορος λογισμου*. The word Maccabees being applied to all who distinguished themselves in the cause of religion and freedom; and sometimes, as in this instance, to those who flourished before the time of Judas. Vid. Scaliger in Chron. Euseb. n. 1853, p. 143. The work of Josephus is a rhetorical declamation on the power of reason, acting on religious principles; in which the author illustrates his subject by a description of the conduct and speeches of Eleazar, and the other martyrs whose fortitude is celebrated in

this second book of Maccabees.

<sup>f</sup> Serar. Prol. ii. in Macc. et Rupert. de Vict. Verb. Dei.

<sup>g</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. c. 19.

<sup>h</sup> Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. i. c. 3.

<sup>i</sup> Genebrard. Chronol. Coteler. Not. ad Can. Apost. p. 338.

<sup>k</sup> Prideaux conceives, that the compiler must have been an Egyptian Jew, since he seems to have acknowledged the lesser temple in Egypt, for he distinguishes the temple at Jerusalem as "the great temple." Vid. chap. ii. 19; xiv. 13.

<sup>l</sup> Comp. 1 Macc. ix. 3, 18, with 2 Macc. i. 10.

to the abridgment of Jason's history; which commences with the third chapter, and concludes with the thirty-seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter, the two last verses forming a kind of conclusion to the work.

The book contains an history of about fifteen years, from the enterprise of Heliodorus in the temple, A. M. 3828, to the victory of Judas Maccabæus against Nicanor, A. M. 3843. The chapters are not, however, arranged exactly in chronological order. The book begins at a period somewhat earlier than that of the first book of Maccabees. As the author appears at first to have intended only an epitome of the history of Judas Maccabæus and his brethren, with some contemporary events,<sup>m</sup> the account of the punishment of Heliodorus, which occurred under Seleucus, the predecessor of Epiphanes, as well as the circumstances related in the two last chapters, which happened under Demetrius Sotor, the successor of Eupator, have been sometimes represented as subsequent additions by some later writer. But since these events, as connected with the time of Judas, were not irrelative to the author's design; there is no reason, except from a pretended difference of style, to dispute their authenticity as a part of Jason's history; or, at least, as a genuine addition affixed to the epitome by the compiler. The author had no title, any more than the writer of the preceding book, to be considered as an inspired historian: he speaks, indeed, of his own performance in the diffident style of one conscious of the fallibility of his own judgment, and distrustful of his own powers.<sup>n</sup> His work was never considered as strictly canonical till received into the sacred list by the council of Trent, though examples are produced from it by many ancient writers.<sup>o</sup> It must be allowed to be a valuable and instructive history, and affords an interesting description of a persecuted and afflicted people; furnishing, in the relation of the conduct of Eleazar, and of the woman and her children who suffered for their attachment to their religion, an example of constancy that might have animated the martyrs of the Christian church. The author industriously displays the confidence in a resurrection and future life which prevailed at

<sup>m</sup> Chap. ii. 19—23.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xv. 38, which is written in the style of an uninspired writer, and resembles the conclusion of the oration of *Æschines* against *Ctesipho*. Vid. Preface to 1 Macc.

p. 330.

<sup>o</sup> *Ambrose de Jacob, et Vita Beat. c. 10, 11, 12. et Lib. de Offic. c. 40, 41. August. de cur. gerend. pro Mortuis, lib. i. §. 3.*

the period of his history,<sup>p</sup> and which was the encouragement that enabled those who were so severely tried, to sustain their tortures. He likewise, perhaps, more particularly enforced the doctrine of a resurrection, with a design to counteract the propagation of the Sadducean principles, which were then rising into notice.

It has been thought to detract from the credibility of the particulars recorded in this book, that neither the author of the preceding work, nor Josephus in those his acknowledged writings, where he treats of the persecution carried on by Antiochus,<sup>q</sup> should mention the sufferings of the martyrs whose memorial is here celebrated. But the silence of these historians can furnish no sufficient argument to deny that there was, at least, some ground-work for the account of this book, with whatever exaggerations we may suppose it to have been decorated. The description, likewise, of the prodigies and meteorological conflicts which portended calamities to Judæa, ought not to invalidate our confidence in the veracity of the writer of this book; since it is unquestionable, from the testimony of respectable historians,<sup>r</sup> and indeed from the evidence of holy writ,<sup>s</sup> that such ominous appearances have sometimes been witnessed. And when, as in this instance, the phenomena are represented by an historian, perhaps nearly contemporary, to have continued forty days,<sup>t</sup> it is unreasonable to suspect delusion, or wilful misrepresentation. So, likewise, however improbable those accounts may appear, in which God is described to have vindicated the insulted sanctity of his temple,<sup>u</sup> and to have discountenanced the adversaries of his people by apparitions and angelical visions,<sup>v</sup> it is certain, that many philosophical and judicious writers have maintained the reality of similar appearances;<sup>w</sup> and that the popular superstitions and belief in such apparitions may, without credulity, be supposed to have originated in the miraculous interpositions which were sometimes displayed in favour of the Jewish people.<sup>x</sup>

But though the book may, perhaps, be vindicated in general,

<sup>p</sup> Chap. vii. 9, 11, 14, 23, 29, 36; and xiv. 46.

<sup>q</sup> De Bel. Jud. lib. i. Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. c. 5.

<sup>r</sup> Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. vii. c. 12.

<sup>s</sup> Luke xxi. 25.

<sup>t</sup> Chap. v. 1—3.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. iii. 24—29.

<sup>v</sup> Chap. x. 29, 30; xi. 8.

<sup>w</sup> Cicero Tuscul. Quæst. lib. i. et de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

<sup>x</sup> Joshua v. 13.

with respect to historical truth, it contains some parts of exceptional character; and some passages in it have been objected to as of dangerous example.<sup>a</sup> The Romanists, indeed, who, in deference to the decision of the Tridentine fathers, admit the canonical authority of the book, have produced the last verses of the twelfth chapter to countenance their notions concerning purgatory and prayers for the dead.<sup>b</sup>

The work, as the production of a fallible and unenlightened man, may contain a mixture of error, and certainly should be read with that discretion which, while it seeks instruction, guards against the intrusion of false and pernicious opinions. If St. Paul, in his eulogium on some illustrious examples of faith, should be thought to have established the truth, or approved the examples of this history, he by no means bears testimony to the inspiration of its author,<sup>c</sup> or establishes its general authority in point of doctrine. The apostles consigned for the direction of the Christian church, the productions of only those "holy men who were moved by the Holy Ghost." St. Austin justly remarked, in answer to the Circumcellion Donatists,<sup>d</sup> who had urged the desperate attempt of Razis,<sup>e</sup> in defence of suicide, that they must have been hard pressed for examples, to have recourse to the book of Maccabees; for that this book was of subordinate authority, as not established on the testimony of the Jewish church, or on that of Christ; and as received by the Christian church only to be discreetly read; and that Razis, however distinguished for valour, was not to be proposed as an

<sup>a</sup> Chap. i. 18—36; and Rainold's Censur. Apocryph. tom. ii. prælect. 133, 134. Vid. also, chap. xiv. 41—46, where the furious attempt of Razis to fall on his own sword is spoken of with seeming approbation.

<sup>b</sup> Bellarm. de Purgat. lib. ii. c. 3. Some think that Judas is commended for having prayed, not for the dead, but that the guilt of the dead might not be imputed to the living: but though the Greek be less favourable to the doctrine of the Romish church than the Vulgate, it must be confessed that the passage will not admit of that construction. Judas, probably, did not dream of purgatory; but he is certainly represented to have prayed for the dead; and in the Greek, as well as in the Latin, the reconciliation is said to have been made for the purpose of delivering the dead from sin.

<sup>c</sup> It is said, in the nineteenth verse of the sixth chapter, that Eleazar *αδαιρησεν επι το τυμπαων προσηγεν*. And St. Paul, speaking of martyrs who had suffered in hopes of a resurrection, says, *αλλοι δε εντυμνωσθησαν*: from which expression, some conceive that the apostle alludes to the death of Eleazar, supposing *τυμπαων* to signify some specific engine of torture. If the apostle did refer to the account of this book, which is a point much controverted, it will only prove that the relation is true.

<sup>d</sup> These were a party of confederated ruffians of the fourth century, who practised and defended assassinations, and who recommended suicide when it could rescue them from public punishment. Vid. Mosheim. Eccles. Hist. cent. iv. part ii.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. xiv. 41.

example to justify self-murder.<sup>f</sup> The fathers in general, indeed, cite the book as an useful history,<sup>g</sup> but not as of authority in point of doctrine.

There are two other books, entitled the third and fourth books of Maccabees, which were never received by any church. That which is improperly styled the third, and which in point of time should be considered as the first, describes the persecution of Ptolemy Philopator against the Jews in Egypt, about A.M. 3789; and the miraculous delivery of those who were exposed in the Hippodrome of Alexandria to the fury of elephants. This is a work entitled to much respect: it is in the most ancient manuscript copies of the Septuagint,<sup>h</sup> and is cited by the fathers;<sup>i</sup> but never having been found in the Vulgate, which version was universally used in the Western church, and from which our translations were made, it never was admitted into our Bibles. Grotius supposes it to have been written soon after the book of Ecclesiasticus. The history is not noticed by Josephus; though in the ancient version of his second book against Apion by Rufinus, there are some particulars that seem to allude to it.

The book which is usually called the fourth book of the Maccabees, and which contains an history of the pontificate of John Hyrcanus, was first published in the Paris Polyglot as an Arabic history of the Maccabees. It is supposed to have been a translation of the work seen by Sixtus Senensis<sup>k</sup> in a Greek manuscript at Lyons, and which was afterwards burnt;<sup>l</sup> though, according to Calmet's account,<sup>m</sup> it should seem to have been a different work from that mentioned by early writers as a fourth book of the Maccabees.<sup>n</sup> It seems to have been originally written in Hebrew; and the Arabic, or the Greek translator, from whose work the Arabic was made, lived after the destruction of the second temple by the Romans, as appears from some particulars. The book differs in many respects from the

<sup>f</sup> August. Epist. 61. ad Dulcit. Cosin's Scholast. Hist. §. 81.

<sup>g</sup> Cyprian. Exhort. Mart. §. 11. Testim. lib. iii. §. 4.

<sup>h</sup> It is in the Alexandrian manuscript at St. James's, and in the Vatican manuscript at Rome.

<sup>i</sup> Euseb. Chron. An. 1800. Theod. in Dan. xi. 7. Canon. Apost. 85. Athan.

Synop. Niceph. vid. Arab. Ver. Paris Polyglot.

<sup>k</sup> Sixt. Senen. Bib. lib. i. et Bib. Maxim. a Fran. de la Haye.

<sup>l</sup> Selden. de Successa. in Pontif.

<sup>m</sup> Calmet. Preface sur le Quat. Livre des Maccab.

<sup>n</sup> Athan. Synop. Syncell. Philastr. Vid. Coteler. Not. in Can. Apost. p. 117, 138.

relations of Josephus. Calmet thinks, that the discourse on the power of reason, before mentioned as the work of Josephus, was the original fourth book of Maccabees, which in many Greek manuscripts is placed with the other three.<sup>o</sup>

It may be added, that in two ancient Hebrew manuscripts in the Bodleian library, as also in one at Leipsic, there follows after Esther, as a book of the Bible, without any title or introduction, an history of the Maccabees written in Chaldee, which differs widely from our apocryphal books. It appears to have been originally written in Chaldee, and to have been translated into Hebrew. It is probably a very ancient production, and contains many remarkable particulars.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Not. Cambesis in Joseph. Lib. de Imper. Ration. Cotel. Not. in Can. Apost. p. 339.

<sup>p</sup> The Hebrew copy has been published

in a very corrupt state by Bartoloccius. Vid. Kennicott, No. 18, Pentat. Psal. Megill. 80, p. 55, 56. on Hebrew and Samaritan manuscript, p. 34.





**A KEY**  
**TO**  
**THE NEW TESTAMENT:**  
**GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF**  
**THE SEVERAL BOOKS,**  
**THEIR CONTENTS, THEIR AUTHORS, AND OF THE TIMES,**  
**PLACES, AND OCCASIONS ON WHICH THEY**  
**WERE RESPECTIVELY WRITTEN.**



TO THE  
HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

SHUTE,

LORD BISHOP OF LLANDAFF.

MY LORD,

The favourable opinion which your Lordship was pleased to entertain of this little work in the first edition, has induced me to give it a revisal, and, by removing some inaccuracies, to render it less unworthy your acceptance.

That so slight a performance should have been able to attract your notice, I must attribute to that vigilant, unremitting attention which so eminently distinguishes your Lordship's conduct, and makes you esteem no attempt undeserving your regard, which has the remotest tendency to promote the interests of religion or learning.

That this little manual may be of some use, especially to the youth of both sexes, I am encouraged to hope, from the candid reception it has met with in our Universities, where, I am told, some of the Tutors have adopted it as a proper compendium to be put into the hands of the younger Students, at their entrance on a course of sacred literature. If it contributes in any degree to make the Holy Scriptures more attentively read and better understood, I shall esteem it a peculiar happiness to have had this opportunity of testifying the sincere respect with which I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged

And most faithful Servant,

THOMAS PERCY.

## PREFACE.

A CLEAR introductory illustration of the several books of the New Testament, shewing the design of their writers, the nature of their contents, and whatever else is previously necessary to their being read with understanding, is a work that, if well executed, must prove the best of commentaries, and frequently supersede the want of all other. Like an intelligent guide, it directs the reader right at his first setting out, and thereby saves him the trouble of much after inquiry. Or, like a map of a country through which he is to travel, if consulted beforehand, it gives him a general view of his journey, and prevents his being afterwards lost and bewildered.

That the following little work will be found to answer this flattering description, the compiler dares not take upon him to assert; he can only say, that the contents are chiefly extracted from two eminent writers, who have particularly distinguished themselves in this branch of sacred criticism, and have lately thrown great light upon the subject.

The first of these is Mr. Professor Michaelis, of his Majesty's University of Gottingen, whose "Introductory Lectures to the sacred Books of the New Testament," translated from the German, were published in one volume 4to. in 1761.\* The other is the Rev. Dr. Lardner, whose "History of the Apostles and Evangelists, writers of the New Testament, with Remarks and Observations on every Book," was printed in three volumes 8vo. in 1760. The former of these has displayed so much ingenuity and discernment, and the latter such a depth of learn-

\* Since this translation of Mr. Michaelis's book was published, that eminent writer has very much improved and enlarged his work in the original German: and it will give satisfaction to the learned reader

to be informed, that a translation of this excellent performance, with all the late additions and improvements of the deceased author, has also been published.

ing, as give the greatest advantage to such as would avail themselves of their labours.

But as their works are not of portable size, and contain a multitude of curious disquisitions not within the reach of the generality of readers, the editor was tempted to give a short abstract of their respective contents, cleared from all miscellaneous digressions, and reduced within a small compass for the pocket. He has not, however, merely confined himself to those two writers, but has enriched his work from other authors: thus, in the Key to the writings of the several Evangelists, a full account is given of the curious hypothesis of the learned and ingenious Dr. Owen, who, in his "Observations on the Four Gospels," 8vo. 1764, has opened a new source of information, and, by comparing the original language of the several Evangelists, has started many new hints, which had escaped former inquirers. If the Doctor should find a difficulty started in the following pages, in respect to one part of his scheme, he will also see a solution offered, which the editor apprehends will give new strength and consistency to the whole argument.

Besides these late writers, recourse was occasionally had to the learned and useful labours of Pyle, Doddrige, Bengelius, Dupin, and other former critics and commentators; from each of whom such parts were selected as seemed most solid and judicious; forming, in the whole, what it is hoped will be found a clear, concise, and not inconsistent compilation, in which the editor frankly acknowledges that very little will be found of his own, and that he has no other merit than that of bringing into one compendium whatever he thought was most excellent in so many valuable writers.

After this little work was first committed to the press, the editor was favoured by an ingenious friend with the short account of the several Sects and Heresies that prevailed in the times of Christ and his Apostles. A general knowledge of those is so necessary to our right understanding the sacred writings, in which one or other of them are constantly alluded to, that this work would have been imperfect without it; it is therefore prefixed, by way of Introduction. In compiling this brief sketch, the writer acknowledges himself indebted, not only to the valuable works of Godwyn, Prideaux, Calmet, and Stackhouse, but to the very learned System of Ecclesiastical

History by Mr. Chancellor Mosheim, of the University of Göttingen.

To the same friend the editor is also indebted for the short Analysis, or Key, to the Prophecies contained in the Revelations, with which this little book is concluded.

