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A

DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AGAINST THE WORK OF

GEORGE B. ENGLISH, A. M.

ENTITLED

THE GROUNDS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, BY
COMPARING THE NEW TESTAMENT
WITH THE OLD.

BY EDWARD EVERETT.

MINISTER OF THE CHURCH IN BRATTLE SQUARE, BOSTON.

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1814.



TO THE REVEREND

JOHN THORNTON KIRKLAND,

D. D. LL. D.

PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE, AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES.

DEAR SIR,

It is equally the dictate of duty and inclination to dedicate to you this essay, which owes any merit it may have to the studies it was my happiness to pursue under your direction. Whatever hope I may feel of its utility, it is the most agreeable reflection with which I regard it, that it affords me a publick opportunity of expressing the respect, affection, and gratitude, with which

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient,
most humble servant,

EDWARD EVERETT.

PREFACE.

I WOULD take occasion, before entering upon the immediate subject of the present work, to ask the reader's attention to another connected with it:—viz. the alleged plagiarisms of Mr. English. He leads us in his preface to expect, that he had availed himself, to a considerable degree, of the labours of others; and as far as the fact appears to correspond *in nature* to this expectation, he must certainly be acquitted of plagiarism. His words are, "I do not claim to have originated *all* the arguments advanced in this book: *a very considerable proportion* of them were derived from ancient and curious Jewish tracts, translated from Chaldee into Latin, &c. *Some FEW other* arguments were derived from other authors, and were taken from works not so much known, as I hope they will be." These remarks are from the preface to his first work; and in his letter to Mr. Cary he says, "the whole truth is, that out of over two hundred pages, of which my book consists, if all for which I am indebted to Collins *was* collected into one mass, *it would not occupy more than seventeen pages.*" And if "the very considerable proportion of the arguments in the book, mentioned in the preface as directly derived from others, were to be collected into a mass, and added to this, *the whole would amount to not exceeding forty pages.*" I would here correct a mistake, which the sequel will show to be of some importance. Mr. English did not say in his preface that 'a very considerable proportion' of the arguments were derived from 'other' sources. The very considerable proportion was derived from Jewish tracts. It was *some FEW other arguments* that were derived from other sources; and under this comprehensive head of '*some few,*' the seventeen pages from Collins must be comprised, besides more than twice as much more from other authors. In fact, my result differs a good deal from that of Mr. English, as

may appear from the following view of transcriptions from other works, in the Grounds of Christianity examined.

Page.	IN THE PREFACE.	
7th.—2	pages from Dr. Price's Observations.	[Acknowledged.]
9th.—2	do. Collins' Grounds and Reasons, preface	
	p. 5, 7, &c.	[Not acknowledged.]
19th.—1	do. Evanson's Dissonance, pref. p. 6.	[Do.]
IN THE BODY OF THE WORK.		
1st.—8	do. Collins' Grounds and Reasons,	
	p. 4—13, and 26—37.	[Not acknowledged.]
11th.—8	do. Priestley's Theolog. Repos. v.	
	p. 211 et seq.	[Do.]
19th.—1	do. Collins' Scheme of Literal	
	Prophecy, p. 321, &c.	[Do.]
23d.—7	do. Collins' Grounds and Reasons,	
	p. 39—61.	[Do.]
30th.—1	do. Collins' Grounds and Rea. p. 79.	[Do.]
31st.—3	do. ——— Scheme of Lit. Proph.	
	p. 329, 347, &c.	[Do.]
45th.—3	do. do. do. p. 239, &c.	[Do.]
13st.—1	do. do. do. p. 147—8.	[Do.]
45th.—4	do. R. Isaac's munimen fidei, § 22.	[Do.]
51st.—7	do. ——— and Levi.	[Acknowledged.]
58th.—4	do.	[Do.]
73d.—4	do. Orobio. Limborch's Am. Col.	
	p. 133.	[Not acknowledged.]
77th.—2	do. Celsus.	[Acknowledged.]
79th.—5	do. R. Isaac's M. F. vide n. p. 329	
	of this work.	[Not acknowledged.]
84th.—9	do. Priestley's Repos. v. p. 403, &c.	[Do.]
97th.—4	do. R. Isaac's M. F. vide n. p. 378.	[Do.]
104th.—1	do. Dr. Allix.	[Acknowledged.]
116th.—1,1-2	do. Brown's History of Shakers.	[Do.]
121st.—1,1-2	do. Middleton's Free Inquiry.	[Do.]
133d.—4	do. Evanson's Dissonance, p. 32, &c.	[Not acknowledged.]
139th.—5	do. do. p. 240.	[Do.]
160th.—2	do. Brown's History of the Shakers.	[Acknowledged.]
170th.—3	do. Toland's Amyntor, p. 193,199.	[Not acknowledged.]

Summary.—*Ninety-four* pages are transcribed. *Twenty* pages acknowledged as transcriptions. Leaving *seventy-four unacknowledged*. *Twenty-six* pages are transcribed from Collins.

Now if Mr. English, when he said that all that he had directly borrowed from others amounted to 'forty-two

pages,' meant all that he had copied, with credit given or without, there is a difference of *fifty-two* pages in our results. If he meant that the 'forty-two pages' is the amount of what he had copied, *without credit*, we still unfortunately differ by thirty-two pages. The number of pages copied from Collins, which is stated by Mr. English at seventeen, amounts in my calculation to twenty-six—more than half as much again.

Now I confess the justice of Mr. English's remark, that "the business is not to quarrel with him, about the arsenal from whence some of his weapons are taken, but to parry their blows, and take heed to their direction: and besides, I doubt after all that a wound's being given with a borrowed weapon, is a circumstance that will not have the least influence on the consequences." But it will be remembered, that if there is any *quarrel* here, it is of Mr. English's own provocation. He would needs tell us in his preface something about the sources from whence his arguments were derived. This was directly to invite inquiry into the subject; unless he trusted so much to the good nature of his readers, as to suppose they would receive the matter just as he stated it. Moreover, to adopt Mr. English's exceptionable simile, if an opponent presents himself in the guise of an honourable warrior, and tells us that besides his own weapons, he has borrowed a considerable number from his honourable ally, and a few more from others, who he thinks should be better known, and under these pretences pours down upon us a shower of poisoned darts, stolen from a savage enemy, whom he had just conquered, I apprehend we should complain, and that loudly, of broken faith and dishonourable war. Mr. English tells us that a considerable portion of his arguments are from Jews, and a few more from other sources, and then immediately proceeds to transcribing the pages of an infidel writer, though he had just settled the controversy with the Deists to his satisfaction! He would escape a little from the equivocal appearance of this by saying, that Collins' system was essentially Jewish, and therefore that his objections deserved a place in the Jewish contro-

versy ; though he had just asserted, what he afterwards repeats, that the system of Collins and his own, that is the Jewish, were totally different.

But every book, at least every one written by a scholar, and assuming the marks of learning, has a literary character. When we see a man writing a book, we suppose that he does it as other books are written, unless he tells us to the contrary. If he notes in the margin, when he alludes to a writer, and when he quotes him, if he gives scrupulous reference to volume, chapter, and page, it is not understood that, besides all the obligations he acknowledges, more than a third of his work is *silently* copied from other authors. If he begins his preface by two pages of acknowledged quotation from Dr. Price, it is not understood that the two next pages, which stand without acknowledgment, are secretly transcribed from Collins. If he marks one paragraph in a chapter, with inverted commas, and inserts ‘ says Dr. Priestley’* in the beginning, it is not understood that the whole chapter is nevertheless copied from Dr. Priestley. If it be said in one place “ the remainder of this chapter is taken from Isaac and Levi,” it is not understood that in other places, where no such notice is given, parts of chapters, and a whole chapter, are secretly imbibed from the same Isaac. If the author of a book of two hundred pages professes to treat principally of the Jewish controversy, and to derive a ‘ very considerable proportion of his arguments’ from Jewish tracts in Chaldee, and ‘ some few’ from other works, it is not understood that seventeen only of the pages are derived from the Chaldee, and eleven more only from other Jewish writings ; nor is it upon any occasion understood, that a *very consider-*

* I had overlooked a passage in the letter to Mr. Cary, till after the following work was written, in which Mr. English says, “ To a tract of Dr. Priestley I am indebted for a *part* of the arguments in chapter xi. relative to the intended perpetuity of the Mosaick law.” I assure the reader that, as far as my discernment goes, Mr. English is indebted to this tract not only for a *part* of his arguments upon this subject, but for the *whole*, and also for the *words*, in which they are expressed : though he gives credit only for one poor paragraph.

able proportion means twenty-nine pages, while *some few* means fifty-four. Finally, if an author says he approaches the Jewish controversy, after having settled the deistical controversy to his satisfaction as a Christian, it is not understood that he is to transcribe into his work twenty-nine pages from deistical writers, and twenty-six of them from a writer whose system he avers to be totally different from the Jewish; and this without a syllable of explanation. But Mr. English does all this.