## INTRODUCTION.

*Of the Jewish Sects or parties alluded to in the Gospels.*

### THE PHARISEES.

THE *Pharisees* were a sect among the Jews that had subsisted at least above a century and a half before the appearance of our Saviour. They affected the most profound regard for the law of God and the sacred books; but for the interpretation of them, and the manner in which they were to be obeyed, they depended chiefly upon traditional accounts. These traditions encumbered religion with a thousand frivolous observances, which drew off the mind from the more important matters of the law; and made men look upon themselves as holy and acceptable to God, not so much from their moral conduct and observance of divine institutions, as from their conformity to certain modes and punctilios of mere human invention, introduced among them under pretence of being the traditions of the elders.<sup>a</sup> Hence their more than ordinary strictness in wearing the phylactery, and singularity in enlarging the borders or fringes of their garments.<sup>b</sup> Hence their superstition about the Sabbath, as if it had been unlawful on that day to walk in the fields, or to pluck the ears of corn, or to cure the sick, or to aid one's neighbour. Hence too their peculiar zeal and pretence to purity, in the demureness with which they fasted, the exactness with which they paid their tithes, the ostentation with which they prayed, performing that duty not only aloud, but in the most public turnings of the streets; the ardour with which they encompassed sea and land to make proselytes, or converts to their sect; their

<sup>a</sup> That is, ancients.

<sup>b</sup> The *phylacteries* were little scrolls of parchment, bound to their foreheads and wrists, on which were written texts of Scripture, taken from Exod. xiii. 9, 16,

and Deut. vi. 8; xi. 18. With regard to their *borders* and *fringes*, the reader will find the origin of this distinction in Numb. xv. 38; Deut. xxii. 12.



frequent washing, not only of themselves, but of their vestments and utensils; and their holding at a distance, or separating themselves, not only from Pagans, but from all such Jews as complied not with their peculiarities. To this last circumstance they seem to have owed the name of their sect, the word Pharisee being derived from a verb in the Hebrew,<sup>c</sup> which signifies to divide, or separate. This sect, however, not only held the soul to be immortal, but had some slight notions of a resurrection, believing that on some occasions the soul might again reanimate a body: whence their conjecture about Christ, upon his first appearance, that he was either John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the old prophets; and hence, too, notwithstanding the violence with which they had opposed the personal ministry of Jesus, that aptitude they displayed in after-times, beyond some of the other Jewish sects, to fall in with his revelation.

#### THE SCRIBES.

The word *Scribes*, as that denomination occurs in the New Testament, appears to be the title, not of any particular sect, distinguished from all others as to their modes of practice or belief, but a general term, applicable to all those, of whatever sect, who made the law of Moses and the prophetic and sacred books their peculiar study, so as to become capable of commenting upon them, and thence of publicly instructing the people. This office seems, however, to have been confined to the descendants of Levi, who being very numerous, and not at all times engaged in the immediate service of the temple, had leisure and opportunity enough to qualify themselves for this duty, being unembarrassed with secular employments, and liberally provided for among all the other tribes. It appears, indeed, from the frequent mention that is made in the gospel of the Scribes and Pharisees in conjunction, that the greatest number of Jewish teachers, or doctors of the law,<sup>d</sup> (for these are expressions equivalent to Scribe,) were at that time of the pharisaical sect. In the Old Testament we meet with the term Scribe in a secular sense, as denoting sometimes a secretary of state,<sup>e</sup> sometimes a principal clerk in a court of judicature,<sup>f</sup> and sometimes

<sup>c</sup> פָּרָשׁ, *Pharash*, to divide.

<sup>d</sup> So the original word should have been rendered, where in our translation it is impro-

perly expressed by the modern term *lawyers*.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. ii. 4; 1 Maccab. v. 42.

a commissary or muster-master in the army:<sup>a</sup> and although it is probable that a duly qualified man belonging to any of the other tribes might be admitted into any of these employments, yet the superior opportunity that the descendants of Levi enjoyed for all sorts of literary improvements, renders it likely that they were generally preferred, especially in ancient times, even to these departments.

#### THE SADDUCEES.

The most ancient sect among the Jews was that of the *Sadducees*. This name may either be derived from the Hebrew word *sedec*, which signifies justice; or from a certain teacher among the Jews called *Sadoc*. The former seems to have been the origin of the appellation, according to the account of the Sadducees themselves; the latter, according to the account given of them by the Pharisees in the Talmud. If we admit the former derivation, it assigns no fixed date of the antiquity of this sect; if the latter, it ascertains their rise to have been but a few years before that of the Pharisees. But be this as it may, the Sadducees seem to have been originally strict adherents to the Mosaic institution, and to the canonical books, only interpreting them in the most literal sense, and rejecting all other explications. The superior estimation in which they held the Pentateuch, or writings of Moses, to all other compositions in the sacred collection, gave rise in all probability to the report of their adversaries, that they entirely rejected the authority of the rest: and the doubts they entertained about a future state, a doctrine not clearly revealed in the writings of Moses, and about any appearances of angels or spirits among men, since the finishing of the Jewish Canon, seem to have at first given a handle to the Pharisees of rendering them suspected of irreligion, which in all probability was afterwards confirmed by men of loose principles sheltering themselves under their name. This however is certain, that at the time of our Saviour, this sect is reputed to have held doctrines that were thoroughly impious:<sup>b</sup> for they are said to have denied the resurrection of the dead, the being of angels, and all existence of the spirits or souls of men departed. It was their opinion that there is no spiritual being but God only; that as to man, this world is his all; that, at his

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. xxvi. 11; 2 Kings xxv. 19.

<sup>b</sup> Vide Prideaux.

death, body and soul die together, never to live more; and that, therefore, there is no future reward nor punishment. They acknowledge that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence; and, for the carrying on this government, hath ordained rewards and punishments, but that they do not extend beyond this world. In a word, they seem to have been Epicureans in all respects, excepting only that they allowed that God made the world by his power, and governs it by his providence. At the same time that they held these loose notions, they are said to have had a bigoted attachment to the law of Moses: and whether it proceeded from this, or their considering our Saviour as a seditious person, they soon joined with the Pharisees in bringing Christ and his disciples to death; for Caiaphas, who was of this sect, and who was high-priest of the Jews at that time, was he who condemned Jesus to be crucified; and Ananus the younger,<sup>1</sup> another of this sect, put to death St. James, the brother of our Lord.

#### THE HERODIANS.

Of the *Herodians* we meet with nothing among ancient writers, except in the New Testament itself; where also mention is made of certain Galilæans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and who are described elsewhere in the New Testament as having made an insurrection against the government, and are called murderers, or Sicarii.<sup>2</sup> The learned Calmet takes an opportunity hence of imputing to those called Herodians, whatever was done by these Galilæans, and thinks they were called Herodians by the other Jews, because Galilee at that time was under the command of Herod, surnamed Antipas. But when we reflect that this insurrection happened long before Christ entered upon his public ministry, even as early as the tenth year of his age, when the insurgents were entirely routed, and the party dispersed, whereas the Herodians are mentioned as still flourishing at the very time when Christ was employed in his mission; we cannot forbear assenting to the judicious conjectures of Dr. Prideaux and others, who look upon the Herodians not as a religious sect, but a political party, who

<sup>1</sup> Son of Annas the high-priest, mentioned in the gospel, who is called Ananus by Josephus.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxi. 38. See a further account of this sect or party, p. 354, under the name of *Gaulanites*.

began to become eminent in the days of Herod the Great, as favouring his claims, and those of his patrons the Romans, to the sovereignty of Judea. Some of these, no doubt, might be weak enough to imagine that Herod was the Messiah; or wicked enough to pretend that they did, in order to serve his cause; and would be ready to vindicate his conduct, when, the better to pay his court to the Romans, he consecrated temples to some of their false deities. And this party having begun in the time of Herod the Great, may well be supposed to have continued long afterwards in favour and power, by the indulgence of the Herods and influence of the Romans. That leaven therefore of theirs, against which our Saviour warns his hearers,<sup>k</sup> must in this case have been either their false conceptions of the Messiah, or their pliantness and conformity to idol-worship, or both.

#### OF THE CHRISTIAN SECTS OR HERESIES ALLUDED TO IN THE EPISTLES.

WHEN the religion of Jesus began to be spread abroad in the world, it had not only to struggle with avowed adversaries, such as the Jew and the Pagan, by whom its professors were exposed to all manner of external disgrace and calamities; but it had to support itself in its native purity, dignity, and excellence, against the corrupt doctrines which many of those whom it received into its community had brought with them from the Jewish or Pagan systems; for under these two denominations were all mankind at that time included; and both so very corrupt, as to be far more capable of imparting infection, than of becoming pure.

#### I.

Of the *Jews* who became Christians, there were, besides such as had been of the sect of the Pharisees, &c. others that had imbibed the particular opinions of the Essenes and the Gaulanites.

#### THE ESSENES.

The *Essenes* seem to have been of a very remote antiquity. They might take their rise from that dispersion of their nation which happened after their being carried captive into Babylon.

<sup>k</sup> Mark viii. 15.

The principal character of this sect was, that they chose retirement, were sober, were industrious; had all things in common; paid the highest regard to the moral precepts of the law, but neglected the ceremonial, any farther than what regarded bodily cleanness, the observation of the sabbath, and making an annual present to the temple of Jerusalem. They never associated with women, nor admitted them into their retreats; but gladly embraced every fair opportunity of supporting and enlarging their society, by rearing, breeding, educating, and instructing other men's children, as if they had been their own. By the most sacred vows, though they were in general averse to swearing, or to requiring an oath, they bound all whom they initiated among them to the observance of piety, justice, fidelity, and modesty; to conceal the secrets of the fraternity, preserve the books of their instructors, and with great care commemorate the names of the angels. To them, in all likelihood, the apostle alludes, when he inveighs against those who forbid to marry, who command to abstain from meats, and who, through a voluntary humility, pay worship to angels. But a more particular description of these errors will be found in the account of the first Epistle to Timothy.

#### THE GAULANITES.

The *Gaulanites* were Galilæans, who had this name given them from one Judas Theudas, a native of Gaulan, in Upper Galilee; who, in the tenth year of Jesus Christ, which was the last of Augustus, and ten years after the death of Herod the Great, excited his countrymen, the Galilæans, and many others of the Jews, to take arms, and venture upon all extremities, rather than pay tribute to the Romans. The principles he infused into his party were, not only that they were a free nation, and ought to be in subjection to no other; but that they were the elect of God, that he alone was their governor, and that therefore they ought not to submit to any ordinance of man. And though he was unsuccessful, insomuch that his party in their very first attempt were entirely routed and dispersed; yet so deeply had he infused his own enthusiasm into their minds, that they never rested till in their own destruction they involved the city and temple. To this wild and fanatic party seem to be addressed many of those passages in the New Testament,

wherein obedience to magistracy is so piously and rationally inculcated.

#### THE NAZARENES.

The Pharisees seem to have composed the chief body of those Christian converts who in the earlier times were distinguished by the appellation of *Nazarenes*. These, though they embraced Christianity, yet entered so little into the real spirit and genius of it, that they were still fond of the beggarly elements and carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law. To repress this their inordinate superstition, seems to have been the intention of the severity with which the law is treated in the apostolic writings, where not only circumcision is exclaimed against, but we are taught to let no man judge us with regard to meats or drinks, or the observance of holy-days, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath; which were a shadow of things to come, whereof Christ is the substance.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

#### THE Gnostics.

Of the *Gentiles* who were converted to Christianity, the most dangerous and pernicious kind were those who were infected with the Egyptian philosophy; a system, as it was then taught, entirely chimerical and absurd. The Christians of this sort assumed to themselves the name of *Gnostics*, a word of Greek derivation, implying a knowledge superior to that of other men. This word does not occur in the New Testament; but

#### THE NICOLAITANS,

of whom mention is made in the Apocalypse of St. John,<sup>m</sup> seem to have been of the Gnostic sect: as were also

#### THE CERINTHIANS;

for most of the errors<sup>n</sup> maintained by Cerinthus, and opposed in the Gospel of St. John, may be derived from the same source.

When we say the Gentile converts were chiefly liable to the Gnostic infection, we must not be understood to exclude those

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 16, &c.

<sup>m</sup> This sect is described in a note to Revelations.

<sup>n</sup> Described at large in the account of St. John's gospel.

of the Jewish race, many of whom were tainted with it, but they seem to have derived it from the Essenes.\*

#### THE EGYPTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The maintainers of this philosophy held, that the Supreme Being, though infinitely perfect and happy, was not the creator of the universe, nor the only independent being: for, according to them, matter too was eternal. The Supreme Being, who resides in the immensity of space, which they called *Pleroma*, or fulness, produced from himself, say they, other immortal and spiritual natures, styled by them *Æons*,<sup>p</sup> who filled the residence of the Deity with beings similar to themselves. Of these beings, some were placed in the higher regions, others in the lower. Those in the lower regions were nearest to the place of matter, which originally was an inert and formless mass, till one of them, without any commission from the Deity, and merely to shew his own dexterity, reduced it into form and order, and enlivened some parts of it with animal spirit. The being who achieved all this, they called the Demiurgus.<sup>q</sup> But such was the perverseness of matter, that, when brought into form, it was the source of all evil. The Supreme Being, therefore, never intended to have given it a form; but as that had been now done, he, in order to prevent mischief as much as possible, added to the animal spirit of many of the enlivened parts, rational powers. The parts to whom rational powers were thus given, were the original parents of the human race; the other animated parts were the brute creation. Unluckily, however, the interposition of the Supreme Being was in vain; for the Demiurgus grew so aspiring, that he seduced men from their allegiance to the Supreme Being, and diverted all their devotion to himself.

These are the outlines of this fantastic philosophy. The corruptions flowing from it, when adapted to Christianity, were these. They held that the God of the Jews was the Demiurgus; that to overthrow and subvert the power and dominion of this Demiurgus, Jesus, one of the celestial *Æons*, was sent by the Supreme Being to enter into the body of the man Christ, in the

\* See account of the first Epistle to Timothy, &c.

<sup>p</sup> *Æon*, in Greek, properly signifies the Age of man; but, having been employed by philosophers to express the duration of

spiritual and invisible beings, the beings themselves were afterwards figuratively called *Æons*, or Durations, &c.

<sup>q</sup> That is, the operator, artificer, or workman.

shape of a dove; that Christ, by his miracles and sufferings, subverted the kingdom of the Demiurgus; but when he came to suffer, the Æon Jesus carried along with himself the soul of Christ, and left behind upon the cross only his body and animal spirit; that the Old Testament ought to be rejected, as having been the means whereby the Demiurgus supported his influence among men; that the serpent who deceived Eve, ought to be honoured for endeavouring to rescue men from their slavery to the Demiurgus; and, finally, that we ought not to marry, or procreate children, because, in so doing, we generate matter, which is the source of all evil; and that there is no resurrection of the body, because the body is material.

Against this philosophy, and not against true science of any kind, are all those texts of the New Testament levelled, which seem to arraign philosophy. This is that philosophy which is there described as vain, deceitful, traditionary, formed upon the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. These are the profane and old wives' fables; the endless genealogies, vain babblings, and opposition of science falsely so called, which we are to reject, and not to give heed to. And of these sophists, or Gnostics, as they called themselves, the apostles write, when they say, "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." And again: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?"

† Jude 4.

\* 1 Cor. xv. 12.

*To this Introduction may not improperly be subjoined a short Abstract of the Chronology of our Lord's Public Ministry, according to Sir Isaac Newton and some other critics, who make it to have lasted five passovers: but the more generally received opinion is, that it continued but three years, and was included in four passovers. By some critics the period is still further reduced. See Dr. Newton, bishop of Waterford, and Dr. Priestly's Controversy on this subject.*

*It is here copied from Mr. Bowyer's Conjectures on the New Testament, &c. 8vo. 1772, a work equally learned and curious. See his Preface, p. 31, where this chronology is defended and illustrated.*



## THE CHRONOLOGY OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

THE fifteenth of Tiberius began Aug. 19, in the year 4742 of the Julian period. [Tiberius's reign began Aug. 19, an. J. P. 4727, A.D. 14.] So soon as winter was over, and the weather became warm enough, John began to baptize, Luke iii. 1. [Suppose in March.]

A.D. 78.

31. 16-17. The **FIRST PASSOVER**, John ii. 33. Wednesday, March 28, after Christ's baptism, (which was, we may suppose, in September, the 17th of Tiberius not beginning till Aug. 19,) he came into Judea; stayed baptizing there while John was baptizing in Ænon, John iii. 22, 23.

John cast into prison in November. About the time of the winter solstice, [in December,] four months before the harvest, Jesus Christ went through Samaria into Cana of Galilee, Matt. iv. 12. A nobleman of Capernaum went to him there, and desired he would come and heal his son. He did not go, but said, "Go, thy son liveth," John iv.

After some time there, he passed through the midst of the people, and dwelt in Capernaum, Luke iv.

32. 17-18. The **SECOND PASSOVER**, Monday, April 14. He called Peter, Andrew, James, and John: preached the sermon on the mount, Matt. v.; whither multitudes followed him from Jerusalem, where he had been at the feast. When the winter was coming on, he went to the Feast of Tabernacles in September, Matt. viii. 19, 23; Luke ix. 51, 57.

He went about the villages of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and working many miracles, Matt. ix. Sent forth the twelve, Matt. x. Received a message from John the Baptist. Upbraided the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, because they repented not, Matt. xi. which shews there was a considerable time from the imprisonment of John till now.

A.D. 78.

33. 18-19. The THIRD PASSOVER, Friday, April 3, after which, the disciples, going through the corn-fields, rubbed the ears in their hands, Matt. xii; Luke vi. 1; δευτεροπρωτη, "on the second prime sabbath," that is, the second of the two great feasts of the passover; as we say, Low Sunday.