In explaining the nature of his transcription from Collins, in the letter to Mr. Cary, particularly in intimating that the resemblance of himself to Collins was no greater than that of each to Locke, Mr. English could hardly be unconscious that he was leaving an erroneous impression on the reader's mind. It is true that Locke and a thousand other writers make the Messiahship of Jesus the fundamental question in Christianity, and it is equally true that Mr. English, instead of confining himself to this, has copied verbatim twenty-six pages from Collins, without acknowledgment; a thing which no writer ever did before, and I venture to predict none will ever do again.

Mr. English also I conceive misleads the reader in the view he gives of Collins' system, in the appendix to the letter to Mr. Cary. He there makes a sketch of the system contained in Collins' *second* work, the "Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered," whereas it was from Collins' first work, "A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion," that Mr. English principally copied. Now that he should take a representation of Collins' system from a different work from that he copied, would in any case be suspicious. It is still more so when we add, that the two books of Collins actually hold forth two different systems; the former, that a Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament, the latter, that none was predicted. I do not wish to say that Collins believed the former, but I maintain that in his first work he argued upon the supposition of it.

Finally, Mr. English says, "so far Mr. Locke, as well as myself, *agree* with Collins, but beginning at the third

chapter, we part, and pursue roads diametrically opposite to each other." It may be so, but a most admirable sympathy of opinion and feeling exists between these 'diametrically opposite' travellers; since beginning again at the fourth chapter, and throughout the first half of that, and *the whole* of the fifth and sixth, they keep the journal of their travels, *in the very same words!* The part of Mr. English's journal which coincides thus curiously with Collins, though it amounts to but twenty-six of Mr. English's pages, fills up fifty-two of Collins' octavo pages. And yet though Mr. English, if he happened to make but a single observation in common with some of the old travellers, would fill his margin with such fine sounding names as Hierocles, Tertullian, or Lactantius, and often with a specification of treatise, book, chapter, and section, does not find a little corner for the initials of Anthony Collins.

I would give here a sketch of the history of the Jewish controversy, as far as I am acquainted with it, in order to correct what I conceive the mistakes of Mr. English's account of the treatment of the Jews. But I will not take up the time of the reader with an incidental subject. It is true the Jews have, in former times, been cruelly persecuted, as I have found occasion to express my regret in the course of this essay; but not more, as I think, than all other hereticks, dissenters, and infidels. The truth is, that comfort, property, or life, are the premium which men have been obliged in all ages to pay for differing from the majority. Nothing has been required of the Jews, which has not been of other sects. Certainly the Jews set the example of persecution to the Christians; and though Mr. English requests the reader to consider "that the Christian system is built upon the prostrate necks of the whole Hebrew nation; it is a tree which flourished in a soil, watered by their tears, its leaves grew green in an atmosphere filled with their cries and groans, and its roots have been moistened and fattened with their blood," yet I would suggest that this is not near so correct as it is flowery, and that Pilate's hall and mount Calvary have a different tale to tell. The Jews have, therefore,

hardly so much right to complain of being brought to prison and the stake, as the hereticks and dissenters of all names and periods.

It has no doubt been one part of the persecution the Jews have suffered, to be restrained in the right of openly professing and publishing their opinions, and defending their cause. But here too they have experienced the universal treatment. Where are the volumes of the ancient hereticks, of Marcion, who is said to have been a critick, of Arius, who was a keen disputant? Where are the six thousand volumes of Origen? Does not Mr. English know that a legal or conventional suppression always takes place of unpopular books? If they be not prohibited or destroyed by the power of the state, they will be shut out of circulation by general consent. Few carry the love of truth to such extravagance as to seek it in the dangerous regions of innovation, dissent, and heresy.

Mr. English tells us, that his Jewish arguments are, "in many instances, the reasonings of learned, ancient, and venerable men, who in times when the inquisition was in vigour, suffered under the most bloody oppression, and whose writings were cautiously preserved and secretly handed down to the seventeenth century in manuscript, as the printing of them would assuredly have brought all concerned to the stake." The Jewish books to which Mr. English is indebted are, as I think, only these: R. Isaac's *Bulwark of Faith*, (commonly quoted by the Hebrew title, *Chissuk Emuna*,) Orobio's *Conference with Limborch*, and *Levi's Letters to Priestley*. The first was written about the middle of the sixteenth century, and considering the state of Jewish literature, probably would not, under the most complete toleration, have been printed long before it was, which was by Hacksan in 1644. It was again published by Wagenseil, with a Latin translation, and without a word of refutation or reply, in 1681. When we consider that it was so early translated and published, by professors in Christian universities, we may think that Mr. English's complaints are exaggerated. This is, I believe, the only "rare and curious Chaldee and Latin tract" from which

Mr. English has derived any thing. The publication of the conference of Orobio and Limborch in Latin by the latter, also a Christian professor, in the year 1687, certainly savours not of intolerance and suppression. While the correspondence of Levi and Priestley, in English, passed in open day, within the last generation, and no objection was taken, that I know, to the boldness of Levi, which was exemplary, or his coarseness, which was extreme. Deriving his Jewish arguments from these sources, I cannot but wish Mr. English had said less of the compulsory silence imposed upon the Jews, and the suppression of their works.

Mr. English leaves, I think, upon his reader's mind the impression, that he had discovered some Jewish arguments, which had hitherto been entirely or almost unknown. Now I assert, without fear of contradiction, that there is not in all Mr. English's work a single argument against Christianity, which has not repeatedly been stated. I will not say that he has not adduced a single *illustration* that is original; perhaps the comparison of the primitive Christians to the Shakers is so. But that a single *argument* can be found in his work which has not been before urged, I am sure. Moreover, the suggestion that this work contains *Jewish* arguments in distinction from *Deistical*, is equally unfounded. Excepting single illustrations and examples, there is not an argument in it, that may not be found in *Deistical* writers; and this I say, after a perusal of the most considerable of them to ascertain this point.

It may excite surprise in some, that Mr. E. should have found it to his purpose, to take so much from the writings of Dr. Priestley, and that he should venture to insinuate that the doctor came to a conclusion, not essentially different from his own.* In reply to this last insinuation, there are few to whom it is necessary to say, that Dr. Priestley lived and died a sincere believer in Jesus Christ and his gospel, as he understood it to be taught in the New Testament. He thought that many of the prophecies applied by Christians to the Messiah, referred to a

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 90

temporal prince, of the house of David, and from a tract where he asserts this, Mr. E. copied his third chapter:—copied not only without acknowledging the debt, at the time; but also without acknowledging it in the partial settlement he makes with his creditors, in the letter to Mr. Cary.

Dr. Priestley firmly believed that other prophecies foretold a suffering Messiah, and that these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Among these prophecies, and in the very tract from which Mr. E. takes his third chapter, he names Is. lii. and liii.—though Mr. E. indulges himself in quoting him for the Jewish interpretation of that prophecy, without any mention of this fact.—In his tract on the perpetual obligation of the Jewish ritual on Jews, Dr. Priestley affords Mr. E. another chapter.—With respect to this last point in addition to what I have said, in the course of this essay, I would add a quotation from a writer, very high in Mr. E's esteem. "A word of that anonymous writer, whose arrogant work 'upon the design of Jesus and his disciples'* has lately been edited by Lessing. He pretends that Jesus, by no means intended the abolition of the Mosaick law, nor taught the cessation of the ritual, *in which he mistakes marvellously*. For if, as this writer supposes and clamorously asserts, Jesus professed to be the Messiah; he must necessarily have proceeded to the abrogation of the Mosaick law, in virtue of this new authority, *a point so clearly conceded by the Jews and Rubbins, that one cannot sufficiently wonder that a learned man should be so ignorant of it, as to dare to maintain that Jesus, in assuming the character and authority of the Messiah, did not therefore wish to abrogate the Mosaick law.*"*

I would add a few words with respect to this essay. In perusing Mr. English's work I have suffered so much inconvenience from his deficiency in stating authorities, that I have perhaps gone to the extreme of minuteness, in giving mine.—I have never,

* "Von dem Zweck Jesu und seiner Junger." See page 458 of this work.

* SEMLERI Paraph. epistolæ ad Galat. p. 171.

as I believe, given a reference to the originals, without having consulted them, and where I am indebted to other writers for references to the fathers, I have not thought myself at liberty to claim them, as the fruits of my own reading.—The quotations from Josephus and Basnage are generally made from the translations of Whiston and Taylor. But having myself turned to the originals, wherever there was any doubt, I have given the references according to the Greek of Josephus, and the French of Basnage, to aid the reader in doing the same.

It will be thought injudicious by many, to have recalled the publick attention to a work, which was received at first with little sensation by the community in general, and which is now quite forgotten. But I do by no means expect that these pages are to attract general public notice: that they will be seen by any, besides a few inquirers, or long remembered beyond the circle of personal friendship. It has not been my object to prolong by controversy, the indecision of those who have not leisure to inquire, but to furnish a few materials to those who have. There is a mixture of styles in this work, of the popular and the learned, into which I was unconsciously led, by attempting to adapt it to the state of publick information, but which, upon revision, appears to myself, and doubtless will to my readers, sufficiently unnatural. But I wished to make the discussion not absolutely below the notice of scholars, and yet not unintelligible to others. I have therefore also thrown into the notes as much as I could, which was not likely to be generally read.—Finally, I can hardly be thought to have prepared these pages, with a view to my own reputation. I see such defects in them, as should preclude the idea, and those who are less partial will see more. I have prepared them under some disadvantages, which I state, not so much as an apology, as a cause of their defects. I commenced them October, 1813, about a fortnight after I began to preach, as a candidate for the Christian ministry. They have accordingly been mostly written, while my hands were filled with other duties, and my heart with other cares.

August, 1814.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

.....

CHAPTER I.

Miracles and Prophecy both proofs of revelation....The opinion of Dr. Sykes....of Mr. Jeffreys....Miraculous evidence more direct than prophetic....doctrine of the Old Testament....of our Saviour and his apostles....opinion of the primitive Christians.... Authority of Justin Martyr....of Jerome....of Lactantius....of Celsus....of Tertullian....of Origen....The fathers considered miracles as proofs of revelation....Not the author's intention to treat the topick of miraculous evidence....Mr. English ceased to believe in the Old Testament after writing, and before publishing his work.... Further illustration of the opinions of Mr. Jeffreys. pp. 1—45.

CHAPTER II.

Comparison of the Jewish and Christian opinions of the character of the Messiah....the latter most rational....the scriptures figurative....difference between figurative and allegorical....The prophets foretell the Messiah as the head of a moral and religious dispensation....examination of passages alleged to favour a contrary opinion....the moral kingdom of the Messiah spoken of by the prophets in like terms as the moral government of God.... Christ truly the prince of peace....Mr. English's concession....The wars and woes of Christendom not to be charged to Christianity.... The restoration of the Jews is not foretold as contemporary with the advent of the Messiah....Examination of texts....Christianity, like all moral means, to operate gradually. pp. 46—81.

CHAPTER III.

Disingenuousness of Collins in passages copied by Mr. English....Examination of particular prophecies to establish the Christian interpretation....Deut. xviii. 15....Grotius and Stillingfleet not fairly represented by Collins and Mr. English....Psalm xvi. 10.... Defence of St. Peter against the charge of having made two mistakes....Psalm ii. 1....Vindication of its application by the apostle....

Testimony of Theodoret to the early and extensive diffusion of the gospel....of Chrysostom....of Athanasius....of Arnobius....of Tertullian....of Irenæus....of Pliny...Micah v. 2...The question is reduced by this prophecy to a point....Zechariah ix. 10....Defence of the evangelist's application of this text from three objections....Applied by the Jews to the Messiah....Zechariah xii. 10....The reading of the evangelist sanctioned by many Jewish and other authorities....Mr. English's mistake of Grotius....copies from Collins an extract from Dr. Sykes, in which there is an unfair suppression....Deistical writers often misuse their authorities. pp. 82-108.

CHAPTER IV.

The prophecy Gen. xlix. 10....Mr. English's ignorance of the Hebrew vowel points, and incorrect assertion respecting them....Mr. English's total mistake of Rittangelius....The three Chaldee paraphrases confirm the common Christian interpretation of this text....Various Jewish and Christian applications....Reason why this prophecy is not quoted in the New Testament....Isaiah lii. 13. and liii....Mr. English misrepresents Paley and Origen....Entirely mistakes Vitranga.....Mr. English's *petitio principii*.....Bishop Lowth's version....Mr. English's interpretation....contradicted by himself....its absurdity exposed....its self contradiction....This interpretation improperly called by Mr. English that of the Jews... not adopted by the targums....by any of the ancient rabbies....by Alshek, a respectable modern rabbi....probable reason why Mr. English does not recognize Alshek....Mr. Frey exposes the fraud of the Jews in suppressing this chapter....five objections to the Christian interpretation refuted....Mr. English mistakes Grotius and Priestley....Account of the Jewish notion of a twofold Messiah....this notion an important confirmation of the Christian views of the Messiah's character....Daniel ix. 24....five defects in Mr. English's interpretation exposed....Mr. English's singular commendation of an interpretation of Marsham, which if true is fatal to his own....Nagid does not necessarily mean a temporal prince....A single fatal objection from history to Mr. English's interpretation....Methods by which the Jews evaded this prophecy....Manasseh Ben Israel owns that they understood it of the Messiah....Josephus....Antecedent probability of the Christian interpretation....Substitution of the translation of Daniel by Theodotion, for the LXX....recent recovery of the latter, its important various readings....Version of the prophecy by Dr. Blayney....Mr. English's assertion that the Messiah was to be named David shown to be unfounded....Mr. English's objection, founded upon the prophecy concerning Elijah, unfounded....Authorities of the Talmud, Tanchuma, and Maimonides. Mr. English interpolates a passage of R. Isaac....two errors in the interpolation....The genealogies of Matthew and Luke reconciled....Another interpolation

of R. Isaac by Mr. English....the opinion implied in the interpolation not conformable to R. Isaac's....Examination of Dan. ii. 31, &c....Six summary objections answered. ..Something said in extenuation of the incredulity of the Jews...great persecutors themselves....Barchochebas. pp. 109—213.

CHAPTER V. [Misprinted IV.]

Expectation of the Messiah at the time our Lord appeared.... Evidence of a famous Jewish tradition....Appearance of false Christs....Sect of Herodians....Testimony of Josephus....Theudas.... Judas of Galilee....a second Theudas....The Egyptian impostor.... R. Gedaliah places him among the false Messiahs...Evidence from incidental passages of the New Testament....from Virgil's fourth eclogue....from Jewish traditions....evidence from express authorities....Philo....Josephus....Suetonius....Tacitus....Inferences from these facts. pp. 215—237.

CHAPTER VI. [Misprinted V.]

Quotations....Mr. English's premises incorrect....the inspiration of the sacred writers not a logical inspiration....The books of the New Testament not a forensic statement of the evidences of Christianity....The doctrine of accommodation adopted by most divines....Mr. English's mistake on this point....persists in it...The use made by the writers of the New Testament of passages of the Old Testament considered by the author to be something different from classical accommodation....a peculiar use....the different forms of quotation proved not to express, as is commonly thought, a different kind or degree of application....the same true of the Mishna....character of this work....Proofs that the rabbins quoted passages of scripture in a reference different from the primary and original reference....examples from the Mishna....the Tanchuma...the Zohar...Talmud...another from the Zohar....from the Beresith Rabba....express authority of the rabbinical treatise Halicoth Olam...example from the Jerusalem paraphrase....character of this paraphrase. ..refutation of objections to the doctrine of accommodation, which apply to the opinions of the author....Account of the work of Surenhusius...Two distinct questions with respect to the quotations unhappily confounded by Mr. English... Examination of the examples of the pretended rules of Surenhusius....In giving these examples from Collins Mr. English retains the typographical errors....Collins did the same in quoting them from La Roche....Mr. English did not look at the examples as they stand in the New Testament...the variations of the readings of the Old and New Testament in these quotations very trifling. pp. 238—292.