He healed a man on the sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 9; Luke vi. 6.

The Pharisees consulted to destroy him, when he withdrew himself, Matt. xii. 14.

He spake in a ship three parables: one, of the seedsman sowing the fields, Matt. xiii.; whence we may infer it was now seed-time, and that the Feast of the Tabernacles, in September or October, was past.

He went into his own country, and taught in the synagogues; but did not any mighty work, because of their unbelief. The twelve returned, having been abroad a year, and told him of John's being beheaded. He departed privately in a ship to Bethsaida. Fed five thousand in the desert, Matt. xiv; Luke ix; John vi. 4.

34. 19-20. The FOURTH PASSOVER, Friday, April 23, John vi. 4, to which he went not up, John vii. 1. Henceforward he was found on the coast of Tyre and Sidon; then by the sea of Galilee, next on the coast of Cæsarea Philippi, and lastly at Capernaum, Matt. xv. 21, 29; xvi. 3; xvii. 34. Went privately to the Feast of Tabernacles in autumn, John vii. 2. The Jews thought to stone him, but he escaped, John viii. 59. Went to the Feast of Dedication in winter, John x. 22. The Jews seeking to kill him, he fled beyond Jordan, John x. 39, 40; Matt. xix. 1. On the death of Lazarus, came to Bethany, John xi. 7, 18. Walked no more openly, but retired to Ephraim, a city in the wilderness, till

35. 20. The FIFTH and LAST PASSOVER, Wednesday, April 13. John xi. 53—55. In the consulship of Fabius and Vitellius.

A KEY  
TO  
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE sacred writings, which Christians receive as divinely inspired, are called in general *Scripture*, or *The Scriptures*, a word which literally signifies *writing*, or *The Writings*. This title often occurs in the New Testament,<sup>a</sup> and was commonly applied in the time of our Saviour to denote the books received by the Jews as the rule of faith: it has since been extended to the writings of the Apostles<sup>b</sup> and Evangelists, as completing the whole of divine revelation: so that the writings of the Old and New Testament are indiscriminately called by Christians, by way of distinction, *Scripture*, or *The Scriptures*.

The whole collection of these sacred writings is called the *BIBLE*. This word originally signifies *book*, and is given to the writings of the prophets and apostles by way of eminence. These collectively are called *The Book*, or *BIBLE*, the *Book of Books*, as superior in excellence to all others in the world.

The holy Scriptures are divided into the Old and New Testament. The former contains the books written under the old dispensation of the Law of Moses; the latter, those published under the new dispensation of the Gospel.

The New Testament (containing the inspired books written after Christ's ascension into heaven) is entitled in Greek *η Καιρη Διαθηκη*, a title which was early borrowed by the Church from Scripture,<sup>c</sup> and authorized by St. Paul himself.<sup>d</sup>

This title, according to the passages of Scripture whence it is taken, should be rendered *Covenant*. And in this view, *The New Covenant* signifies, "A book containing the terms of the new covenant between God and man." But according to the meaning of the primitive Church, which bestowed this title, it is not altogether improperly rendered *New Testament*; as being

<sup>a</sup> Tim. iii. 16; Luke iv. 21.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28; Gal. iii. 17; Heb. viii. 8; ix. 15, 20.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 16.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 14.

that wherein the Christian's inheritance is sealed to him as a son and heir of God, and wherein the death of Christ as a testator\* is related at large, and applied to our benefit. As this title implies that in the Gospel unspeakable gifts are given or bequeathed to us, antecedent to all conditions required of us; the title of Testament may be retained, although that of Covenant is most exact and proper.

The sacred writings of the New Testament are all handed down to us in the Greek language, which was that most generally understood at the time they were written; and are part historical, part epistolary, and part prophetic.<sup>f</sup> Of the former are

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

The word *Ευαγγελιον*, Evangelium, (Gospel,) signifies in Greek authors any joyful tidings, and is exactly answerable to our English word *Gospel*, which is derived from the Saxon words *god* (good) and *spel* (speech or tidings.) In the New Testament this term is confined to "the glad tidings of the actual coming of the Messiah;" and is even opposed to the prophecies concerning Christ, (Rom. i. 1, 2.) So in Matt. xi. 5, our Lord says, "The poor have the gospel preached to them:" i. e. the coming of the Messiah is preached to the poor. Hence the Church gave the name of Gospels to the lives of Christ; that is, to those sacred histories wherein the good news of the coming of the Messiah, with all its joyful circumstances, are recorded.

The chronological order of these sacred narratives, according to the most eminent critics who have considered this subject, is as follows:—

*Table of the Historical Books, with the places when and where written, according to Mr. Michaelis.*

Book.	Place.	A. D.
ST. MATTHEW.	JUDEA, or near it. <i>In Hebrew, for the Use of the Hebrews.</i>	61
ST. MARK.	ROME. <i>For the Use of the Romans who understood not Hebrew.</i>	61
ST. LUKE.	ALEXANDRIA. <i>For the Use of the Gentile Christians in Egypt, Greece, &amp;c.</i>	63 or 64
ST. JOHN.	EPHESUS. <i>To refute the Errors of Cerinthus and the Gnostics.</i>	69
The ACTS by ST. LUKE.	ALEXANDRIA. <i>For the Use of Churches everywhere.</i>	63 or 64

\* Heb. ix. 16, 17.

<sup>f</sup> Viz. Revelations.

Dr. Mill and Dr. Lardner concur for the most part in these dates, &c., only the latter thinks St. Matthew's gospel was written in Greek about A. D. 64; that St. Mark's was also penned the same year; and that St. Luke's gospel and Acts of the Apostles were first published in Greece.—Dr. Mill thinks St. John's gospel was written so late as the year 97, not long before his death.

It is the general opinion of these and almost all other critics, that the first three evangelists had not seen each other's gospels when they composed their own, except St. Mark, who is allowed to have abridged that of St. Matthew: but an ingenious writer<sup>c</sup> has lately compared the several gospels together in the original language, and thinks he has discovered strong internal proofs of the contrary: he has therefore offered a new arrangement according to the following table:—

*A Scheme of the times, places, and occasions of writing the gospels, according to Dr. Owen.*

Gospel.	Places.	A. D.
ST. MATTHEW'S.	JERUSALEM. <i>For the Use of the Jewish Converts.</i>	about 38 <sup>b</sup>
ST. LUKE'S.	CORINTH. <i>For the Use of the Gentile Converts.</i>	about 53
ST. MARK'S.	ROME. <i>For the Use of Christians at large.</i>	about 63
ST. JOHN'S.	EPHESUS. <i>To confute the Cerinthian and other Heresies.</i>	about 69

This ingenious writer thinks St. Matthew wrote his gospel for the use of the churches at Palestine, then composed of Jewish converts, and adapted it to the condition of the times, and the nature of their circumstances.

“When the Gentiles were admitted into the Christian church, St. Luke, as the exigence of their state required, strengthened their faith by another gospel, accommodated to their special use.

“And when the invidious distinction between Jew and Gentile had well nigh ceased, St. Mark, wisely rejecting the many peculiarities of these two gospels, compacted a third out of the most important contents, for the benefit and instruction of Christians at large.

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, 8vo. 1764. are controverted in the following pages; however, the general arrangement may be

<sup>b</sup> This and the date of St. Luke's gospel allowed to stand here.

“And afterwards, when the church was infested by heretics, St. John undertook to confute their errors from the life and conversation of Christ: which produced the last of these gospels; and afforded the author an opportunity of relating several remarkable things which had been omitted by his predecessors.”

These four gospels, he thinks, form one complete system of divinity: and if we read them in the order they are here placed in, we shall find them improving on one another, and yet all conspiring to one end, to a perfect representation of revealed religion. Each of the authors consulted the writings of his predecessors; and, either by the addition of facts, explanation of terms, or confirmation of doctrine, contributed something to the common stock and the general instruction of Christians. They likewise quoted each other's words, and thereby recommended each other's histories; by which means they became not only mutual vouchers for the truth of these genuine gospels, but at the same time joint-opposers of all those spurious ones that were impiously obtruded upon the world. St. Luke by his quotations referred his readers to the Gospel of St. Matthew. St. Mark again referred to both the former. And all three were approved by St. John, and appointed to be read in churches. And afterwards, when he wrote his own, it was ushered into the world with the knowledge, approbation, and perhaps testimony, of all the Asiatic bishops. Thus was the whole evangelic history finally closed, and the evangelical canon established upon the firmest ground, and by the most venerable authority.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

THIS gospel was written before the other three. The author of it was an eye-witness of most of the facts he relates, having been early called to the apostolic office by Christ himself.<sup>1</sup> Besides the name of Matthew, he had also that of Levi, being the son of Alphaeus; but not of that Alphaeus, or Cleophas, who was the father of James, &c.<sup>2</sup> He was originally by profession a publican,

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 3.

or collector of the Roman taxes: his office consisted in gathering the customs of such commodities as came by the sea of Galilee, and in receiving tribute from such passengers as went by water. This lucrative post he cheerfully quitted for the sake of Christ, to whom he became a faithful attendant, and eye-witness of all his miracles.

In what year St. Matthew wrote his gospel is not agreed by ancient writers; some dating it A. D. 41, others in 49, and others between the years 61 and 64. This last account is gathered from Irenæus, and is what the most judicious modern critics<sup>k</sup> are inclined to prefer; not only as Irenæus was the most ancient of those who have given the circumstance of time, but for other reasons. The Hebrews suffered about that time a heavy peræcution, which almost drove them to apostacy, and obliged St. Paul to write his epistle to them. In these circumstances nothing could be of more expediency and use to them, than a history of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. It is most probable, therefore, that both this gospel and the epistle to the Hebrews were written with the same view, to preserve the Christians of Judea in the faith.

Again, this gospel contains several plain predictions of the miseries and desolation of Jerusalem, and of the overthrow of the temple, &c., besides many other figurative intimations of the same thing, which could not safely be published to all the world in writing, till towards the conclusion of the Jewish state.

An ingenious writer<sup>l</sup> has lately proposed a much earlier date of St. Matthew's gospel: he indeed thinks that it was written in a time of persecution, for the use of the Jews; but then he supposes it was in that first persecution which raged in Palestine after the death of the martyr Stephen, about the year of Christ 38, in the second year of the emperor Caligula.

There is, however, a capital objection to this very early date; and that is, the great clearness with which the comprehensive design of the Christian dispensation, as extending to the whole Gentile world, is unfolded in this gospel. Whereas it is well known and allowed by all, that for a while our Lord's disciples laboured under Jewish prejudices; and that they did not fully

<sup>k</sup> Michaelis is for the year 61. Lardner is for 64. See also Baanage, &c.

<sup>l</sup> Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, 8vo. p. 22.

understand all his discourses<sup>m</sup> at the time they were spoken. They could not clearly discern the extensive design of the gospel scheme, till after St. Peter had been at the house of Cornelius, and there received Gentile converts into the church without circumcision;<sup>n</sup> nor indeed till after the gospel had been preached abroad in foreign countries by St. Paul and other apostles.

Now if we turn to St. Matthew's gospel, we everywhere find the enlarged views of his divine Master represented in too clear a manner to admit a doubt that the writer was ignorant of their full tendency and meaning. Thus he shews that the apostles were to teach all nations.<sup>o</sup> He represents the spirituality and freedom of the gospel:<sup>p</sup> and that our Saviour was designed to be a blessing to the Gentiles.<sup>q</sup> That the same evangelist understood the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, may be inferred from several passages.<sup>r</sup> He had also a distinct apprehension of the extent of our Lord's kingdom and the progress of his doctrine, when he recorded those parables in ch. xiii. And it is probable he had some knowledge of the gospel's having been preached out of Judea, when he put down that declaration concerning the woman in ch. xxvi. 13.

There is also an expression used once or twice, intimating that some considerable space of time had elapsed between the event and the time when this gospel was written. See ch. xxvii. 8, and ch. xviii. 15.<sup>s</sup>

Whoever weighs all these circumstances will rather be inclined to fix the date of this gospel in the latter persecution of the Jewish Christians of Palestine, about the year 61, than in the more early one in 38. For it is the unanimous opinion of antiquity, that

“St. Matthew wrote his gospel for the service of the Jews in Palestine;<sup>t</sup> with a view to confirm those who believed, and to convert, if possible, those who believed not.” This opinion is supported by several passages of his gospel. Thus the evangelist

<sup>m</sup> Vide John xvi. 7—14; and other passages.

<sup>n</sup> Acts x. This event is placed by chronologists about the year 39.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. xxviii. 19.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. xv. 10, 20.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. ii; iii. 9.

<sup>r</sup> Ch. viii. 10, 12; xxi. 33, 46; xxii. 1, 14.

<sup>s</sup> See this argument handled more at large by Dr. Lardner, Supplement, ch. v. vol. i. The same author has shewn many advantages of the late publication of the gospel in his *Credib.* vol. viii. p. 124, 137.

<sup>t</sup> Origen. apud Euseb. l. vi. c. 25. Hieron. and Theophylact. in Matt. Vide Dr. Owen, *passim*.



begins with the genealogy of Christ from Abraham, which, agreeably to the Jewish custom, he gives according to his *legal* descent by Joseph, his supposed father; deducing it down from Abraham through David, to shew his title to the kingdom of Israel. Thus also he refers often to Jewish customs; relates the most of our Saviour's discourses against Jewish errors and superstitions; quotes the greatest number of passages from the Jewish scriptures; answers the most considerable Jewish objections; and frequently makes use of the terms and phrases of Jewish theology.

That this evangelist wrote in a time of persecution, appears from the many useful lessons which he gives to comfort and support the suffering Christians; and to moderate, win over, or at least deter, the persecuting Jews. With regard to the Christians, he informs them that their afflictions were no more than what they had been taught to expect, and had engaged to bear, when they embraced the gospel: 'that their sufferings were useful to them, as trials of their faith:' that a cowardly desertion of the gospel would only expose them to greater calamities, and cut them off from the hopes of heaven: 'that they might lawfully use means of preservation, when consistent with innocence:' that the observance of the rules of the gospel was an excellent means to soften the fury of their enemies: 'and that it was better to suffer martyrdom, than by any base compliance to incur God's displeasure.'

On the other hand, with regard to the unmerciful Jews, he tries to soften their prejudices, and engage them in the practice of meekness and charity: 'to this end he inculcates the amiableness of a compassionate and benevolent disposition; its advantages here, and rewards hereafter.' He reminds them of the judgments inflicted on their fathers for the cruel treatment of the prophets, and that they might expect worse if they persisted in the ways of cruelty: 'for that God, though long-suffering, would at last vindicate his elect, and punish their oppressors with a general destruction.'

<sup>a</sup> Ch. xxiii. 1—33.

<sup>v</sup> Ch. x. 21, 22, 34—36; xvi. 24.

<sup>w</sup> Ch. v. 11; xxiv. 9—13.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. x. 28, 32, 33, 39.

<sup>y</sup> Ch. x. 16, 17, 23.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. v. 39; vii. 12, 24—27; v. 13—20.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. xvi. 25—27; x. 28.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. ix. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. v. 3—48; xviii. 23—35.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. v. 5, 7, 9; x. 40—42; xviii. 23—35; v. 21—26; xxv. 31—46.

<sup>e</sup> Ch. xxiii. 27—39; x. 14, 15.

<sup>f</sup> Ch. xxiv. 1, &c.

St. Matthew is said by ancient writers to have written his gospel originally in Hebrew or Syriac; out of which it was early translated, either by himself, or some other apostolic writer, into Greek, as being the more universal language. However, some judicious critics among the modern, by examining the internal structure of the Greek text, have found reason to believe that the ancients were mistaken in this respect, and that the Greek copy is not a version, but the original.<sup>a</sup>

After all, whether the present gospel was the original or the translation, it is agreed on all hands to be of divine authority, being published in the apostolic age; universally received by the Christian church as authentic; and many passages of it being (as a learned writer has lately shewn<sup>b</sup>) incorporated into the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, who have thereby borne testimony to its genuine sense, and set their seals to its authenticity.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

THIS gospel is agreed to have been written by that Mark whom St. Peter affectionately calls his son, i. e. his worthy disciple,<sup>i</sup> and whom the ancients affirm to have been the familiar companion of that apostle. He is also believed to have been the John surnamed Mark,<sup>j</sup> to whose mother's house St. Peter retired when released by the angel out of prison,<sup>k</sup> and who is the same John that accompanied St. Paul and Barnabas in their travels.<sup>l</sup> Mark was only his surname, which he had probably assumed in compliance with the Jewish custom, while he travelled among the heathens, to whom his Hebrew name of John would have appeared too foreign.

His mother dwelt at Jerusalem, and the Christians assembled

<sup>a</sup> See Lardner, Jortin, Doddridge, Wetstein, Basnage, &c. However, the contrary opinion is maintained with no mean arguments by Michaelis.

<sup>b</sup> See Dr. Owen's Observations on the Four Gospels. By way of specimen, compare Mark iv. 1—9, with Matt. xiii. 1—9; and Mark xiv. 26—46, with Matt. xxvi. 36—50. So again compare Luke iii.