CHAPTER VII.

Alteration of Mr. English's opinion of a good part of his own book. .his opinion of the moral character of our Lord.....his opinion that the New Testament is spurious, would destroy, if it were true, most of his own objections....Christianity can be proved without the New Testament....Case of the woman taken in adultery....Charges brought by Mr. English against our Lord of inconsistency refuted....teaching in parables....reproving the disciples for sleeping...Mr. English's mistake of the commentators...Objection to John viii. 51....Mr. English charges our Lord with inconsequent reasoning...refuted in his examples....Mr. English mistakes the argument for Christianity from martyrdom...Paley's statement of the argument...No analogy between the cases quoted by Mr. English and apostolick martyrdom....Mr. English's extracts, without acknowledgment, from Orobio....Limborch's refutation of the objections in the extracts....Opinion of the Protestants, with respect to Peter's being at Rome, mistaken by Mr. English....Mr. English contradicts himself with respect to the morality of the New Testament....with respect to the foundation of the New Testament...Motto for Mr. English's second edition from Celsus. pp. 293—328.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. English's tenth chapter taken, without acknowledgment, from R. Isaac...refutation of the various objections it contains...Mr. English's eleventh chapter taken, without acknowledgment, from Dr. Priestley....Discussion of the question of the perpetuity of the Jewish ritual...Distinction between the moral and ceremonial parts of the law....The Mosaick institutions in their nature temporary....Not taught in the Old Testament to be perpetual...Authority of the Psalms and Prophets....Testimony of Collins....Express prediction of the abrogation of the Mosaick law....The doctrine and practice of our Saviour and his apostles....Vindication of St. Paul....The Mosaick religion never can be universal....does not teach the doctrine of immortal life. pp. 329—371.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. English's work contains two systems, the Jewish and Deistick...A contradiction exposed...Source of the notion that there was a schism between Paul and the other apostles....refutation of it....Mr. English borrows, without credit, from R. Isaac....Examination of the charge that Christianity is founded on the religion of Zoroaster...its absurdity...Zoroaster himself drew from the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the source of that part of Christianity pretended to borrowed from Zoroaster...Mr. English

unfortunate in his allusion to Latimer....contradicts himself with respect to the origin of sin....the New Testament doctrine on this subject not borrowed from the Persians, neither is the New Testament doctrine of the devil..Mr.English makes a great mistake about the doctrine of atonement....betrays the temper in which he pursued this enquiry...Absurd comparison of the primitive Christians to the Shakers....His account of the primitive state of Christianity inconsistent with Tacitus, Pliny, and the whole series of history...No resemblance between the evangelical miracles and those of the church....The proof of the Christian miracles is their effect on the world....Mr. English's principles lead to universal skepticism. pp. 372—400.

CHAPTER X.

Our Lord's Prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem not borrowed from Daniel...eight circumstances alleged in which it is more explicit...strictly fulfilled in all of them...Mr.English's unhappiness in calling the interpretations of this prophecy nonsensical....Isaiah uses the same language in the same sense....No objection to this prophecy from an alleged error with respect to the day of judgment...Mr.English's surprising neglect to examine the prophecies of the New Testament....two pointed out, Matt. xvi. 18 and Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11....their wonderful fulfilment against human probability....Our Lord taught the worship of no being beside Jehovah. pp. 401—418.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. English's contradiction of himself with respect to the New Testament morality....examination of his objections to certain precepts....vindication of the precepts...Mr. English holds false notions of morality, which he will learn by experience....a mistake of a few fathers for the body of the primitive Christians....examination of a particular objection...Indecency of the skeptical writers...Vanity of the charge that Christianity was a principal means of destroying the Roman empire....Mr. English's quotation and treatment of Origen, the one incorrect and the other uncivil.... Authority of Tertullian and of Grotius. pp. 418—441.

CHAPTER XII.

Authenticity of the New Testament....Mr. English refutes his own objections....Instances....Examination of alleged geographical blunders in Matthew....of alleged ignorance of Jewish customs in the evangelists...Quotation of an apocryphal book...Objection that Latin words occur in the gospels answered....The case of alleged contradictions between the evangelists...Parallel examples by Dr. Paley and Lessing...Mr. English misrepresents Evanson...Opinion

pronounced of Evanson's work by Eichhorn....Mr. English misrepresents Semler....Semler asserts the authenticity of all the books of the New Testament excepting the Catholick epistles, and the apocalypse....Mr. English misrepresents Dodwell....Mr. English's mistake in copying Toland....The conjectures of Dodwell refuted by Le Clerc....Argument for the genuine from the apocryphal gospels....The authority of Papias vindicated, and of Irenæus and Tertullian....that of Justin Martyr....Heinous liberty taken by Mr. English with Dr. Marsh....Proofs of the authenticity of the New Testament from the succession of authors that testify to it....from the hereticks....the heathen....the versions....Application of Mr. English's manner of reasoning to the poems of Horace, proving them not to be authentick....Conclusion.

DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE difficulty has arisen in this subject, with respect to the comparative value of evidence from prophecy fulfilled, and evidence from miraculous works. It may therefore be proper to state the precise question in controversy, and the different topicks of argument, which may be employed. The main question is, the Messiahship of Jesus: Was Jesus Christ the person foretold by the prophets, as the Messiah of the Jews? One method, and a very obvious one, of examining his claims to this character, is to compare his person, life, actions, and doctrine with the supposed predictions of them. But if it also appear that this Jesus wrought such works, as evinced that he enjoyed the supernatural assistance and cooperation of God, this certainly is a fact of great importance. For we cannot say that in estimating the validity of our Lord's claims to the character of Messiah, it is of no consequence whether, while he advanced those claims, he wrought such works as proved his intimacy with the God of truth. While he professed himself the Messiah,

is it indifferent whether he was showing himself to be a being beyond delusion and above imposture?—Let us make the case our own. Suppose that we were witnesses of the miraculous works of a personage of pretensions like our Lord's, should we think it necessary or reasonable to resort to long courses of argument, or indeed to any process of the understanding, except what was requisite to establish the matter of fact of the miracles? Should we, while he was opening the eyes of the blind and raising the dead from their graves, feel it necessary to be decyphering prophecies, and weighing their difficulties? Now we may transfer this case to that of christianity. The miracles of our Lord are either true or false. The infidel, if he maintain the latter, must prove it; and if the former can be made to appear, then they are beyond all comparison the most direct and convincing testimony to the truth of him, who wrought them, that can be devised; and it is only a waste of zeal to pursue the inquiry into the evidence of the christian religion, without taking them into the account. But to do the argument justice, let us take the opposite statement, as it is forcibly made by Mr. English. "Suppose that the prophecies, which foretel, or describe a Messiah, had affirmed, that he should be born at Athens, and should be learned in all the philosophy of Greece. A man born at Bethlehem in Judea, and entirely ignorant of Grecian philosophy and letters, arises and

proclaims himself the promised Messiah. But he not only calls himself this Messiah foretold by the prophets, he performs miracles to prove the truth of what he teaches. Now according to our 'irrefragable argument' his miracles prove his doctrine true. And what is the doctrine taught? Why unquestionably this, that the prophet had foretold a Messiah, that this Messiah should be born at Athens, &c. and that this *prophecy* is true. But his miracles prove too the truth of his *assertion*, viz. that he who was born at Bethlehem, &c. is the Messiah promised! That is, the miracles prove the prophecy to be false, which is affirmed to be true!"* Now this, however plausible, is clearly only the supposition of an impossible case. As prophecy and miracle are equally divine works, it is impossible that they should contradict each other. They are equally the works of the God of truth, and whatever contradiction there appear to be between them, must be but apparent. If a person of whatever pretensions professes to work miracles in support of those pretensions, in which nevertheless he is contradicted by express prophecy—one of three things is certain, that the prophecy is a forged one, or that we have mistaken the meaning of it, or that the miracles are not real. To reply however to the case, which is put by Mr. English, suppose that one of the prophecies which foretel or describe the Messiah, had affirmed that he should be born at Athens, and should be