4—6, with Matt. iii. 3, &c.; Luke iii. 7—9, with Matt. iii. 7—10; Luke iii. 16, 17, with Matt. iii. 11, 12; Luke xii. 22—31, with Matt. vi. 25—33; Luke vii. 20, 22—28, with Matt. xi. 3—11, &c.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Pet. v. 13.

<sup>j</sup> See Lardner, Michaelis, &c.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xii. 12.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid. ver. 25.

at her house;™ he was cousin to Barnabas,<sup>n</sup> and attended him and St. Paul in their first travels among the Gentiles;° but he soon separated from them,<sup>p</sup> which occasioned a division between these two apostles, when Barnabas took him along with him another journey.<sup>q</sup> However, when St. Mark lived at Rome about the time of St. Paul's imprisonment, that apostle had so good an opinion of him, that he reckons him among his fellow-labourers,<sup>r</sup> and had thoughts of sending him to Colosse.<sup>s</sup>

St. Mark, even humanly speaking, was a very credible witness of the life of Christ. He was, strictly speaking, an Evangelist; i. e. a preacher sent by the apostles to Jews and Gentiles without being confined to any particular church. What Timothy was to St. Paul, Mark was to St. Peter and Barnabas, and at last he bore the same relation to St. Paul himself. It was usual for such evangelists to have extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost.<sup>t</sup> Hence we have just reason to believe that St. Mark wrote by inspiration: and as the primitive church has transmitted to us his gospel as a book of divine authority, without ever entertaining the least doubt of his inspiration, we have no reason to consider it as a mere human composition.

St. Mark is universally allowed to have written after St. Matthew;<sup>u</sup> and a learned writer<sup>v</sup> thinks he also wrote after St. Luke. The gospels of these two evangelists were written, that of St. Matthew with particular reference to the Jews, that of St. Luke with a view to the Gentiles; the gospel of St. Mark (according to this supposition) was composed last of the three, in a still more simple form, and for more general use. It was written at the request and for the use of the Christian church at Rome, which was at that time the grand metropolis and common centre of all civilized nations. St. Mark's gospel is therefore a simple and compendious narrative, divested of almost all peculiarities, and accommodated to the use of Christians in general.

As the other two evangelists had been so full in their accounts

<sup>m</sup> Acts iii. 12.

<sup>n</sup> Col. iv. 10.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xii. 25.

<sup>p</sup> Acts xiii. 13.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. xv. 36—40.

<sup>r</sup> Philem. 24.

<sup>s</sup> Col. iv. 10.

<sup>t</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

<sup>u</sup> Michaelis thinks that St. Mark had

St. Matthew's gospel chiefly before him, and wrote principally with a design of publishing in a more known language (sc. the Greek) that which St. Matthew had written in Hebrew.

<sup>v</sup> Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, mentioned above in the Introduction.

of our Saviour's birth and infancy, this will account for St. Mark's passing over that period of the history, and confining his narrative to the time of our Lord's public mission. And as this had been so well related already, he had little more to do than to abridge the two former gospels, varying some expressions, and inserting some additions, which he probably had from St. Peter. Whoever compares St. Mark with the other two evangelists, will find that he copies largely from both,<sup>†</sup> and takes one or other of them constantly for his guide, but chiefly St. Matthew: the order, which is his own, is very close and well connected. In his account of facts he is clear, exact, and critical; for he wrote for the perusal of a learned people, and he proceeds with caution, as it were to clear his gospel from all objections.

His exordium is singular; for whilst other evangelists style our Saviour "the Son of man," he calls him expressly "the Son of God;" an august title, the more likely to engage the attention of the lordly Romans. With the same view probably he omits such particulars as might be of more use to his countrymen than to foreigners; as the genealogy of Christ; the massacre of the children at Bethlehem; the account of Jesus's birth; the sermon on the mount, which exposes the false morality of the Pharisees, to which the Gentiles were strangers; and in general the quotations of certain prophecies of the Old Testament. On the other hand, he adds some things for the sake of the Gentiles, to enable them to understand the history of Christ. Thus, in ch. vii. 2, he explains what was the meaning of "defiled" or "common" among the Jews: and in ver. 3, 4, instructs his readers in the Jewish customs, which was unnecessary in St. Matthew. In ch. xv. 21, having mentioned Simon the Cyrenian, he adds, that he was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," because both these persons resided at Rome, and were known to the Roman Christians.\* And perhaps the young

<sup>†</sup> See Dr. Owen's Observations, &c. passim. Compare in the Greek, Mark iv. 1—9, with Matt. xiii. 1—9, where the parable of the Sower is taken from St. Matthew. So again, in the explanation of the parable, ver. 15—20, he had his eye on St. Matt. ver. 19—23, till he comes to the conclusion, ver. 21, 22, 25, where he makes a transition to St. Luke, ch. viii. 16—18.

Compare also St. Mark i. 21—28, with Luke iv. 31—37, &c. &c. This coincidence proves at least that one of these two evangelists (St. Mark and St. Luke) had seen the other when he wrote. Which of them wrote first must be collected from other proofs.

\* See Rom. xvi. 13.

man mentioned in ch. xiv. 51, 52, was a Roman, whose curiosity might lead him to know the cause of the tumult, and being a stranger might the sooner be suspected, and therefore apprehended. He had perhaps often told the story at Rome; and the evangelist thought proper to confirm it. In this light it makes a good argument. All internal marks of this sort confirm the report of the ancients, that St. Mark wrote his gospel chiefly for the use of the Romans.

The time when he wrote it appears<sup>7</sup> to have been about the end of the year 52 or 53, the ninth of the emperor Nero, when the church stood in need of all the consolations of religion, to support it under the afflictive weight of a most dreadful and cruel persecution.

The Greek language was at that time more in request at Rome than the French is among us; so that the most familiar letters of the emperor Augustus (which are still extant) are commonly either in Greek, or intermixed with Greek. We are not therefore to wonder that St. Mark, a foreigner, wrote his gospel in that language for the use of the Christian church in general.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

THIS Gospel is generally allowed to have been written by that "beloved physician," who is mentioned by St. Paul in Col. iv. 14, and whom he expressly asserts to have been a Gentile.<sup>a</sup> Consequently he was neither one of the seventy disciples, nor an eye-witness of our Saviour's miracles, as hath been sometimes supposed;<sup>b</sup> but we know that he was intimately conversant with apostolical persons.

That St. Luke travelled with St. Paul to Rome, and there assisted him for some time, appears from several passages of Scripture.<sup>b</sup> From thence he is affirmed by the ancients to have gone into Africa, and to have preached the gospel at Thebes in Egypt. His intercourse with the apostles and eye-witnesses of

<sup>7</sup> See Dr. Owen's Observations, p. 76—80. Mill, &c.

<sup>a</sup> Col. iv. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Luke i. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Acts xxviii. 13—16; Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24.

the works of Christ, renders him an unexceptionable witness as a man ; especially since he assures us that he investigated every thing diligently,<sup>c</sup> and had drawn it from the fountain head.<sup>d</sup> And it is no more objection to the divinity of his book that he wrote from the information of others, than it is to the inspiration of Moses that he took his first book from ancient records, and sometimes refers to other books ;\* and therefore we may well receive the universal testimony of the Christian church, that St. Luke, under the direction of the Holy Ghost, committed to writing those particulars which he had received from infallible witnesses.

It has been the common opinion, that St. Luke wrote later than St. Matthew and St. Mark : but the ingenious writer so often quoted<sup>f</sup> thinks that St. Mark wrote last of the three ; and this, as we have seen, has great appearance of reason.<sup>g</sup>

St. Jerom affirms that St. Luke penned his gospel on the borders of Achaia and Bœotia, which should seem to be at the time when he was attending St. Paul in his travels through Greece, under whose care and inspection he probably wrote it. It is agreed to be this evangelist whom that apostle expressly styles, "the brother whose praise is in the gospel."<sup>h</sup> And that St. Luke wrote agreeably at least to St. Paul's sense, will be evident to any one that compares the two passages quoted in the margin,<sup>i</sup> where the apostle and evangelist have both used the very same words in Greek to describe the institution of the Lord's Supper : this coincidence shews the agreement of their sentiments, whichever of them is supposed to have written first.

St. Matthew's gospel being intended chiefly for the Jews, it was highly expedient that some inspired apostolical person should write such a history of our Saviour's life, as might satisfy the inquiries, and be adapted to the situation of the Gentile converts. This accordingly appears to have been the peculiar view of St. Luke in his gospel : for, writing to those who were far

<sup>c</sup> Ἀκριβώς.

<sup>d</sup> Ἀνωθεν.

<sup>e</sup> Numb. xxi. 27.

<sup>f</sup> Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Gospels. He fixes the date of St. Luke's gospel in A. D. 53 ; if so, it must have been written before St. Matthew's, (see above, p. 367) ; but as the contrary seems demonstrable from the passages of

St. Matthew copied by St. Luke, (see below,) we must assign a later date to St. Luke's gospel, unless we date St. Matthew's gospel in 41 or 49.

<sup>g</sup> Page 377.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 18.

<sup>i</sup> Luke xxii. 19, 20, with 1 Cor. xi. 23

—25.

remote from the scene of action, and ignorant of Jewish affairs, it was requisite for him to descend to many particulars, and touch on many points, which would have been unnecessary when writing to the Jews. Hence he begins his history so much farther back than the rest, and is so careful in specifying times and places. Hence he gives the genealogy of Christ according to his *natural* descent from the Virgin Mary,<sup>j</sup> and carries it up to Adam; shewing he was that seed of the woman, who was promised for the redemption of the *whole* world.

With regard to the general construction of St. Luke's gospel, it seems to be formed nearly on the same plan with that of St. Matthew, whose very words are sometimes copied.<sup>k</sup> Indeed, as the Gentile converts suffered the same things from their countrymen that the Jewish Christians did from the Jews, it was necessary St. Luke should adopt much the same points of instruction, both to support the poor persecuted Christians,<sup>l</sup> and to soften and convert their malicious adversaries, of whom the Jews residing in the several countries were still the chief.<sup>m</sup> But as the rage and envy of the Jews proceeded now from another cause, (for they persecuted the Gentile Christians for laying claim to the privileges of the gospel,) we shall accordingly find St. Luke's narrative peculiarly adapted to remove their prejudices and obviate their objections; to soften and enlarge their minds, and to deter them from their malicious proceedings.<sup>n</sup>

St. Luke wrote in Greek, and (as appears from the beginning both of his gospel and Acts of the Apostles) at the request of a Christian of distinction, whose name was Theophilus. He calls him *κρατιστε*, or excellent, as we address certain persons with the title of Excellency. The same title in Greek is given in the Acts to the Roman governor,<sup>o</sup> and was equivalent to the Latin *Optimus*, or *Optimas*, which the Romans addressed to their principal senators of the most ancient families. A great critic<sup>p</sup>

<sup>j</sup> By interposing an easy parenthesis, the pedigree in St. Luke is naturally connected with the family of Mary. <sup>k</sup> And Jesus began to be, or was, when he began his ministry, about thirty years of age; being (as was supposed, the son of Joseph, but) in reality the son of Heli, who was the father of Mary."—*Kidder*.

<sup>l</sup> See instances referred to above in page 369; and others may be seen in Dr. Owen.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. vi. 20—23; xii. 4—12, 31, &c.; xviii. 28—30.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. vi. 24—26; x. 12; xiii. 1—5; xix. 14—44.

<sup>n</sup> Vide ch. iv. 25—27; xiii. 1—5; xiii. 28—30; xiv. 16—24; xv. 11—32; xviii. 7, 8; xx. 9—16; xxi. 5, &c.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3; xxvi. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Michaelis: See his Lectures on the New Testament.

thinks this was some nobleman who dwelt in Upper Egypt, and that St. Luke's gospel was written about A.D. 63 in that country, near Thebes; which he supposes St. Jerom mistook for Thebes in Bœotia. He observes that the Syriac subscription represents this gospel to have been published in Alexandria in Egypt, and he imagines many things in it were particularly expressed with a view to refute the falsehoods of the Egyptian gospel; an erroneous narrative, whence Mahomet is believed to have extracted many of those false particulars of our Saviour's history which he has inserted in his Alcoran.

Perhaps St. Luke's gospel was first written in Greece, and re-published along with the Acts when he was afterwards in Egypt. Be that as it may, the date assigned above is probably the true one; at least it appears pretty evident that St. Luke's gospel was written after the year 61, if that be admitted to have been the date of St. Matthew's gospel.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

THIS gospel is universally agreed to have been written after all the rest, with a view of completing whatever was deficient in them all. This evangelist, independent of his divine inspiration, must be allowed to have had a most perfect knowledge of the facts he relates; and as he undoubtedly examined all the other gospels before he wrote, he is an authentic witness to their veracity. He was, according to the testimony of the ancients, of our Saviour's near kindred. Before he became acquainted with our Lord, he was a disciple of John the Baptist, and probably one of those two whom he sent to Christ.<sup>†</sup> Our Saviour honoured him with the most intimate confidence, and loved him beyond his other disciples. He, and Peter, and James were (exclusive of the rest) witnesses of the raising Jairus's daughter, of Christ's transfiguration, and of his agony in the garden. He was the only apostle who stood under the cross when Christ was crucified. So that he was better qualified than any other to describe the miracles and history of Jesus Christ. A very discerning writer<sup>‡</sup> thinks that St. John, in the lifetime of his blessed

<sup>†</sup> John i. 37—42.

<sup>‡</sup> Michaelis. See his Lectures on the New Testament.



Master, wrote down some of the heads of his discourses: at least that his style perfectly resembles that of those who relate the discourses of another from short heads taken down while they were spoken.

But we are to consider this gospel not only as an historical narrative, but also as a controversial treatise, designed to refute various heresies. For no sooner was the Christian church established, but its doctrines were obscured, debased, and corrupted by errors and heresies of various kinds. The first heretics assumed the name of *Gnostics*, i. e. "knowing ones," pretending to superior light and knowledge. They were afterwards followed by the Nicolaitans, whose false tenets were propagated by Ebion and Cerinthus. These heresies prevailed most in Asia. Wherefore the Asiatic bishop desired St. John to draw up a refutation of them: and he, in compliance with their request, composed his gospel with a view to put those heretics "to shame; and to shew that there is one God, who by Christ his Word made all things; and that the Creator and Father of our Lord were not, as they pretended, distinct beings," &c.\* Wherefore he does not relate the birth and parentage of Christ, or even those facts of which he, Peter, and James were eye-witnesses, exclusive of the other apostles; but he chiefly collects such discourses and miracles as confirm the doctrines laid down in the first chapter, which were counter-positions to those of Cerinthus and other heretics, who maintained the grossest errors concerning Christ.

Cerinthus is said to have taught, 1. That the most high God was entirely unknown before the appearance of Christ, and dwelt in a remote heaven called Pleroma, with the chief spirits or *Æons*.<sup>†</sup> 2. That this supreme God first generated an only begotten Son, who again begat the Word, which was inferior to the first-born. 3. That Christ was a still lower *Æon*, though far superior to some others. 4. That there were two high *Æons* distinct from Christ; one called Life, and the other Light. 5. That from the *Æons* again proceeded inferior orders of spirits; and particularly one Demiurgus, who created this visible world out of eternal matter. 6. That this Demiurgus was ignorant of the supreme God, and much lower than the *Æons*, which were wholly invisible. 7. That he was however the

\* Irenæus contra Hæres. lib. iii. c. 2.

† See the Introduction.

peculiar God and protector of the Israelites, and sent Moses to them, whose laws and injunctions were to be of perpetual obligation. 8. That Jesus was a mere man, the real son of Joseph and Mary. 9. That the Æon Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove, when he was baptized; revealed to him the unknown Father, and empowered him to work miracles. 10. That the Æon Light entered John the Baptist in the same manner; and therefore that John was in some respects to be preferred to Christ. 11. That when Jesus had propagated the knowledge of God, and came to suffer, Christ left him, and fled to the uppermost heaven. 12. That Jesus Christ should reign on earth a thousand years, and his disciples enjoy all sensual delights. Some of the Cerinthian sect denied also the resurrection of the dead; and many of them maintained that Jesus Christ was not yet risen.

Now we shall find St. John's gospel divided into three parts.

The first contains doctrines laid down in opposition to those of Cerinthus."

The second delivers the proofs of those doctrines in an historical manner.'

The third is a conclusion or appendix, giving an account of the person of the writer, and the view he had in writing."

In what year this gospel was written, is not agreed among the ancients. It should seem to have been before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the year of our Lord 70, for St. John speaks of that city as still subsisting: "there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool," &c.<sup>x</sup> On the other hand it appears, from the gospel itself, to have been written after the death of St. Peter, which is generally placed in the year 68. For the other evangelists, when they relate the cutting off the high priest's servant's ear, conceal the name of Peter, lest the Jews should have a legal pretence to prosecute him, and deliver him to the Romans to be capitally punished; whereas St. John mentions him expressly by name.'<sup>y</sup> Nor could St. John probably have interpreted the words of Christ, "thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee,"<sup>z</sup> concerning the manner of St. Peter's death, if it had been written before the crucifixion of that apostle: for before that time the words were ambiguous.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. i. 1—18.

<sup>y</sup> Ch. i. 19—xx. 29.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. xx. 30, to the end.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. v. 2.

<sup>y</sup> Ch. xviii. 10.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. xxi. 18.

This limits the writing of this gospel to the year 69, a year expressly specified by an ancient writer. Others give the date of it so late as A. D. 97, but this is plainly confuted by the above arguments.

According to every computation, St. John is allowed to have closed the whole gospel history, to have ratified and confirmed the former gospel, and to have established the evangelical canon on the firmest ground and most venerable authority.

### THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THIS forms a central or intermediate book to connect the Gospels and the Epistles. It is an useful postscript to the former, and a proper introduction to the latter.

This divine history is evidently a second part or continuation of St. Luke's gospel, as appears from the very beginning of it; and that both were written by the same evangelist, is attested by the most ancient Christian writers. The subscriptions at the end of some Greek MSS. and of the copies of the Syriac version, testify that St. Luke wrote the Acts at Alexandria in Egypt.

As the narrative reaches down to the year of Christ 63, the Acts cannot have been written earlier than that year; and that they were not written much later, may be inferred from the subject being continued no farther, which otherwise it would probably have been; at least St. Luke would have been apt to have given the issue of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, as what the Christian reader would have been curious to have known.

Considered as a mere human witness, St. Luke was better able than others to draw up an authentic history of the apostles, as he had accompanied St. Paul in so many of his journeys. As he was a physician by profession, he was able to form a sound judgment of the miracles St. Paul wrought upon the diseased, and to make a credible report of them. But he seems not to have had the gift of healing himself; for in chap. xxviii. 8, 9, St. Paul, and not he, healed the sick. His accounts are generally so full and circumstantial, that the reader is perfectly enabled to examine the facts himself, and to judge whether they were attended with any deception or not.

St. Luke appears not to have intended to write a complete ecclesiastical history of the whole Christian church during the first thirty years after Christ's ascension. For he almost wholly omits what passed among the Jews after the conversion of St. Paul; though the labours and sufferings of the other apostles could not but have afforded interesting materials.

If we examine the contents of this book we may observe two ends pursued in it.

1st. To give an authentic relation of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the first miracles by which the truth of the Christian religion was established. An authentic account of this was indispensably necessary, since Christ had so often promised the Holy Ghost to his disciples; and if a heathen were to receive this gospel, he would naturally inquire how it had been first promulged at Jerusalem.

2nd. To impart those accounts which evince the claim of the Gentiles to the church of Christ; a point particularly contested by the Jews about the time of St. Luke's writing the Acts. St. Paul was at that very time a prisoner at Rome, upon the accusation of the Jews, who became his enemies for having admitted the Gentiles into the church.

Hence it is that St. Luke relates the conversion of the Samaritans,<sup>a</sup> and the history of Cornelius,<sup>b</sup> who, though he was not of the circumcision, had, in consequence of a divine command, been instructed in the gospel by St. Peter himself, to whom St. Paul's opponents appealed.<sup>c</sup> For the same reason he relates (ch. xv.) what was decreed by the first council at Jerusalem concerning the Levitical law; and treats most fully of the conversion of St. Paul, and of his mission and transactions among the Gentiles.

The Acts of the Apostles may very properly be divided into seven parts, viz.

I. The account of the first Pentecost after Christ's death, and of the events preceding it, contained in ch. i. ii.

II. The Acts at Jerusalem, and throughout Judea and Samaria, among the Christians of the circumcision, ch. iii. ix. xii.

III. The Acts in Cæsarea, and the receiving of the Gentiles, ch. xxi.

<sup>a</sup> Ch. viii.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. x. xi.

<sup>c</sup> Gal. ii. 6—21.

IV. The first circuit of St. Barnabas and St. Paul among the Gentiles, ch. xiii. xiv.

V. The embassy to Jerusalem, and the first council there, wherein the Jews and Gentiles were admitted to an equality, ch. xv.

VI. The second circuit of St. Paul. ch. xvi. xix.

VII. St. Paul's third journey to Rome, ch. xix. 21—28.

## THE EPISTLES.

THE sum and substance of the Christian religion is contained in the history of the life and death, the doctrines and discourses, of our Lord in the Four Gospels. The epistolary writings of the apostles were occasional, being intended to confirm the several churches to whom they are addressed in the same rules of gospel faith and practice as they had been before instructed in; and accommodated to the disputes and controversies, errors and false notions, that prevailed among them.

The general method observable in these apostolic letters is, first, to discuss the particular point debated in the church, or among the persons to whom they are addressed, and which was the occasion of their being written; and in the next place, to give such exhortations to every Christian duty and virtue as would be at all times, and in every church, of necessary and absolute importance; paying a particular regard to those virtues which the disputes that occasioned the epistle might tempt them to neglect. Now the former part of these epistolary writings cannot be rightly understood, but by attending carefully to the state of the question there determined. Therefore the errors and vain disputes concerning faith and works, justification and sanctification, election and reprobation, &c. which have so long vexed and distracted the minds of Christians, have all arisen from one grand mistake of applying to themselves or other particular persons now, certain phrases or passages which plainly referred to the then state and condition, not of particular persons, but of whole churches, whether Jewish or Gentile, of those times. Perplexed and puzzled with these knotty points, many well-meaning Christians have been drawn aside from

paying a due regard to those moral and weighty exhortations, which are most easy to be understood, and of infinite obligation to be put in practice.<sup>d</sup>

Of the Epistles, fourteen are by St. Paul, which are not placed according to the order of time in which they were written, but according to the precedence or supposed rank of the churches and persons to whom they are addressed; it will be proper therefore to exhibit here their chronological order according to two eminent critics.

*The Chronological Order of the Epistles, &c. according to Michaelis, and some others.*

Epistle to, or by.	Places where written.	A. D.
1 PETER	JERUSALEM	49
GALATIANS	THESSALONICA	51
1 THESSALONIANS	CORINTH	52
2 THESSALONIANS	CORINTH	52
1 CORINTHIANS	EPHESUS	57
2 CORINTHIANS	MACEDONIA	58
1 TIMOTHY		58
ROMANS	CORINTH	<i>end of</i> 58
JAMES	<i>Uncertain</i>	61
PHILEMON	} ROME	62
COLOSSIANS		
EPHESIANS		
PHILIPPIANS		
HEBREWS	ROME	63
TITUS	NICOPOLIS	<i>Uncertain</i>
2 PETER	<i>Uncertain</i>	67
JUDE	<i>Uncertain</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>
2 TIMOTHY	ROME	67
<i>The Three Epistles of JOHN</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>	70
REVELATIONS	PATMOS	{ 54
		{ 96

*A Table of St. Paul's Epistles, with the places where and times when written, according to Dr. Lardner.*

Epistle.	Place.	A. D.
1 THESSALONIANS	CORINTH	52
2 THESSALONIANS	CORINTH	52
GALATIANS	} CORINTH	<i>near end of</i> 52
1 CORINTHIANS	} EPHESUS	<i>beginning of</i> 53
1 CORINTHIANS	EPHESUS	<i>the beginning of</i> 53
1 TIMOTHY	MACEDONIA	56
TITUS	} MACEDONIA,	<i>the end of</i> 56

<sup>d</sup> Vide Pyle.

2 CORINTHIANS	- - - - -	MACEDONIA	- -	about October	57
ROMANS	- - - - -	CORINTH	- -	about February	58
EPHESIANS	- - - - -	ROME	- - - -	about April	61
2 TIMOTHY	- - - - -	ROME	- - - -	about May	61
PHILIPPIANS	- - - - -	ROME	- - -	before the end of	62
COLOSSIANS	- - - - -	ROME	- - -	before the end of	61
PHILEMON	- - - - -	ROME	- - -	before the end of	62
HEBREWS	- - - - -	{ ROME or ITALY }	- - -	in spring of	63

*A Table of the Catholic Epistles and the Revelation, according to Dr. Lardner.*

Epistle.	Place.	A. D.
JAMES	JUDEA	- - - - - 61
		{ or beginning of 62
<i>The Two Epistles of PETER</i>	ROME	- - - - - 64
1 JOHN	EPHESUS	- - - - - about 80
		{ between 80
<i>2nd and 3rd of JOHN</i>	EPHESUS	- - - - - and 90
JUDE	Unknown	- - - - - 64 or 65
	{ PATMOS or EPHESUS }	- - - - - 95 or 96

## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS celebrated epistle was written by St. Paul from Corinth, when he was setting out for Jerusalem with the supplies which had been collected in Macedonia and at Corinth; that is, according to some critics,\* in the beginning, or, according to others, towards the end of the year 58, which was the fourth of the emperor Nero.

The Christian church at Rome appears not to have been planted by any apostle; wherefore St. Paul, lest it should be corrupted by the Jews, who then swarmed in Rome, and of whom many were converted to Christianity, sends them an abstract of the principal truths of the gospel, and endeavours to guard them against those erroneous notions which the Jews had of justification, and of the election of their own nation.

Now the Jews assigned three grounds for justification. First, "The extraordinary piety and merits of their ancestors, and the covenant made by God with those holy men." They thought

\* So Dr. Lardner, who thinks St. Paul came to Corinth in November, A. D. 57, and wrote this epistle in February following. The other opinion is that of Michaelis. Vide Rom. xv. 25—27.

God could not hate the children of such meritorious parents; and as he had made a covenant with the patriarchs to bless their posterity, he was obliged thereby to pardon their sins. Secondly, "A perfect knowledge and diligent study of the law of Moses." They made this a plea for the remission of all their sins and vices. Thirdly, "The works of the Levitical law," which were to expiate sin, especially circumcision and sacrifices. Hence they inferred that the Gentiles must receive the whole law of Moses in order to be justified and saved.

The Jews' doctrine concerning election was, "that as God had promised to Abraham to bless his seed, to give him not only spiritual blessings, but also the land of Canaan; to suffer him to dwell there in prosperity, and to consider him as his church upon earth;" that therefore this blessing extended to their whole nation, and that God was bound to fulfil these promises to them, whether they were righteous or wicked, faithful or unbelieving. They even believed that a prophet ought not to pronounce against their nation the prophecies with which he was inspired; but was rather to beg of God to expunge his name out of the book of the living.

These previous remarks will serve as a key to unlock this difficult epistle, of which we shall now give a short analysis.<sup>f</sup>

1. The epistle begins with the usual salutation with which the Greeks began their letters.<sup>g</sup>

2. St. Paul professes his joy at the flourishing state of the church at Rome, and his desire to come and preach the gospel.<sup>h</sup> Then he insensibly introduces the capital point he intended to prove, viz.

3. The subject of the gospel;<sup>i</sup> that it reveals a righteousness unknown before, which is derived solely from faith, and to which Jews and Gentiles have an equal claim.

4. In order to prove this, he shews<sup>j</sup> that both Jews and Gentiles are "under sin," i. e. that God will impute their sins to Jews as well as Gentiles.

His arguments may be reduced to these syllogisms.<sup>k</sup> "The wrath of God is revealed against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness; i. e. who acknowledge the truth, and yet sin against it.

<sup>f</sup> See *Michaelis*.

<sup>g</sup> Ch. i. 1—7.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 8—19.

<sup>i</sup> Ver. 16, 17.

<sup>j</sup> Ch. i. 18—*Tit.* 20.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. ii. 1, 17—24.



“The Gentiles acknowledge truths; but, partly by their idolatry, and partly by their other detestable vices, they sinned against the truth they acknowledged.

“Therefore the wrath of God is revealed against the Gentiles, and punisheth them.

“The Jews have acknowledged more truths than the Gentiles, and yet they sin.

“Consequently the Jewish sinners are yet more exposed to the wrath of God.”<sup>1</sup>

Having thus proved his point, he answers certain objections to it.

*Objection 1.* “The Jews were well grounded in their knowledge, and studied the law.” He answers, If the knowledge of the law without observing it, could justify them, then God could not have condemned the Gentiles, who knew the law by nature.<sup>m</sup>

*Objection 2.* “The Jews were circumcised.” *Answer.* That is, ye are admitted by an outward sign into the covenant with God. This sign will not avail you when ye violate that covenant.<sup>n</sup>

*Objection 3.* “According to this doctrine of St. Paul, the Jews have no advantage before others.” *Answer.* Yes, they still have advantages; for unto them are committed the oracles of God. But their privileges do not extend to this, that God should overlook their sins, which, on the contrary, Scripture condemns even in the Jews.<sup>o</sup>

*Objection 4.* “They had the Levitical law and sacrifices.” *Answer.* From hence is no remission, but only the knowledge of sin.<sup>p</sup>

5. From all this St. Paul concludes, that Jews and Gentiles may be justified by the same means, namely, without the Levitical law, through faith in Christ; and in opposition to the imaginary advantages of the Jews, he states the declaration of Zechariah, that God is the God as well of the Gentiles as the Jews.<sup>q</sup>

6. As the whole blessing was promised to the faithful descendants of Abraham, whom both Scripture and the Jews call his children, he proves his former assertion from the example of

<sup>1</sup> Ch. ii. 1—12.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. ii. 13—16.

<sup>n</sup> Ch. ii. 25—29.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. iii. 1—19.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. iii. 20.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. iii. 21—31.

Abraham, who was an idolater before his call, but was declared just by God on account of his faith, long before his circumcision. Hence he takes occasion to explain the nature and fruits of faith.<sup>r</sup>

7. He goes on to prove from God's justice that the Jews had no advantages over the Gentiles with respect to justification. Both Jews and Gentiles had forfeited life and immortality by the means of one common father of their race, whom they themselves had not chosen. Now as God was willing to restore immortality by a new spiritual head of a covenant, viz. Christ, it was just that both Jews and Gentiles should share in this new representation of the whole race.<sup>s</sup> Ch. v. 15, 16, amount to this negative question, "Is it not fitting that the free gift should extend as far as the offence?"

8. He shews that the doctrine of justification, as stated by him, lays us under the strongest obligations of holiness.<sup>t</sup>

9. He shews that the law of Moses no longer concerns us at all; for our justification arises from our appearing in God's sight as if actually dead with Christ on account of our sins; but the law of Moses was not given to the dead. On this occasion he proves at large, that the eternal power of God over us is not affected by this, and that whilst we are under the law of Moses we perpetually become subject to death, even by sins of inadvertency.<sup>u</sup>

10. Hence he concludes, that all those, and those only, who are united with Christ, and for the sake of his union do not live according to the flesh, are free from all condemnation of the law, and have an undoubted share in eternal life.<sup>v</sup>

11. Having described their blessedness, he is aware that the Jews, who expected a temporal happiness, should object to him that Christians notwithstanding endure much suffering in this world. He answers this objection at large.<sup>w</sup>

12. He shews that God is not the less true and faithful, because he does not justify, but rather rejects and punishes those Jews who would not believe the Messiah.<sup>x</sup> In discussing this point, we may observe the cautious manner in which, on account of the Jewish prejudices, he introduces it,<sup>y</sup> as well as in the discussion itself.

<sup>r</sup> Ch. iv. 1—v. 11.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. v. 12—21.

<sup>t</sup> Ch. vi.

<sup>u</sup> Ch. vii.

<sup>v</sup> Ch. viii. 1—17.

<sup>w</sup> Ch. viii. 18—39.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. ix. x. xi.

<sup>y</sup> Ch. ix. 1—5.

He shews that the promises of God were never made to all the posterity of Abraham; and that God always reserved to himself the power of choosing those sons of Abraham whom, for Abraham's sake, he intended to bless, and of punishing the wicked sons of Abraham; and that with respect to temporal happiness or misery, he was not even determined in his choice by their works. Thus he rejected Ishmael, Esau, the Israelites in the desert in the time of Moses, and the greater part of that people in the time of Isaiah, making them a sacrifice to his justice.<sup>a</sup>

He then proceeds to shew that God had reason to reject most of the Jews then living, because they would not believe in the Messiah, though the gospel had been preached to them plainly enough.<sup>a</sup> However, that God had not rejected all his people, but was still fulfilling his promise upon many thousand natural descendants of Abraham, who believed in the Messiah; and would in a future period fulfil them upon more, for that all Israel would be converted.<sup>b</sup> And he concludes with admiring the wise counsel of God.<sup>c</sup>

13. From the doctrine hitherto laid down, and particularly from this, that God has in mercy accepted the Gentiles, he argues that the Romans should consecrate and offer themselves up wholly to God. This leads him to mention in particular some Christian duties,<sup>d</sup> viz.

14. He exhorts them to be subject to magistrates; <sup>e</sup> the Jews at that time being given to sedition.

15. To love one another heartily.<sup>f</sup> And,

16. To abstain from those vices which were considered as things indifferent among the Gentiles.<sup>g</sup>

17. He exhorts the Jews and Gentiles in the Christian church to brotherly unity.<sup>h</sup>

18. He concludes his epistle with an excuse for having ventured to admonish the Romans, whom he had not converted; with an account of his journey to Jerusalem; and with some salutations to those persons whom he meant to recommend to the church at Rome.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ch. ix. 6—29.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. ix. 30—x.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. xi. 1—32.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. xi. 33—36.

<sup>e</sup> Ch. xii.