* English's Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 45, 46.

learned in all the philosophy of Greece ; and that another prophecy should affirm that he should be born in Judea, and be entirely ignorant of the Grecian philosophy. Now if a person appeared, who was born in Athens, and claimed the character of Messiah, he would be proved an impostor by the second prophecy. And if he were born in Judea, and claimed this character, he would be proved an impostor by the first ; and, in whatever event, the words of scripture would be entangled in inextricable contradiction. Now can any thing be argued from this supposition against the validity and value of prophetic testimony ? Is any reply to be made to the supposition but this, that it is the supposition of an impossible case, and that it never can be that two prophecies, both inspired by God, should speak a language mutually contradictory. And it is precisely this remark which must be applied to Mr. English's supposition. Prophecy and miracles are each and equally the works of God. To suppose a case, in which as sources of evidence they contradict each other, is to suppose an impossibility. The correctness of this reasoning is tacitly acknowledged by those writers, who have attempted to destroy the historical credit of the christian miracles, and among others therefore, by Mr. English himself. It is obviously unphilosophical, allowing them to be real, to leave them out in the estimate of the truth of any pretension made by their author : because in no case whatever,

even imaginary, can it be of no consequence to the truth and justice of a claim, that it is sanctioned and enforced by works, which denote the immediate intercourse and countenance of the Supreme. On the contrary, no evidence can be devised more satisfactory, than the evidence, which such works afford to the veracity of their author. The idea of denying their value, on the ground which Mr. English assumes, appears to have been a wantonness of Collins, of whose paradoxes it was not the least ingenious, that allowing the christian miracles to be real, they could not prove the truth of christianity.

But Mr. English has strengthened the demand he makes, that the evidence of prophecy be alone adduced, by attesting that most ingenious and judicious theologian, Dr. Sykes. In his first work he says, "he, [Mr. English,] fears that he shall see an answer precisely resembling the many others, that he has seen upon the subject: except two, those of Sykes and Jeffreys, who acknowledge that miracles *have nothing to do* with the question of the *Messiahship*, which can be decided by the Old Testament *only*, all that he has met with evade this question, and slide over to the ground of miracles."* This is repeated in the letter to Mr. Cary,† with the mention that the author's anticipations have come to pass. If the preceding reasonings are correct, it would

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 173.

† Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 19.

be of small consequence that Dr. Sykes and Jeffreys had advanced the sentiment thus attributed to them—it would only show them not beyond error. But the error here is entirely on the part of Mr. English, and as the supposed authority of Dr. Sykes appears to have confirmed him in his unphilosophical views of miraculous evidence, I particularly point it out. Dr. Sykes, in his *Essay on the truth of the Christian Religion*, the work to which Mr. English alludes, says, that “the Christian religion—being manifestly founded upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament, there cannot be a more natural method than to compare what was foretold with the consequences and following events, and then to consider the arguments, which Christ himself and his immediate disciples urged in proof of their assertions.”* He then proceeds to contradict the opinion of those, who think the truth of Christianity established merely by proving the truth of the accounts of the miracles and the resurrection, and says, much in the language of Collins, whom he is answering, and which Mr. English *has adopted*, that “supposing miracles to be true, yet no miracles can prove that which is false in itself, to be true; and if therefore the Messiah be not foretold in the Old Testament, no miracles can prove Jesus to be the Messiah foretold, &c.” Now though the Dr. here seems to have overlooked the contradiction in terms, which exists in the propo-

* *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion*, p. 1.

sition that a miracle *can* be wrought to testify to a falsehood, yet his sentiment is one that I am far from disputing, viz. that miraculous testimony cannot prove that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, if no Messiah was predicted. This however, as we shall presently more distinctly see, is a very different thing from maintaining that the miracles “have nothing to do” with the Messiahship, and that this can be proved only from the Old Testament. For the truth is, that the suppositions made by Dr. Sykes and Mr. English are different in their nature. Dr. Sykes says, that miracles could not prove Christ to be the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament, if none were foretold; but Mr. English says, that they could not prove him to be the foretold Messiah, if he were, that is, if he appeared to us to be, a different personage from the one foretold. The difference, and it is highly important, is, that in Dr. Sykes’ case, it is hardly possible we should mistake in the fact, whether a Messiah were foretold or not; but in Mr. English’s case it is not only possible, but very conformable to experience, that we should mistake in the interpretation of the particular character. Agreeably to this Dr. Sykes proceeds in his work, not to show directly, as might be supposed from Mr. English’s intimations, that the prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled, in the person of Christ, but first *that there were* predictions of a Messiah in the Old Testament, and second, that Jesus applied them to him-

self, pretending that they were fulfilled in himself, and third, that this pretension was just. Now when he comes to this third point, and inquires “*how* Jesus proved himself to be the Christ, or the Messiah, or the Son of man,” the reader will be surprised no doubt to find, in variance with Mr. English’s emphatic and repeated assertion, that Dr. Sykes appeals directly and solely to the miracles of the Saviour. And after many remarks to which I *earnestly refer* the reader,* he adds, “But then I have shown at large, that a Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament. *Miracles will therefore prove the claim of him who does them to that title, if he pretends to it, or else we must lay aside all notions of the being of God as a Governor and Director of this world. And consequently since Jesus worked miracles, and assumed to himself the title of the Messiah, his claim was just and indisputable.*”† It will thus be seen, that though the evidence of miracles is applied by him to the proof of Christianity in a manner different from that of some others, from whom Dr. Sykes expresses his dissent, yet that this is ultimately the sole evidence on which he relies, and the medium through which he makes the evidence of prophecy bear upon Christianity. So too Mr. English has hastily adduced the authority of Jeffreys, as patronising his opinion, that miracles have nothing to do with this question. Jeffreys ob-

* Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 120—134, 2d edition.

† *Ibid.* p. 134.

serves indeed in his introductory chapter, *to which it is possible that Mr. English limited his notice*, “that he soon submitted to the clear evidence produced by Collins, that miracles are not *of themselves* a sufficient proof of Christianity.”* Even this I apprehend is not enough to authorise the loose and declamatory assertion, that this author also allowed that miracles *have nothing to do* with the question; but had Mr. English continued his perusal a little further, he would have met with this passage, “That prophecies could be NO OTHERWISE *direct* proofs of Christianity, than as they were *miraculous*, and so discovered the divine interposition in behalf of the gospel;” and a little farther the author’s opinion is yet more distinctly expressed, “What the apostles preached to the Gentiles, and what, upon their receiving, they were baptized, and admitted into the Christian church, was the gospel; but this they received *on the evidence of miracles*, and the gifts of the Spirit, as it is indeed capable of no other evidence, and such a faith as this engages to the entire practice of Christianity.—The additional evidence of prophecy, which they would learn afterwards would, if any at all, be very slender, compared with the other of miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, upon which they had before received the gospel. These were the proper direct proofs of Christianity, and are always proposed as such by

* Jeffreys’ Review, p. 69.

the apostles, and it is remarkable, as I have shewn throughout the Acts, that there is not one *direct* proof for Christianity brought *from prophecies* by the apostles; so that indeed prophecies were not made use of as the first proof to the Jews, and the last to the Gentiles, (as Dr. Sherlock had thought,) but were *never* made use of *as a direct proof* of Christianity to either Jews or Gentiles.”*

It is a matter of deep regret that Mr. English *should have viewed in so different a light* the reasonings of these authors on so important a branch of the controversy, and in direct reply to one of his principal sources, the work of Collins.

But it may be asked, notwithstanding, whether the demand to have the inquiry confined to prophetic testimony is not just; although it be not sanctioned by Dr. Sykes and Mr. Jeffreys. And to this question I answer in the negative. First, because it is a sort of intellectual romance, and piece of rashness, to confine yourself to one kind of evidence, while a second is accessible, and that so convincing and so irresistible as the immediate testimony of God. And next the evidence of prophecy is more remote, by at least one degree, than that of miracles; for you must not only establish the historical fact, that the prophecy was made and subsequently fulfilled, but the forensic fact, that your interpretation of it is correct. This last process is of course involv-

* Jeffreys' Review, p. 83

ed in the difficulties attendant on a language imperfectly known, and a style of writing imperfectly understood. And these difficulties are so great, that the Jews have differed among themselves as much almost as they have from the Christians, in expounding the prophecies of the Messiah, as will hereafter appear. But if a miracle is pretended to be wrought, we either see it or receive it on historical evidence. If it is addressed directly to us, we have only to ask our senses whether it be real. If we receive it upon historical evidence, we have only to examine the evidence, and see if it be satisfactory. The process in either case has but one step; having settled the reality of the miracle, we settle the interference of the hand of God; and the certainty of the veracity of the worker. If it be said, with Hume, that a miracle cannot be proved to have been wrought, it can be answered, that it can be proved as much as that a prophecy should have been made and fulfilled. For that a blind man should be restored to sight, by a word, is in itself a thing no more incapable of proof, than that one should now describe persons and events, which are to come to pass five hundred years hence. A prophecy is in fact a miracle;* it is a supernatural work be-

* Jeffreys remarks, that "properly speaking, the evidence of Christ's being the [expected] prophet was not the mere agreement with the prophetic characters, (for the agreement with those characters, which are not miraculous, was no evidence at all,) but the agreement only with those characters which were miraculous, as the resurrection, i. e. indeed it was not the ag-

yond the course of nature, or the natural powers of man.

But Mr. English says for the sake of argument, "suppose the prophecy to be obscure, hyperbolic, abounding in enigmas, and metaphors, full of abruptness and incoherency, can miracles make it simple and plain? Can miracles free it from enigmas, its abruptness, and incoherency. I apprehend not. After the most stupendous miracles, it must still retain its original character. It remains what it was when it fell from the lips of the prophet."* But neither this question nor this answer are pertinent. The simple question is this, will not a miraculous work afford us a sanction of the interpretation, which its worker gives of such obscure passages. God gave the prophecy by his servants, God works miracles by his servants. Are not the interpretation of these miraculously-assisted servants better than ours? Whether the prophecy be clear or obscure, figurative or plain, is not an exposition of it given by one, who establishes his intimacy with God, more credible than the expositions of fallible men, of ourselves? These are questions which answer themselves.

But it is urged by Mr. English, that the Old Testament expressly enjoined upon the

accomplishment of the prophecy as such, but the *miracle* which was the direct evidence," &c. p. 83. Though this be not strictly correct, yet practically it is an important remark, since the fulfilment of prophecy in things not miraculous, might always be exposed to the suspicion of coincidence.

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 47.

Jews to judge of the miracle by the doctrine, and to give no heed to the former, if there were any thing false, unlawful, or forbidden in the latter. If this were true, it would imply a contradiction between two works of the same almighty Being, an inference to the last degree inadmissible ; and to say that the Old Testament declares that miracles wrought in support of idolatry are to be disregarded, is to say that the Old Testament admits the possibility of such miracles, the possibility that God should lend his authority to a falsehood. A violent presumption therefore must arise in the mind of every one who believes with Mr. English, that the “moral precepts of the Old Testament are unexceptionable,” and that it teaches “theism,”* or the existence and government of God, against such an interpretation of any part of it. Mr. English however quotes Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3, in the following manner, as a proof, that these views of miraculous testimony are actually exhibited in the Old Testament, “If there arise among you a prophet, or dreamer of dreams, and give you a sign or a wonder, (that is, a miracle,) and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, let us go after other gods, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your

* Letter to Mr. Channing, p. 26.

heart, and with all your soul ;” of which he soon after gives this paraphrase, and “ If any man arise in Israel and advise or teach them to worship any other beside Jehovah, and in proof of the divinity of his mission promise a sign or wonder, and in fact does bring to pass the sign or wonder promised, he is nevertheless not to be hearkened to, but be put to death. And these criterions given by God or Moses, as the means whereby they might know a true prophet from a false one, most exquisitely prove his wisdom and foresight. For if he had not expressly excluded *miracles*, or signs and wonders from being a proof of the divinity of doctrines, the barriers which divided his religion from those of idolaters, must have been broken down, since as we have seen, well attested miracles (meaning always by miracles, signs, and wonders brought about by human agency,) are related to have been performed in proof of every religion under heaven. But *veritable* prophecy is and can be a proof proper only to a true revelation, because none can know what is to come but God and those who sent him. Accordingly we find that the Jewish prophets were not acknowledged as such but on account of their foretelling the truth, or being supposed to do so.”*

The confusion of expression in this long extract, to which I beg the reader’s attention, is evidence of the confusion of thought in the writer’s mind. Mr. English, in search of proofs that miracles are an incompetent testi-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 125.-

mony, unfortunately adduces a text in which *false prophecy* is said to be incompetent; viz. a sign or a wonder given by a false prophet, which *comes to pass*. Now it is plain that the sign, which is *given*, and which comes to pass, is prophetic testimony, in contradistinction to miraculous. A circumstance which not only makes this text extremely irrelevant to Mr. English's argument, but directly opposes his fundamental principle of the absolute sufficiency of prophetic, to the exclusion of miraculous testimony. To avoid this consequence he has *interposed* the words, "that is a miracle," after the words "sign or wonder," a resort which though sometimes convenient, has been called by logicians, begging the question. Moreover his point was to prove, in opposition to Christians, that miraculous testimony was excluded in the Old Testament; but he finds himself reduced to the making of a distinction between true and false prophecy; a distinction highly important indeed, but no ways connected with the subject. He concludes the paragraph however by asserting, that *veritable* prophecy is the proper proof of revelation, for that none can know what is to come, but God and his servants; a principle that follows not at all from the text, which sets forth that though one *should* tell what is to come, and the event should be accordingly, he must notwithstanding be rejected if he taught other gods. At any rate, if any *real* evidence be excluded by this text, it is clearly that, and that only, on which Mr. English rests, proph-

✓ ecy fulfilled. But the truth is, no *real* evidence is excluded by this text; the Israelites are warned in it against the arts of impostors. In a multitude of random predictions, which such might utter, some must be verified by the event, and the history of the ancient ages gives examples of the coincidence of such predictions with the subsequent state of things. God forwarned his people against any such imposture, and told them to reject all enticements to idolatry, even should they appear to have this sanction. It is manifestly clear that no *real* prophecy could have been uttered, and no real miracle could have been wrought by an impostor, and that interpretation must be wrong, which supposes either. But why this laborious distinction? Be it prophecy or miracle. That which made prophecy an evidence makes miracles so too. "None can know the future," says Mr. English, "but God and those sent by him." So none can control nature but God and his servants; and the sole thing, which makes prophecy fulfilled a testimony of the prophet's veracity is, that it is a miraculous work.

If it be said too by Mr. English, that all false religions have had their alleged miracles, I reply, that they have had their alleged prophecies too, as numerous and as plausibly attested.* And if he will urge that *veritable* proph-

* Mr. English will prize the authority of Celsus, even though it make against himself; *τι δει καταλεγειν οσα εκ χρηστηριων; Τιστο μιν ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΙ και ΠΡΟΦΗΤΙΔΕΣ.*

ecy is confined to true religion so are *veritable* miracles, and it is as easy to discern between true and false miracles, as between true and false prophecy.

If this be the precept of the Old Testament, what is the practice—the history? Mr. English, after saying that Samuel was acknowledged as a prophet, not because he wrought miracles, but foretold the future, adds, “and the same may be said of all the Hebrew prophets, from Nathan to Malachi.† Where this information was derived, it is not so easy to say, as of the most of them there is no kind of biography extant. But to begin with the Jewish economy; how was the mission of Moses confirmed? By miracles. And in fact what distinction is it possible to draw between a prophecy immediately fulfilled, and any other miracle? Now prophecy immediately fulfilled is the only kind, which could be offered as testimony to the prophet’s contemporaries; and any miracle whatever can be reduced to the case of prophecy thus fulfilled. The dis-

τατο δε αλλοι κατοχοι και ανδρες και γυναικες ενθεω φωνη προειπον; οσα δε εξ αυτων αυτων ηκβηθησαν θαυματια; οσα δε εξ ιερειων και θαυματων τοις χρωμενοις εδηλωθη; οσα δε εξ αλλων τεραστιαυ συμβολων; τοις δε εναργη παρεστη φαντασματα. ΜΕΣΤΟΣ ΤΟΥΤΩΝ Ὁ ΠΑΣ ΕΣΤΙ ΒΙΟΣ. Orig. Contr. Cels. l. viii. § 45.