<sup>e</sup> Ch. xiii. 1—7.

<sup>f</sup> Ch. xiii. 2—10.

<sup>g</sup> Ch. xiii. 11—14.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. xiv. 1—xv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> Vide Michaelis.

## FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a wealthy and luxurious city, situated in Achaia, upon the isthmus or neck of land which joins Morea to the rest of Greece. Near it were celebrated those Isthmian games to which St. Paul alludes in this epistle. In this city St. Paul had spent two years, planting a Christian church, which consisted, like most of the others, of a mixture of Jewish and Christian converts. But having been absent from them about three years, they were overrun with great disorders, and split into various sects and factions.

This occasioned the following epistle, which was written by St. Paul just before his departure from Ephesus,<sup>1</sup> about Easter,<sup>2</sup> in the year of Christ 57, in the third of the emperor Nero. It was intended partly to correct some corruptions and abuses among the Corinthians, and partly to answer certain queries they had proposed to him.

In his introduction<sup>1</sup> he expresses his satisfaction at all the good he knew of them, particularly at their having the gift of the Holy Ghost for the confirmation of the gospel.

And first, he corrects their corruptions and abuses.

1. He rebukes the sectaries among them, and defends himself against one or more false teachers who had alienated most of the Corinthians from him.<sup>m</sup>

2. He considers the case of a notorious offender, who had married his father's wife, i. e. his own step-mother; orders them to excommunicate this person, and to acknowledge no public fornicator as a brother.<sup>n</sup>

3. He reproves them for their covetous and litigious temper, which caused them to prosecute their Christian brethren before heathen courts of judicature.<sup>o</sup>

4. He cautions them against fornication, a vice to which they had been extremely addicted before they were converted, and which some of them still reckoned among the things indifferent,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 31; 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9.

<sup>2</sup> So Michaelis infers from ch. v. 7, 8. "Ye are unleavened," which he interprets, "Ye are now keeping the feast of unleavened bread." Dr. Lardner dates this

Epistle a year sooner.

<sup>1</sup> Ch. i. 1—9.  
<sup>m</sup> Ch. i. 10; iv.  
<sup>n</sup> Ch. v. 13.  
<sup>o</sup> Ch. vi. 1—9.

or which might be practised, or let alone, without breach of morality.<sup>p</sup>

In the next place, he answers certain queries they had proposed. And,

1. He determines some questions relating to the marriage state.<sup>q</sup>

2. He instructs them how to act with respect to idol-offerings.<sup>r</sup> It could not be unlawful in itself to eat the meat which had been offered to idols; for the consecration of flesh or wine to an idol did not make it the property of the idol, an idol being nothing, and therefore incapable of property.<sup>s</sup> But some Corinthians thought it lawful to go to a feast in the idol-temples, which at the same time were places of resort for lewdness; and to eat the sacrifices whilst praises were sung to the idol.<sup>t</sup> This was publicly joining in the idolatry.—He even advises to abstain from such participation as was lawful, rather than give offence to a weak brother; which he enforced by his own example, who had abstained from many lawful things, rather than create offence to the gospel.

3. He answers a third query, concerning the manner in which women should deliver any thing in public, when called to it by divine impulse.<sup>u</sup> And here he censures the unusual dress of both sexes in prophesying, which exposed them to the contempt of the Greeks, among whom the men usually went uncovered, and the women veiled.

He also takes occasion here to censure the irregularities committed at their love-feasts, &c., and in the exercise of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, &c.<sup>v</sup>

4. He asserts the resurrection of the dead, which some among the Corinthians doubted, and others denied.<sup>w</sup>

He then concludes with some directions to the Corinthian church concerning the manner of collecting alms; promises them a visit; and salutes some of the members.<sup>x</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Ch. vi. 10—20.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. vii.

<sup>r</sup> Ch. viii. 1; xi. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. x. 25—30.

<sup>t</sup> Ch. viii. 10; x. 20—22.

<sup>u</sup> Ch. xi. 2—17; ver. 18, 34.

<sup>v</sup> Ch. xii. xiii. xiv.

<sup>w</sup> Ch. xv.

<sup>x</sup> Ch. xvi. Vide *Michaelia*.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

ST. PAUL'S first epistle had wrought different effects among the Corinthians: many of them entered into themselves; they excommunicated the incestuous man; requested St. Paul's return with tears, and vindicated him and his office against the false teacher and his adherents. Others of them still adhered to that adversary of St. Paul, expressly denied his apostolical office, and even furnished themselves with pretended arguments from that epistle. He had formerly promised to take a journey from Ephesus to Corinth, thence to visit the Macedonians, and return from them to Corinth.<sup>j</sup> But the unhappy state of the Corinthian church made him alter his intention,<sup>k</sup> since he found he must have treated them with severity. Hence his adversaries partly argued, 1st, That St. Paul was irresolute and unsteady, and therefore could not be a prophet. 2ndly, The improbability of his ever coming to Corinth again, since he was afraid of them.

Such was the state of the Corinthian church when St. Paul, after his departure from Ephesus, having visited Macedonia,<sup>l</sup> received an account of the above particulars from Titus,<sup>m</sup> and therefore wrote them his second epistle about the end of the same year,<sup>n</sup> or the beginning of 58.

The contents of this epistle are these:—

1. He gives the Corinthians an account of his sufferings at that time, and of the comfort he derived from meditating on the resurrection.<sup>o</sup>

2. He vindicates himself against those who would not consider him as a true apostle because he had altered his resolutions.<sup>p</sup>

3. He forgives the incestuous man,<sup>q</sup> and tells the Corinthians how much he longed for their amendment.<sup>r</sup>

4. He treats of the office committed to him of preaching the redemption, and highly prefers it to preaching the law, to which probably his adversaries had made great pretences. They had

<sup>j</sup> 2 Cor. i. 15, 16.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 23.

<sup>l</sup> Acts xx. 1.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 5, 6.

<sup>n</sup> So Dr. Lardner, who dates it from

Macedonia, about Sept. or Oct. 57.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. i. 1—11.

<sup>p</sup> Ch. i. 12; ii. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Ch. ii. 5—11.

<sup>r</sup> Ver. 12, 13.

ridiculed his sufferings, which he shews to be no disgrace to the gospel or its ministers; and here he gives a short abstract of the doctrine he preaches.<sup>b</sup>

5. He shews it to be his office, not only to preach the redemption by Christ, but to inculcate certain duties, and particularly that of flying from idolatry, (an oblique censure of those who attended the idol-feasts.)<sup>i</sup>

6. He endeavours once more to win their confidence, by telling them how affectionately he was disposed towards them, and rejoiced at their amendment.<sup>j</sup>

7. He exhorts them to a liberal collection for the Christians in Judea.<sup>k</sup>

8. He vindicates himself against those who thought him deficient in the evidences of his apostleship, and imputed his caution, when at Corinth, to his consciousness of not being a true apostle.<sup>l</sup>

## THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE Galatians were descended from those Gauls who had formerly invaded Greece, and afterwards settled in Lower Asia. St. Paul had preached the gospel among them in the year 51, soon after the council held at Jerusalem.<sup>m</sup> Asia swarmed at that time with zealots for the law of Moses, who wanted to impose it upon the Gentiles.<sup>n</sup> Soon after St. Paul had left the Galatians, these false teachers had got among them, and wanted them to be circumcised, &c. This occasioned the following epistle, which an eminent critic<sup>o</sup> thinks was written in the same year, before St. Paul left Thessalonica; though others<sup>p</sup> date it about the end of the year 52, or in the very beginning of 53, before St. Paul set out to go to Jerusalem by way of Ephesus.

The subject of this epistle is much the same with that of the epistle to the Romans; only this question is more particularly considered here—"Whether circumcision and the full observance

<sup>b</sup> Ch. ii. 14; v.

<sup>i</sup> Ch. vi.

<sup>j</sup> Ch. vii. 1—16.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. viii. 1; ix. 15.

<sup>l</sup> Ch. x. Vide Michaelis.

<sup>m</sup> Acts xvi. 6.

<sup>n</sup> Acts xv. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Michaelis.

<sup>p</sup> Dr. Lardner, &c.

of the Levitical law, were necessary to the salvation of a Christian convert."

It seems, these judaizing Christians, whose indirect views St. Paul exposes,<sup>q</sup> at first only laboured to represent circumcision as necessary to salvation, without obliging the Gentiles to observe the whole Levitical law ;<sup>r</sup> yet they insisted upon the Christians receiving the Jewish festivals and sabbatical years.<sup>s</sup>

Their principal arguments were—

1. "That the apostles at Jerusalem, St. Peter in particular, and the whole church at Jerusalem, considered circumcision as necessary; that St. Paul was only a deputy from that church, and his doctrine only to be regarded so far as it agreed with that of the church of Jerusalem." This obliged St. Paul to declare, not only that the apostles at Jerusalem perfectly concurred with him, but also that he was an immediate apostle of Christ.

2. "That St. Paul himself had changed his opinion, and now preached up the Levitical law."<sup>t</sup> They urged perhaps that he had caused Timothy to be circumcised just before he came to them.<sup>u</sup>

3. "That all the promises of God were made to the sons of Abraham; and that whoever would partake of Abraham's blessing, must, like him, be circumcised." This objection he fully answers.<sup>v</sup>

4. "That Isaiah foretold an approaching conversion of the Heathen, and promised children from among them to Sion or Jerusalem; and therefore, if the Gentiles desired to be children of the church of Jerusalem, they ought to conform to the rites of that church." In answer to this, the apostle shews that these children were not promised to the Jewish, but to the ancient or Jebusite Jerusalem.<sup>w</sup>

St. Paul frequently directs Christians to bear with the weakness of those Jewish converts who observed the Levitical law.<sup>x</sup> But the Galatian church consisted of Gentiles; and the whole import of this epistle is, that they should not be circumcised.

In the two last chapters are some practical exhortations, de-

<sup>q</sup> Ch. vi. 12, 13.

<sup>r</sup> Acts xv. 1; Gal. v. 3. 9.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. iv. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Gal. i. 8. 10; v. 11.

<sup>u</sup> Acts xvi. 3; Gal. ii. 3.

<sup>v</sup> Gal. iii. 7; iv. 18.

<sup>w</sup> Ch. iv. 19—31. The words (ver. 25.) "Sinai is a mount in Arabia," are thought to be a gloss crept into the text.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. xiv; Acts xxi. 23, 24. 26.



signed chiefly against the animosities and partialities which these disputes had bred among them.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

EPHESUS was the chief city of all Asia on this side Mount Taurus. St. Paul had passed through it in the year 54, but without making any stay.<sup>y</sup> The following year he returned to Ephesus again, and stayed there three years.<sup>z</sup> During his abode there, he completed a flourishing church of Christians, the first foundations of which had been laid by some inferior teachers. As Ephesus was frequented by persons of distinction from all parts of Asia Minor, St. Paul took the opportunity of preaching in the ancient countries;<sup>a</sup> and the other churches of Asia were considered as the daughters of the church of Ephesus; so that an epistle to the Ephesians was, in effect, an epistle to the other churches of Asia at the same time.

In the year 61, St. Paul was carried prisoner to Rome for the first time; and during his confinement there, which was not very close,<sup>b</sup> he wrote the epistles to Philemon, the Colossians, the Ephesians, and Philippians.

Hence all these epistles bear so great a resemblance in their style and manner. Of these four, a learned writer<sup>c</sup> thinks the epistle to the Ephesians was first written by the apostle in the spring, A. D. 61, as soon as conveniently could be, after his friends at Rome had taken a lodging for him, and he was settled in it.

This epistle was intended to establish the Ephesians in the faith; and to this end, to give them more exalted views of the love of God, and of the excellency and dignity of Christ; to shew them that they were saved by grace, and that the Gentiles (however wretched they had been once) had now equal privileges with the Jews; to encourage them, by declaring with what steadiness he (St. Paul) suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance

<sup>y</sup> Acts xviii. 19—21.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. xix.

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 10.

<sup>b</sup> Acts xxviii. 31, 32.

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Lardner.

in it; and finally to engage them to the practice of those duties which became them as Christians.<sup>d</sup>

The city of Ephesus was distinguished by peculiar vices and sins, which are alluded to in this epistle, and in those to Timothy.

1. It was the genuine seat of the idolatrous worship of Diana, who was called *Σωτειρα*, or the Saviour Goddess; in opposition to which, St. Paul calls the true Deity *Σωτηρ*, or the Saviour God, in his epistle to Timothy.<sup>e</sup>

2. The Ephesians were remarkable for the practice of superstitious arts.<sup>f</sup>

3. They were vain in their dress.<sup>g</sup>

4. They were remarkable for lewdness and drunkenness, and gloried in obscenity of language.<sup>h</sup>

An eminent critic<sup>i</sup> thinks the Christians of Ephesus were also tainted with the errors of the Essenes; an account of which the reader will find below, in the Introduction to the first Epistle to Timothy.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPI, was a city of no great extent in Macedonia, near the borders of Thrace. The Christian religion was first planted there about the year 51, by St. Paul,<sup>j</sup> who left St. Luke and Timothy to carry on the work. He afterwards paid them a second visit,<sup>k</sup> and it is probable saw them afterwards a third time.

This epistle was sent at the same time with the preceding, viz. A.D. 62 or 63. The design of it seems to be, to comfort the Philippians under the concern they had expressed for his imprisonment at Rome; to check a party spirit that had crept in among them; and to promote on the contrary an entire union and harmony of affection; to guard them against being seduced from the purity of the Christian faith by judaizing teachers; to support them under the trials with which they struggled; and,

<sup>d</sup> Vide Doddridge.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. i. 1; ii. 3.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xix. 18, 19.

<sup>g</sup> See 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

<sup>h</sup> Eph. v.

<sup>i</sup> Michaelis. See his Lectures on the New Testament.

<sup>j</sup> Acts xvi.

<sup>k</sup> Acts xxi. 6.

above all, to inspire them with a concern to adorn their holy profession by the most eminent attainments in the divine life.<sup>1</sup>

### THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

**Colosse** (or, as it was anciently written, *Colassæ*) was a considerable city of Phrygia in Asia Minor. St. Paul himself had not been at this city when he wrote this epistle,<sup>m</sup> though he had some years before travelled through Phrygia. However, Epaphras had founded a Christian church at Colosse, and probably in the neighbouring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis.<sup>n</sup> It is probable that some Colossians, who had heard St. Paul preach at Ephesus,<sup>o</sup> might be converted by him; and among them Philemon, to whom St. Paul addressed his epistle so entitled.

Now the churches of Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were exposed to more imminent danger of being seduced by false teachers, as they had not received the gospel immediately from an apostle, but from Epaphras; and as they might question whether Epaphras did not err in some respects, this occasioned St. Paul's anxiety for them,<sup>p</sup> and induced him to confirm the doctrine of Epaphras by this epistle,<sup>q</sup> which was written from Rome about the same time with the preceding, A. D. 62 or 63. A learned writer<sup>r</sup> thinks this and the epistle to Philemon were sent away together by Tychicus and Onesimus, although that to Philemon was probably first delivered.

The more immediate occasion of writing to the Colossians, was an epistle St. Paul had received from the Laodiceans,<sup>s</sup> which an eminent critic<sup>t</sup> thinks contained some written queries relating to the doctrines of the Essenes, and this epistle was intended to answer them. What those doctrines were, see in the Introduction to the first Epistle to Timothy.

This epistle to the Colossians is so like that to the Ephesians, both in language and contents, that the one will greatly illustrate the other.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Doddridge.

<sup>m</sup> Col. ii. 1.

<sup>n</sup> Col. i. 7; iv. 12, 13.

<sup>o</sup> Acts xix. 10.

<sup>p</sup> Col. ii. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Col. i. 7; iv. 12, 13.

<sup>r</sup> Lardner. See also Michaelis.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. iv. 16.

<sup>t</sup> Michaelis.

## FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THESSALONICA was, in St. Paul's time, the capital of Macedonia. St. Paul had preached the gospel there in the year 51: "some few among the Jews received the gospel; but a great multitude of those heathens, who confessed one only true God," became converts to Christ. Hence the majority of the church consisted of native heathens, who had formerly been idolaters.\* The Jews, ever jealous of the admission of the Gentiles to the same privileges with themselves, raised such a disturbance, that St. Paul, with Silas, was obliged suddenly to withdraw; they even pursued him to Berea. He left Silas and Timothy there, and fled to Athens, ordering them to follow him.† Timothy did not long continue there with St. Paul, but was sent back to Thessalonica,‡ and, when he returned, found St. Paul at Corinth, where he resided a year and a half;§ and in the former part of that time this epistle was probably written, viz. about A. D. 52.

With regard to the state of the church of Thessalonica, the knowledge of which is requisite to understand these two epistles,

1. It consisted chiefly of Gentiles, and of some Jewish members. It is probable that the teachers mentioned in the fifth chapter¶ were converts from Judaism; at least, such Greeks as had before been proselytes to the Jewish religion.

2. This church being still in its infancy, and oppressed by the powerful Jews, required to be established in the faith. St. Paul therefore, in the three first chapters, endeavours to convince the Thessalonians of the truth and divinity of his gospel, both by the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, which had been imparted, and by his own conduct when among them.