† Mr. English differs here from Tertullian, whom he elsewhere assumes as a patron of his opinion. This father says, “Quos diximus prædicatores, *prophetae* de officio præfandi vocantur. Voces eorum, ITEMQUE VIRTUTES, QUAS AD FIDEM DIVINITATIS EDEBANT, in thesauris literarum manent, nec istæ nunc latent” Apol. xviii.

inction therefore has no foundation in reason. It has as little in fact. The mission of Moses was established by miracles *in the strictest sense*. His own mind was in the first place convinced of his divine mission by the miracle of the burning bush.* In reply to the divine command to conduct the children of Israel from Egypt, he says, "But behold they will not believe me nor hearken to my voice, for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee. And the Lord said unto him, what is that in thy hand; and he said a rod. And he said, cast it on the ground: and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent. And Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail; and he put forth his hand and caught it: *That* they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers hath appeared unto thee."† He then gives him another sign, the power of assuming a leprous hand, and restoring it again, and adds, "And it shall come to pass if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first *sign*, that they will believe the voice of the latter *sign*, and it shall come to pass if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken to thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall be-

* Exod. iii. 2, 3.

† Exod. iv. 1, 2, 3, 45.

come blood upon the land.”* In short, if I may be excused for labouring so plain a point, the following testimony of a Jew will not be thought suspicious. “Upon the wonder that Moses showed at these *signs*, God exhorted him to be of good courage, and to be assured that he would be the greatest support to him, *and bid him make use of those signs in order to obtain belief among all men*, that thou art sent by me, and dost all things according to my commands.”† One more example only will suffice on this topick: “Joshua said unto the children of Israel, come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God; hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, &c. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man, and it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jor-

* In fact it is a maxim recognized and asserted, by the highest Jewish authority, and therefore decisive of the question as far as their champion is concerned, that “at the command of a prophet doing signs, any precept may be lawfully violated; and every prophet working signs shall be believed in whatever he teaches, whether by explication, addition, enlargement, or *repeal* of any part of the law, except in the one case of idolatry.” Talm. Saned. et Jarchi, in Deut. xviii, 18. Chandler’s Defence, p. 318.

† Joseph. Ant. Jud. l. ii. c. xii. § 3.

dan shall be cut off, from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand up on an heap."* Now here is what, in the strictest sense, would be called a prophecy fulfilled; but wherein does its value as a testimony to the presence of God with the Israelites consist? Is it not in this, that the event foretold was a *miraculous* one, and that when it was wrought it evinced the divine interference? Had Joshua foretold something within the reach of human sagacity to discern, or human power to effect, would the fulfilling of the prediction have been sanction of his prophetic character? Had he predicted that the ark would be transported across the river in a boat, would the accomplishment of this prediction have been a proof that the most high God was with the Israelites? Certainly not. It was the miraculousness of the event which gave the value to the prediction, and though it may sometimes be a proof of inspiration to foretel things within the compass of human sagacity; yet it can be only under such particular circumstances as preclude the supposition that it was merely the exercise of this sagacity, *that such prediction can be valuable as a divine attestation*. In a word, if the utterance and correspondent fulfilling of the prophecy be not *miraculous*, it can be no proof of a divine mission or of a doctrine.

We next say something of a part of this question, which Mr. English has, (I hope un-

* Josh. iii. 13.

intentionally) misrepresented; the estimation in which miraculous testimony was held by our Saviour, and the primitive church. The following words of Collins are taken into the Grounds of Christianity examined: "Jesus laid no great stress upon miracles, as proving doctrines, for he forewarned his disciples that signs and wonders would be performed, so great and stupendous as to deceive if possible the very elect, and bids them not give any heed unto them." Mr. English then quotes in a note, a passage of Dr. Sykes, giving it of course as a confirmation of his own remark, though to do him justice he quotes it *without* acknowledgment.* In reply to this assertion of Collins, I will only quote the words of Dr. Sykes, which Mr. English overlooked, while appealing to that truly judicious and pious Christian as a denier of miraculous testimony. "Jesus himself always appeals to the *works* which he did, to prove that he came from God, and was that Son of man spoken of by Daniel. Had he called himself the Messiah, and given no evidence of it, no doubt a wise man might justly have refused his assent to him. For as he argues,† If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true, that is, ought not to be admitted as true. But then he adds, The *works* which the Father hath given me to finish, the same *works*, that I do, bear witness of me that

* Compare the note p. 8, of Grounds of Christianity examined with Sykes' Essay, Introd. p. 2.

† John v. 21

the Father hath sent me:* and again, The *works* that I do in my Father's name, the same bear witness of me:† and if I do not the *works* of my Father, believe me not: but if I do, though ye believe not me, [upon my word] believe the *works*: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.‡ So again, Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very *works'* sake.§ This way of arguing was looked upon as so strictly conclusive, that Jesus declares, If I had not done the *works* which none other man did, they had not had sin.|| And it was on this foundation that the apostles argued that Jesus of Nazareth was to be received as Lord, and the Christ, or Messiah, because he was a man approved of God among you by *miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did* by him in the midst of you."¶ The first instance which appears of the divine presence with the apostles, is the *miraculous* effusion of the Spirit at the feast of Pentecost.** “With great *power*, says St. Luke, gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.†† “God bore them witness, both by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.”‡‡ They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them and confirming the

* John v. 36. † Ib. x, 25. ‡ Ib. v, 37. § xiv. 11.

|| xv. 24.

¶ Sykes' Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 129.

** Acts ii. 33, 36.

†† Acts iv. 33.

‡‡ Heb. ii. 4.

word with signs following:* the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. || In fact the evangelical history is miraculous throughout, as was the propagation of the gospel which it relates, and one may truly say of the New Testament, what has been insidiously said of the Old, "It is all a prodigy."† But a greater than any it relates is, that it should be thought possible to account for the rise, progress, and diffusion of Christianity by human arts, or human means.

What has already been remarked upon the tests of a true prophet, as prescribed by Moses, is an anticipation of most that need be said upon those texts, which are adduced to show that our Lord warned his disciples against the miracles of impostors. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that (if it were possible,) they shall deceive the very elect,‡" and the wicked one is spoken of by St. Paul, "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders."§ It is a matter of real surprise that these passages of scripture should have been so often and extensively misapprehended. Our Saviour predicts false prophets, and says they shall give signs and wonders. Now what sort of won-

* Mark xvi. 20.

|| Acts xiv. 3. See Farmer on Miracles, p. 245, 2d. Ed.

† Voltaire's Essai sur les Mœurs, tom. i. p. 170.

‡ Matthew xxiv. 24.

§ 2 Thessal. ii. 9.

ders should we reasonably suppose a false prophet would give? The terms themselves, 'signs and wonders,' are equivocal.* But is it not extremely obvious that a false prophet, an impostor, could have none but false signs and lying wonders to exhibit; impositions upon the senses and imaginations of their followers, such as every age almost has witnessed? Our Saviour declares that the false prophets and false christs, which shall arise, will give these false signs and wonders, and gives his disciples notice that they shall be exhibited with such art and dexterity, as to delude all but those who were too firmly persuaded of the true Christ, to listen to a false one, insomuch as to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.† This interpretation of these passages, besides that it is so reasonable in itself, receives the most plenary confirmation from the history, which fulfils the predictions they contain. We shall have occasion, in the sequel of this essay, to mention particularly some of the false prophets, which sprung up in that

* The text in Thessalonians, as has already been noticed by Farmer, is mistranslated. *Εν παση δυναμει, και σημειοις, και τερασι ψευδης*, should certainly be rendered, With all lying power, signs, and wonders. Farmer on Miracles, p. 204, second edition.