3. An error prevailed with respect to the doctrine of the last judgment. The Thessalonians, like most of the primitive Christians, thought the day of judgment would happen in their time. They imagined, those who lived to see it take place would have great advantage over the deceased faithful; which was, pro-

\* Acts xvii.

† Σεβομενος Ἑλληνας.

‡ 1 Thess. i. 9.

§ Acts xvii. 14, 15.

¶ 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

\* St. Paul came there before the end of the year 51, and stayed till the beginning of 53.—Lardner.

† Ver. 12.

## 394 SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

bably, to consist in their entering immediately on the Millennium. This error he combats in the fourth chapter.

4. Some of this church who refused to subject themselves to the teachers, had at the same time given themselves up to disorder; and they seem to have carried on this unruliness under a pretence of teaching or edifying others. On this account the apostle gives the admonitions in the fifth chapter.<sup>b</sup>

## SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE second epistle to the Thessalonians was sent from Corinth soon after the first, viz. A. D. 52. St. Paul found the Thessalonians still considered the day of judgment as at hand, and that the disorders before reprov'd were still carried on among them. He therefore, in this second epistle, shews that the last day was still distant, from some prophecies not yet fulfilled; and gives them more particular directions how to conduct themselves towards those disorderly persons.

M. Michaelis thinks that 2 Thess. ii. 2, refers to some epistles forged in St. Paul's name to propagate the above error, and to certain calculations and false prophecies applied to the same purpose.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

WE have an account of Timothy in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>a</sup> and in other parts of the New Testament,<sup>d</sup> from which he appears to have been a youth of most excellent qualities, and almost constantly the companion of St. Paul.

This first epistle to him is by some dated A. D. 65, but by others, on better grounds,<sup>e</sup> about A. D. 56 or 58, at the time of St. Paul's journey into Macedonia.<sup>f</sup> This apostle being obliged to retire from Ephesus earlier than he intended, on account of

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 11—14.

<sup>c</sup> Acts xvi. 1—3.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Tim. i. 5; Acts xiv; 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Heb. xiii. 23. Vide also the address to 2 Cor. Philipp. Coloss. 1 and 2

Thess. Philem.

<sup>e</sup> See Michaelis, Lardner. The place where this epistle was written is not certainly agreed, though it is likely St. Paul was either in Macedonia or near it.

<sup>f</sup> Acts xx. 1.

the insurrection raised by Demetrius,<sup>a</sup> left Timothy behind him to restore perfect order in the church, to fill the ecclesiastical offices, and to withstand false teachers.

As some of the Ephesians would not obey him, and others attempted to force themselves upon him as bishops and ministers, St. Paul wrote this epistle, which he might lay before them as his commission; so that it is rather to the Ephesians than to Timothy.<sup>b</sup>

An eminent critic<sup>c</sup> thinks this first epistle to Timothy, and those to the Ephesians and Colossians, were levelled against certain errors prevalent among them, which the Essenes (a Jewish sect) had borrowed from Oriental philosophers. They held, 1. That God was surrounded by demons or angels, who were mediators with God, and therefore to be worshipped. 2. That the soul is defiled by the body; that all bodily enjoyments hurt the soul, which they believed to be immortal, though they seem to have denied the resurrection of the body, as it would only render the soul sinful by being reunited to it. 3. That there was a great mystery in numbers, particularly in the number seven; they therefore attributed a natural holiness to the seventh or sabbath day, which they observed more strictly than the other Jews. They spent their time mostly in contemplation; abstained from marriage and every gratification of the senses; used washings, and thought it sinful to touch certain things; regarded wine as poison, &c.

In opposition to these, St. Paul, in these three epistles, shews the superiority of Christ to the angels, and warns Christians against worshipping them. He censures the observation of sabbaths; rebukes those who forbade marriage and the touching of certain things, and who delivered commandments of men concerning meats, and prohibited them. He permits Timothy to drink wine; blames those who abstain from nourishing their bodies; and enjoins bodily exercise. He cautions against a philosophy which teaches all these things, and against persons who assume a great appearance of wisdom and virtue. He delivers Hymenæus over to Satan, because he pretended there was no resurrection of the flesh.

The same learned writer thinks the errors of the Essenes had found their way into these churches through Apollon, who was

<sup>a</sup> Acts xix.

<sup>b</sup> See 1 Tim. iii. 18; iv. 6, 12, 13 23.

<sup>c</sup> Michaelis.

of Alexandria, in the neighbourhood of which the Essenes prevailed;<sup>j</sup> and also through the twelve Christians mentioned in Acts xix,<sup>k</sup> who appear but imperfectly acquainted with the Christian doctrines. He conjectures that "the vagabond Jews, exorcists,"<sup>l</sup> were of this sect.

### THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THIS epistle, according to some critics,<sup>m</sup> was written by St. Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment there, and was sent to Timothy in the summer of the year 61. But others<sup>n</sup> rather think it was written during the apostle's last imprisonment there, not very long before he sealed the truth with his blood, which is commonly placed about A. D. 66 or 67.

That Timothy was at Ephesus, or in Lesser Asia, when this epistle was sent to him, appears from the frequent mention in it of persons residing at Ephesus. The false teachers, who had before thrown this church into confusion, grew every day worse; insomuch that not only Hymenæus, but Philetus, another Ephesian heretic, now denied the resurrection of the dead. They were led into this error by a dispute about words. At first they only annexed various improper significations to the word *resurrection*, till at last they denied the thing, pretending that the resurrection of the dead was only a resurrection from the death of sin, and so was already past. This error was probably derived from the eastern philosophy, which placed the origin of sin in the body. This epistle consists chiefly of affectionate advice to Timothy, thenceforward to be active in opposing those false teachers, and in propagating the gospel.

### THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

THIS may be called an epistle to the Cretans; for St. Paul

<sup>j</sup> Acts xviii. 24; xix. 1—7.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 1—7.

<sup>l</sup> Ver. 13.

<sup>m</sup> So Dr. Lardner.

<sup>n</sup> So Michaelis, and others.

meant not so much to instruct Titus, as to furnish him with a rule to lay before the Cretans, to which he might appeal whenever unworthy and unqualified persons attempted to obtrude themselves into the episcopal office.

Titus was a Greek,<sup>o</sup> and probably owed his conversion to St. Paul,<sup>p</sup> who, fourteen years after, took him with him to Jerusalem, to the great council held there in the year 49. And as Titus was of Gentile parents, St. Paul would not suffer him to be circumcised, that he might not abridge the liberty of the Gentile converts.<sup>q</sup> Some years after, St. Paul despatched him to Corinth, to bring him an account of the state of that church;<sup>r</sup> and afterwards sent him thither again, to hasten the collection for the poor Christians in Judea.<sup>s</sup> After this we hear no more of him, till he is mentioned in this epistle as having been with St. Paul in Crete.

This epistle, according to Dr. Lardner, was written towards the end of the year 56, while St. Paul was in Macedonia, or near it. But M. Michaelis and others think it was more probably written in St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though the precise year they are not able to determine. Titus had been left at Crete, to settle the church which St. Paul had probably established there in his first journey to Rome<sup>t</sup> and afterwards.<sup>u</sup> The churches in Crete had not hitherto had any bishops and ministers. Titus was to appoint them; but he was to be upon his guard against some of the circumcision, who aspired to ecclesiastical offices.

The island of Crete was the parent of Roman and Greek idolatry; and the Cretans so far excelled other nations in inventing gods, that they were called *The liars*. They were also distinguished for unnatural vices, and a spirit of sedition.

The Cretan converts to Christianity were indeed obliged to forsake idolatry and the worship of images; but as the Cretans were Egyptians by descent, and had long intermixed the whims of Egyptian philosophy and Judaism, and as they had embraced Christianity very early, no church was in greater danger of adopting the absurd and heathen genealogies of God, of his only-

<sup>o</sup> Gal. ii. 3.

<sup>p</sup> Tit. i. 4.

<sup>q</sup> Gal. ii. 1—3.

<sup>r</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 18; vii. 6. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. viii. 6.

<sup>t</sup> Acts xxvii. 8.

<sup>u</sup> Tit. i. 5.



begotten Son, and of the Æons. Hence St. Paul warns them against these errors.<sup>†</sup>

### THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON seems to have been a substantial man at Colosse, who had a spacious house, in which a part of the Christian church assembled, and in which travelling Christians were entertained.<sup>‡</sup> The want of public inns among the ancients made this hospitality needful; and it was particularly enjoined upon Christians to receive one another hospitably: but, as every individual was not in a condition to entertain Christian strangers, the churches seem to have appointed one or more of their principal members for this purpose.<sup>§</sup> This was the office of deacons, so that Philemon had an office in the church; and indeed he is by some of the ancients entitled Bishop of Colosse. Whatever his ministerial office was, he is by St. Paul called "his fellow-labourer."<sup>¶</sup> His son Archippus, to whom this epistle is also addressed, had just before been deacon in the church of Colosse; \* he is accordingly mentioned with honour by St. Paul, who not only styles him his fellow-labourer, like his father, but also his fellow-soldier.

Philemon seems to have been one of St. Paul's first-fruits of the church of Ephesus, and not to have been converted, like the rest, by Epaphras, but by St. Paul himself; \* having probably come to Ephesus while St. Paul was there.

This epistle was written from Rome (at the same time with the epistles to the Colossians, Philippians, &c.) about A. D. 62 or 63. The occasion of it was this: Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed him, and fled to Rome. There St. Paul meeting with him, converted him to the Christian faith; and, having kept him some time to be satisfied of his reformation, sends him back to his master with this letter, which has always been admired for its delicacy of sentiment and masterly address, and may be considered as a fine model of epistolary writing.

† Tit. i. 14; iii. 9. Vide Michaelis.

‡ Philem. 22.

\* Rom. xvi. 22.

§ Ver. 1.

¶ Col. iv. 17.

\* Col. iv. 19.

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS apostolic letter, according to the best authors, both ancient and modern, was the genuine work of St. Paul;<sup>b</sup> and, according to the ancients, was originally written in the Hebrew or Syriac language; out of which it was translated into Greek by some apostolic person, who is believed to have been either St. Luke or Clement. Some eminent critics, however, among the modern, find reason to think our present Greek copy was not a translation, but the original; and that the ancients were mistaken in this respect.

St. Paul contrary to his usual custom, did not prefix his name to this epistle, for a very obvious reason—that he might not too early awaken the prejudices conceived against him by the Jewish converts, which might have led them to throw it aside unperused. It was written towards the end of (or soon after) St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome,<sup>c</sup> A. D. 63, to the converted Jews of Palestine, here called Hebrews, as distinguished from the Hellenists, or foreign Jews. A severe persecution had deprived them of the apostle St. James, and had rendered almost that whole church wavering in the faith. To confirm some, and to recover others from their apostacy, was the purport of this epistle.

As the zealous defenders of the Mosaic law would naturally insist on the divine authority of Moses, on the majesty and glory attending its promulgation by the ministry of angels, and the great privileges it afforded those who adhered to it; the apostle shews,

I. That in all these several articles Christianity had an infinite superiority to the law.

This topic he pursues from ch. i. to xi. wherein he reminds the believing Hebrews of the extraordinary favour shewn them by God, in sending them a revelation by his own Son, whose glory was far superior to that of angels;<sup>d</sup> very naturally inferring from hence, the danger of despising Christ on account of his

<sup>b</sup> Many proofs of this may be collected from this epistle itself. It is evident, from ch. ii. 3, that the writer was not one of Christ's disciples. See Dr. Lardner, who has fully discussed this point, and finds reason to give it to St. Paul.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. x. 34; xiii. 22, 23.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. i.

humiliation, which, in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons; particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and to encourage the freedom of our access to God.<sup>e</sup> With the same view he magnifies Christ as superior to Moses, their great legislator; and from the punishment inflicted on those who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of contemning the promises of the Gospel.<sup>f</sup> And as it was an easy transition to call to mind, on this occasion, that rest in Canaan to which the authority invested in Moses was intended to lead them; the apostle hence cautions them against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into a superior state of rest to what the Jews ever enjoyed.<sup>g</sup> This caution is still further enforced by awful views of God's omniscience, and a lively representation of the high-priesthood of Christ.<sup>h</sup> In the next place he intimates the very hopeless situation of those who apostatize from Christianity; and then, for the comfort and confirmation of sincere believers, displays to them the goodness of God, and his faithful adherence to his holy engagements; the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner.<sup>i</sup> Still further to illustrate the character of our Lord, he enters into a parallel between him and Melchizedek, as to their title and descent; and, from instances wherein the priesthood of Melchizedek excelled the Levitical, infers that the glory of the priesthood of Christ surpassed that under the law.<sup>k</sup> From these premises the apostle argues, that the Aaronical priesthood was not only excelled, but consummated by that of Christ, to which it was only introductory and subservient; and of course, that the obligation of the law was henceforth dissolved.<sup>l</sup> Then recapitulating what he had already demonstrated concerning the superior dignity of Christ's priesthood, he thence illustrates the distinguished excellence of the New Covenant, as not only foretold by Jeremiah, but evidently enriched with much better promises than the Old:<sup>m</sup> explaining further the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it with what the Jewish high-priests did on the

<sup>e</sup> Ch. ii.

<sup>f</sup> Ch. iii. 1—13.

<sup>g</sup> Ch. iii. 14; iv. 11.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. iv. 12; v. 14.

<sup>i</sup> Ch. vi. 9—20.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. vii. 1—17.

<sup>l</sup> Ch. vii. 18—28.

<sup>m</sup> Ch. viii.

great day of atonement.<sup>a</sup> Afterwards he enlarges on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it;° and proves that the legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience; whence he infers the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it.<sup>p</sup> He then urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an high-priest and covenant conferred on them, to the purposes of approaching God with confidence, to a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other.<sup>q</sup>

The apostle having thus obviated the insinuations and objections of the Jews, for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds,

II. To prepare and fortify their minds against the storm of persecution, which in part had already befallen them, and was likely to continue and be often renewed. He reminds them of those extremities they had endured, and of the fatal effects which would attend their apostacy;<sup>r</sup> calling to their remembrance the eminent examples of faith and fortitude exhibited by holy men and recorded in the Old Testament.<sup>s</sup> He concludes his discourse with glancing at many other illustrious worthies; and, besides those recorded in Scripture, refers to the case of several who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, 2 Maccab. viii. &c.<sup>t</sup>

Having thus finished the argumentative part of the epistle, the apostle proceeds to a general application, in which he exhorts the Hebrew Christians to patience, peace, and holiness;<sup>u</sup> cautions them against secular views and sensual gratifications, by laying before them the incomparable excellence of the blessings introduced by the Gospel, which even the Jewish economy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal;<sup>v</sup> exhorts them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion, dependence on the divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, a life of thankfulness to God and benevolence to man:<sup>w</sup> and concludes the whole with recommending their pious ministers to their particular regard, entreating their

<sup>a</sup> Ch. ix. 1—14.  
<sup>o</sup> Ch. ix. 15—28.  
<sup>p</sup> Ch. x. 1—15.  
<sup>q</sup> Ch. x. 15—25.  
<sup>r</sup> Ch. x. 26—39.

<sup>s</sup> Ch. xi. 1—29.  
<sup>t</sup> Ch. xi. 30; xii. 2.  
<sup>u</sup> Ch. xii. 3—14.  
<sup>v</sup> Ch. xii. 15—29.  
<sup>w</sup> Ch. xiii. 1—16.

prayers, saluting them, and pronouncing on them a solemn benediction.\*

### THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

THIS and the following epistles are probably called *catholic* or *general*, because most of them were written, not to particular churches, but to the faithful dispersed throughout whole countries. The second and third epistles of St. John are added to them, only because they were written by the same hand that wrote the first, and would have been lost had they been copied separately.

This epistle was written by St. James the Less, the son of Alphaeus or Cleophas, styled the brother, i. e. kinsman, of our Lord, who stately resided at Jerusalem, and is said by the ancients to have been the first bishop of that city; where he is believed to have suffered martyrdom in the former part of the year 62, and to have written this epistle a short time before his death, which a learned writer<sup>†</sup> thinks might be partly occasioned by the offence taken at this apostolic letter.

It is generally understood to be addressed to the Jewish converts to Christianity dispersed abroad in the more distant regions; and that the apostle's design is partly to exhort the Christian converts to constancy in suffering, and partly to warn them against certain Jewish vices.

But Dr. Lardner thinks that this epistle was written to all Jews, of every denomination throughout the world, whether Christians or otherwise: for this reason the apostle does not wish them grace or peace from Jesus Christ, though he does not dissemble his own character, nor does he conclude with any Christian benediction: and though a large part of the epistle is applicable to Christians, there are several paragraphs which seem particularly addressed to unbelieving Jews.\*

### THE FIRST EPISTLE OF SAINT PETER.

THIS apostolic letter is probably addressed to such Gentiles as

\* Ch. xiii. 17—25.

† Dr. Lardner.

\* Ch. iv. 1—10; v. 1—6, &c.

had forsaken idolatry and believed in the true God, without having been circumcised, and who afterwards became Christians, such as Cornelius the centurion; i. e. Christians from among the proselytes, "elect (or declared to be such) through sanctification of the Spirit."<sup>a</sup> The whole epistle abounds in assurances that these converts were regenerate and become children of God, without Levitical sacrifices, merely through Christ.

This epistle was written from a city called by St. Peter *Babylon*: this some think to have been Babylon in Assyria, which, though demolished, might possibly have some few Christians in its neighbourhood; however, the generality, both ancients and moderns, suppose it to have been a figurative name for Rome. But Michaelis proposes a query, whether Jerusalem might not be shadowed under that name; he also thinks it was written so early as the year 49, soon after the great council held there. But the more received opinion is, that it was much later, either in the year 63 or 64, or at latest 65.<sup>b</sup>

St. Peter's chief design is to confirm the doctrine of St. Paul, which the false teachers pretended he was opposing; and to assure the proselytes that they stood in the true grace of God.<sup>c</sup> With this view he calls them elect, and mentions that they had been declared such by the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them.<sup>d</sup> He assures them that they were regenerate without circumcision, merely through the gospel and resurrection of Christ;<sup>e</sup> and that their sufferings were no argument of their being under the displeasure of God, as the Jews imagined.<sup>f</sup> He recommends it to them to hope for grace to the end.<sup>g</sup> He testifies that they were not redeemed by the paschal lamb, but through Christ, whom God had preordained for this purpose before the foundation of the world.<sup>h</sup>

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF SAINT PETER.

THIS second epistle is supposed to have been written many years after the former, viz. in A. D. 67, a short time before St. Peter's

<sup>a</sup> Vide ch. i. 2, compared with Acts x. 44—47; xi. 15—17.

<sup>b</sup> Dr. Lardner.

<sup>c</sup> Ch. v. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Ch. i. 1, 2.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 3, 4, 21—25.

<sup>f</sup> Ver. 6—12.

<sup>g</sup> Ver. 13.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 18—20.

martyrdom, which happened in 68, and to which he alludes in one or two places.<sup>1</sup>

The general design of this epistle is, to confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former epistle; "to excite the Christian converts to adorn and stedfastly adhere to their holy religion, as a religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is at large described; and notwithstanding the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies."

The genuineness of this epistle has been doubted, from the peculiar style of the second chapter, which is different from the other parts of St. Peter's writings. Bishop Sherlock supposes that the apostle, describing in that chapter the character of such seducers as endangered the faith of the Christian converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish authors, containing a strong description, in the eastern manner, of some false prophets in that, or an earlier age.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF SAINT JOHN.

THIS epistle of St. John (if it is not rather a little treatise) appears, as well as his gospel, to have been written against Cerinthus: in it he also alludes to the pernicious doctrines of the other Gnostics, especially in the admonitions to walk in the light, to keep undefiled from sensual sins, and to abstain from idols. For while Cerinthus taught that the law of Moses was abolished, the others maintained that eating things offered to idols and fornication were indifferent acts.

In opposition to those errors, St. John lays down three positions: 1. That it is necessary to walk in the light, and keep clear of fleshly lusts, in order to partake of the kingdom of God. 2. That it is necessary to keep the new commandment of loving one another. 3. That Jesus was Christ and the Son of God, not only in his baptism, but also at the shedding of his blood.

This little treatise or epistle is directed to all Christians, wheresoever dispersed, and is supposed to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, by such critics as apply

<sup>1</sup> Ch. i. 13, 14.

ch. ii. 18, to the last time of the Jewish state. Others suppose it to have been written after the Jewish war,<sup>k</sup> about the year 80; and others even so late as the year 91 or 92.

## THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF SAINT JOHN.

THESE are improperly denominated catholic or general, being inscribed to two single persons—the one to some lady of distinction, the other to Gaius, or Caius; probably the same person whom St. Paul at Corinth styles his host,<sup>l</sup> and who is celebrated for his hospitality to his brethren. But a learned writer<sup>m</sup> rather thinks he was an eminent Christian, who lived in some city of Asia not far from Ephesus, where St. John chiefly resided after he had left Judea.

These letters are conjectured to have been sent about the same time with, or soon after, the former.

## THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF SAINT JUDE.

THIS was written by Jude, or Judas, the brother of James the Less. The remarkable similarity between this and part of the second epistle of Peter, was probably owing to both writers drawing their character of the false teachers from the description given of the false prophets in some ancient Jewish author: and it is also possible that St. Jude might have the second epistle of St. Peter before him. They both prove, against certain heretics, (probably the Gnostics,) that a great day of judgment is impending; and conclude, from the judgments of God formerly exerted, that God will be an avenger of evil.

This is believed to have been written after most (if not all) the other apostolical epistles, when St. Jude was arrived at a very old age: Dr. Mill even dates it A.D. 90; others suppose it to have been written much earlier, yet after that of St. Peter, about A.D. 65 or 66.

<sup>k</sup> So Dr. Lardner.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. xvi. 23; 1 Cor. i. 14.

<sup>m</sup> Dr. Lardner.



## THE REVELATION OF SAINT JOHN.

THIS prophetic book is agreed to have been written by St. John the Evangelist, who, according to Eusebius, was banished to Patmos, an isle of the Ægean sea, and there received the visions contained in this book, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, about the year 96. Others suppose it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the opinion of M. Michaelis, who dates it so early as the time of Claudius or Nero, long before St. John's gospel or epistles. In this he follows the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton, who concludes it must have been composed in an early period of St. John's life, because the style, he thinks, abounds with Hebraisms, and is not penned in such good and fluent Greek as the gospel and epistles, which he supposes were written when the apostle had acquired a more perfect knowledge of the Greek tongue. Other cities however do not allow such great difference of language between this and St. John's other writings; at least not more than what they think may be occasioned by the difference of subject, arising from allusions to the prophetic books of the Old Testament, or from the abruptness and obscurity of the prophetic style. It is again urged, that the Revelation mentions no other heresy as flourishing, but that of the Nicolaitans,<sup>a</sup> which subsisted long before that of Cerinthus, against which St. John wrote his gospel between A. D. 65 and 68, and therefore the Revelation must have been written long before. In opposition to this, it is doubted whether the seven churches of Asia were founded so early as the times of Claudius or Nero, or had at least undergone such great changes and revolutions as are alluded to in this book. It has likewise been thought improbable that the apostle should give this prophetic and mysterious book before ever he had delivered a plain and simple narrative of the life of his Master; the latter, as it would be of the greatest use to Christians, would naturally be first afforded them; and the apostles would be most likely to lay down the

<sup>a</sup> The Nicolaitans, according to ancient writers, were a sect who taught the lawfulness of lewdness and idolatrous sacrifices: they were so called from one Nicolas, their founder. By Nicolaitans in Scripture are thought to be meant, in general, lewd and profligate persons, who aim at nothing but their own secular advantage.

great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity in general, before they would think of entering into the state of particular churches, or describe the events of future times, whether near or remote.

Some other arguments for the more early date of this book are given by M. Michaelis and others; but as they allow them all to be subordinate to that urged above, from the uncommon prevalence of the oriental idioms in this book beyond what are found in the other writings of St. John, this will not be judged very decisive, if after all it should appear that this is no more than the natural consequence of the subject; and that St. John, expressing in Greek the images of the ancient Hebrew prophets, had a peculiar reason for adopting their phraseology and idioms, as being inseparable from the prophetic style;° so that upon the whole, perhaps, we may reasonably abide by the express testimony of Irenæus,<sup>p</sup> that this sacred book was written in the reign of Domitian, as that ancient father was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of St. John himself.

But at whatever period of his life the Revelation was composed, there is strong internal evidence,<sup>q</sup> as well as the most convincing positive testimony, that this book was written by St. John the Evangelist.<sup>r</sup> It is no less obvious that the contents are of a prophetic nature, and that they exhibit a series of visions, descriptive of very important events that were to succeed in the course of ages.

Many ingenious and learned men have undertaken to illustrate this sacred book, and even to point out very precisely the particular events predicted by its inspired author; but their success has not always been answerable to their sanguine expectations. Perhaps a complete and perfect commentary must be reserved for future ages, when many of the events have taken place which are predicted in it, but remain at present unaccomplished.

However, the pious student ought not to be discouraged from the perusal of these divine prophecies; and it is certain that he could never sit down to consider them with so much advantage

° See what is urged on the subject of the prophetic style, in Dr. Hurd's Lectures, referred to below. See particularly Sermon the 9th.

<sup>p</sup> Advers. Hæres. lib. v. cap. 30. p. 449. ed. Grabe. See also Eusebius, Chron. lib. i.

ed. Scal. p. 80. Vide etiam, p. 164. lib. posterioris, et Chron. Can. p. 208. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 18. Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. pp. 14, 15.

<sup>q</sup> See Dr. T. Twells, Michaelis, &c.

<sup>r</sup> See Lardner, Doddridge, &c.

as he can at present, when he is furnished with so excellent an introduction to the study of these and all the other prophecies which regard the Christian church, in the lectures lately published by the very learned and ingenious preacher at Lincoln's-Inn.\*

To this admired writer it will be sufficient here to refer the reader, and he will lead him to as excellent a commentator in the great and admirable Joseph Mede, to whose works these new lectures are a most useful introduction. It will be sufficient here to give a short extract from the latter, to assist the reader in forming a distinct idea of the method in which the whole book of the Apocalypse is disposed; which he will readily do, if he observes that it is resolvable into three great parts.

The first part is that of the epistles to the seven churches, contained in the three first chapters. This, as containing little or nothing prophetic, is not at all considered by Mr. Mede.

The second part (with which Mr. Mede begins his commentary) is that of the sealed book, from ch. iv. to ch. x., and contains the fates of the Roman empire, or its civil revolutions, yet with a reference still to the state and fortune of the Christian church.

The third part is that of the open book, with what follows to the end; and exhibits, in a more minute and extended view, the fates of the Christian church, especially during its apostacy, and after its recovery from it.

This third division may, further, be considered as consisting of two parts.

The first contains (in ch. xi.) a summary view of what should befall the Christian church, contemporary with the events deduced in the second part, concerning the empire; and is given in this place in order to connect the second and third parts, and to shew their correspondence and contemporaneity. See Mr. Mede's *Clavis*, p. 424, and *Comment. Apocalypt.* p. 476.

The second part of the last division (from ch. xii. to the end) gives a detailed account of what should befall the Christian church in distinct, and several of them synchronical, visions.

\* Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church, Papal Rome, in Twelve Sermons, &c. By Richard Hurd, D.D. London, 1772. 8vo. and in particular concerning the Church of

*Here we should conclude; but as the curious reader may desire to be informed how the predictions revealed in this book of St. John have usually been interpreted and applied, we shall, consistently with our subject, subjoin A KEY TO THE PROPHECIES CONTAINED IN THE REVELATION. This is extracted from the learned Dissertations of Dr. Newton, Bishop of Bristol:† to which the reader is referred for a more full illustration of the several parts, as the conciseness of our plan only admits a short analysis or abridgment of them.*

## A KEY TO THE PROPHECIES CONTAINED IN THE REVELATION.

Nothing of a prophetic nature occurs in the first three chapters, except, 1, What is said concerning the church of Ephesus, that her “candlestick shall be removed out of its place,” which is now verified, not only in this, but in all the other Asiatic churches which existed at that time; the light of the gospel having been taken from them, not only by their heresies and divisions from within, but by the arms of the Saracens from without. And, 2, Concerning the church of Smyrna, that she shall “have tribulation ten days,” that is, in prophetic language, ten years; referring to the persecution of Dioclesian, which alone of all the general persecutions lasted so long.

The next five chapters relate to the opening of the seven seals; and by these seals are intimated so many different periods of the prophecy. Six of these seals are opened in the sixth and seventh chapters.

The first seal or period is memorable for conquests. It commences with Vespasian, and terminates in Nerva; and during this time Judea was subjugated.

The second seal is noted for war and slaughter. It commences with Trajan, and continues through his reign and that of his successors. In this period, the Jews were entirely routed and dispersed; and great was the slaughter and devastation occasioned by the contending parties.

The third seal is characterized by a rigorous execution of

† Dissertations on the Prophecies which have been remarkably fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling, in the world, vol. iii. 8vo.

justice, and an abundant provision of corn, wine, and oil. It commences with Septimius Severus. He and Alexander Severus were just and severe emperors, and at the same time highly celebrated for the regard they paid to the internal felicity of their people, by procuring them plenty of every thing, and particularly corn, wine, and oil. This period lasted during the reigns of the Septimian family.

The fourth seal is distinguished by a concurrence of evils, such as war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts; by all which the Roman empire was remarkably infested from the reign of Maximin to that of Dioclesian.

The fifth seal begins at Dioclesian, and is signalized by the great persecution, from whence arose that memorable era, the era of martyrs.

With Constantine begins the sixth seal, a period of revolutions, pictured forth by great commotions in earth and in heaven, alluding to the subversion of paganism, and the establishment of Christianity. This period lasted from the reign of Constantine the Great to that of Theodosius the First.

The seventh seal includes under it the remaining parts of the prophecy, and comprehends seven periods, distinguished by the sounding of seven trumpets.

As the seals foretold the state of the Roman empire before and till it became Christian, so the trumpets foreshew the fate of it afterwards; each trumpet being an alarm to one nation or other, rousing them up to overthrow that empire.

Four of these trumpets are sounded in the eighth chapter.

At the sounding of the first, Alaric and his Goths invade the Roman empire, besiege Rome twice, and set it on fire in several places. At the sounding of the second, Attila and his Huns waste the Roman provinces, and compel the eastern emperor, Theodosius the Second, and the western emperor, Valentinian the Third, to submit to shameful terms. At the sounding of the third, Genseric and his Vandals arrive from Africa, spoil and plunder Rome, and set sail again with immense wealth and innumerable captives. At the sounding of the fourth, Odoacer and the Heruli put an end to the very name of the western empire; Theodoric founds the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy; and at last Italy becomes a province of the eastern empire, Rome being governed by a duke under the exarch of Ravenna.

As the foregoing trumpets relate chiefly to the downfall of the western empire, so do the two following to that of the eastern. They are sounded in the ninth, tenth, and part of the eleventh chapter.

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, Mahomet, that blazing star, appears; opens the bottomless pit, and with his locusts, the Arabians, darken the sun and air. And at the sounding of the sixth, a period not yet finished, the four angels, that is, the four Sultanies or leaders of the Turks and Othmans, are loosed from the river Euphrates. The Greek or eastern empire was cruelly hurt "and tormented" under the fifth trumpet; but under the sixth, it was "slain" and utterly destroyed.

The Latin or Western church being in no wise reclaimed by the ruin of the Greek or Eastern, but still persisting in its idolatry and wickedness; at the beginning of the tenth chapter, and under the sound of this sixth trumpet, is introduced a vision preparative to the prophecies respecting the Western church, wherein an angel is represented, having in his hand a little book, or codicil, describing the calamities that should overtake that church. The measuring of the temple shews, that during all this period there will be some true Christians, who will conform themselves to the rule of God's word even whilst the outer court (that is, the external and more extensive part of this temple or church) is trodden under foot by Gentiles, i. e. such Christians as, in their idolatrous worship and persecuting practice, resemble and out-do the Gentiles themselves. Yet against these corrupters of religion, there will always be some true witnesses to *protest*, who, however they may be overborne at times, and in appearance reduced to death, yet will rise again from time to time, till at last they triumph and gloriously ascend. The eleventh chapter concludes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

In the twelfth chapter, by the woman bearing a man-child is to be understood the Christian church; by the great red Dragon, the heathen Roman empire; by the man-child whom the woman bore, Constantine the Great; and by the war in heaven, the contests between the Christian and heathen religions.

In the thirteenth chapter, by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, unto whom the dragon gave his power, seat, and great authority, is to be understood, not Pagan but Christian,

not imperial but papal Rome; in submitting to whose religion, the world did in effect submit again to the religion of the dragon. The ten-horned beast therefore represents the Romish church and state in general: but the beast with two horns like a lamb, is the Roman clergy; and that image of the ten-horned beast, which the two-horned beast caused to be made and inspired with life, is the pope, whose number is 666, according to the numerical powers of the letters constituting the Roman name *Δαρεινος*, *Latinus*, or its equivalent in Hebrew, רוסיית, *Romiith*.

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	666	666	

Chapter xiv. By the Lamb on mount Sion is meant Jesus; by the hundred, forty, and four thousand, his church and followers; by the angel preaching the everlasting gospel, the first principal effort made towards a reformation, by that public opposition formed against the worship of saints and images by emperors and bishops in the eighth and ninth centuries; by the angel crying, "Babylon is fallen," the Waldenses and Albigenses, who pronounced the church of Rome to be the Apocalyptic Babylon, and denounced her destruction; and by the third angel, Martin Luther and his fellow-reformers, who protested against all the corruptions of the church of Rome, as destructive to salvation.

Here we may put a period to this short analysis of the Revelation, as what follows seems not to be of such obvious interpretation as the preceding, and therefore the curious reader will consult the Bishop's Dissertations themselves. In reading those, or any other illustration of the prophecies contained in this mysterious book, he will do well always to have before him the admirable works of Joseph Mede, above quoted.

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