† Should it be said, that if lying wonders be so delusive, no reliance could be placed on true ones, it is obvious to answer that the conclusion does not follow. There are optical illusions which impose upon the sight, but they do not weaken the strength of the evidences of the senses. So in a larger view, sophisms, and other arts of false reasoning, may delude the understanding, but this fact does not diminish the value of sound reasoning. Miracles, like every thing else, must be rationally examined as to the reality of the facts.

disastrous age, which immediately preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. If we may trust to Josephus, who cannot be suspected of bearing testimony to Christ, these desperate adventurers assumed the character, which was so ardently cherished in the expectations of the Jews, and under pretence of delivering them from the Roman power, led them on to provoke its vengeance. They promised however, and pretended to exhibit miraculous proofs of their powers, and were but too successful in their attempts to delude their countrymen. And it is not hard to imagine, when we remember with what painful and importunate anxiety the prophesied deliverer was expected, that nothing but the firm belief which the Christians had, that he had already appeared, could have been a certain security from the plausibility of these pretensions. The object they proposed, the motives they urged, and the arts they employed, would have deceived, had it been possible, the very elect.*

In his second chapter, which is transcribed from Collins, Mr. English claims the authority of St. Peter, as confirming the preference of prophetic to miraculous testimony. "Prophesies," say Collins and English, "when delivered in an inspired book, are, when fulfilled, such as may justly be deemed sure and de-

* This subject is well treated in Farmer's learned and judicious work on miracles, a book not read as it deserves. Vid. p. 194, et seq. 2d. ed.

monstrative proof; and which Peter (2 Peter i. 19.) prefers as an argument for the truth of Christianity, to that miraculous attestation (whereof he and two other apostles are said to have been witnesses) given by God himself to the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. His argument appears to be as follows, “Laying this foundation, that prophecy as it proceeds from the Holy Spirit, is a stronger argument than a miracle, which depends upon external evidence and testimony.”* It need not be replied to this argument, which is foisted upon St. Peter, that a miracle proceeds as directly from the Holy Ghost as a prophecy, and that a prophecy is as dependent upon human testimony as a miracle. The whole objection is founded upon a mistake of the words of Peter; a mistake into which these writers were led by our common version of the New Testament. The words of Peter as they stand in this version are, “For Jesus Christ received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, *and this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, &c.*” Now the original of the passage in italicks is thus read in Griesbach, *και ταυτην την φωνην ημεις ηκουσαμεν εξ ουρανου ενεχθεισαν, συν αυτω οντες εν τω ορει τω αγιω, και εχομεν βεβαιωτερον τον προφητικον*

* English's Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 5, 6. Collins Grounds and Reasons, p. 27

λογον—“And this voice which came from heaven we heard, being with him in the holy mount, and have the word of prophecy more sure.” From which it is plain that the apostle declared not that the prophecy was surer than the miracle, but that in consequence of the miracle they had the prophecy more sure.*

Finally, if it be asked why the primitive Christians appear to have laid comparatively little stress upon miraculous testimony, the answer is obvious; though, I cannot but think, a different one from that which Mr. English suggests; “It is a striking circumstance,” says he, “that the earliest apologists for Christianity laid little stress upon the miracles of its Founder;” and then adduces Justin, who flourished in the year 140, Jerome 392, Lactantius 306. Celsus 160, and Tertullian 200. In a question of such consequence, more fulness as well as method would have been acceptable. More sobriety too, and correctness in adducing these testimonies would have been becoming. “Justin Martyr,” says he, “in his apology is *very shy* of appealing to the miracles of Jesus, in confirmation of his pretensions; he lays no stress upon them, but relies entirely upon the prophecies he quotes as in his favour.” If the implication here is, as who cannot see that it is, that Justin did not insist upon the *truth* of the miraculous accounts, it is incorrect. If the implication is, that granting them to be true,

* Middleton on the Greek Article, p. 338, Ed. Amer.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 9 n.

they did not affect the question of the pretensions of him, who wrought them, this also is erroneous. These are his words, which I cannot but regret that Mr. English did not give, rather than his own digest of their import: — But lest any one should object that nothing hinders but that he, whom we call Christ, being a man, and descended of men, wrought the miracles of which we speak, by magick art, and was held on that account the Son of God, I shall commence a demonstration, not upon the authority of contemporary witnesses, but of prophets, who foresaw events, the completion of which we have seen and see; a demonstration which as I think will appear most solid and true, even to yourselves.”*

There is also a passage in his dialogue with Trypho, which as Mr. English does not produce it, may be given here. “Healing the deaf and lame, and opening the eyes of the blind, and raising the dead, he brought *by the force of these miracles* the men of that age to notice him. They indeed, seeing these things done, declared that it was by means of the magick art, and denounced him as a magician, and a seducer of the people.”†

Now to use the words of Dr. Paley, who quotes also these passages, “this reason meets the very point of the objection.”‡ Whether Justin believed or not in the powers of demons

* Justin's Apol. prim. Ed. Thirlbii, p. 48.

† Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 288. Edit. Thirlbii.

‡ Paley's Evidences, p. 295.

and the arts of divination, it is of no consequence to inquire. Of course he did. This however is certain, that he shared the belief with all around him, and that it was a highly satisfactory reason for not insisting upon miraculous evidence. To what purpose would it have been to press the heathen with miracles, and make out from them a demonstration of the truth of Christianity, when the single reply that these were the arts of magicians, soothsayers, and impostors would have made their labour of no effect.* That the early apologists gave an historical testimony to the truth of the miracles is not only most certain, but it is all we need prove. The use they made of them concerns not us. We live in a different age, and can apply them in a different manner.

* Should it be asked whether this circumstance does not lessen the value of the testimony of the Christians and the assent of the heathens, to the reality of the miracles, because no pains would have been taken by either party to examine into the truth of miraculous accounts which, if true, would not decide the question of the claims of the religion, I answer, no; for though the truth of the miraculous accounts would not prove the truth of the religion, (to those who believed the power of demons,) yet the falsehood of these accounts would prove the falsehood of the religion. Men who should go forth into the world proclaiming a religion, and pretending miracles in its support, would, if it appeared that no miracles had been wrought, be unanimously denounced as impostors. Therefore it was the interest of the Christians strictly to prove, and of the heathen strictly to scrutinize the truth of the miraculous accounts, as much as if no such ideas of the power of demons prevailed. Because, however little or great the force of the miracles as proofs of the gospel; they were a part of its historical facts, and so large a part, as that the truth of the gospel though it might not stand, would fall with them.

Next to Justin of the second century, Mr. English quotes Jerome, who lived in the fifth, to show that the *earliest* apologists laid little stress upon miracles. The error which he made of quoting the words of Porphyry as those of Jerome, who adduces them in his comment upon the eighty-first Psalm, is corrected in the letter to Mr. Cary.* But the correction is as hasty as the mistake. After mentioning the mistake, he says, "that he must therefore give up Jerome as favouring his opinion with regard to miracles." But the truth is, though Mr. English was so very careless as to give the words of Porphyry as Jerome's, this father does yet maintain, and in the context where the quotation from Porphyry stands, the very same opinion.† And this double error is a striking commendation of the excellence of a habit which some writers have neglected, that of looking at an authority before it is quoted. That Jerome acknowledged the reality of the miracles it would be an useless point indeed to labour. And his testimony to this is all we ask.

Next Mr. English adduces Lactantius, Div. Inst. v. 3. "as seeing so little force in the mir-

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 126.

† So popular a work as Farmer's ought to have been a protection from this mistake. He says, "And Jerome, or whoever is the author of the Breviary upon the Psalter, Apud Heiron, t. ii. 334, 335, makes no difficulty of allowing to Porphyry, that the magicians of Egypt, Appollonius, and an infinite number of other persons, wrought miracles. "Non est autem grande facere signa," seems to have been a principle common both to Porphyry and Jerome." Farmer, p. 80.

acles of Christ *exclusive* of the prophecies, that he does not hesitate to affirm their utter inability to support the Christian religion by themselves." As I find no such passage as this in the work to which Mr. English refers; as he appeals to Huet in his letter to Mr. Cary for more of these testimonies, and his reference, Inst. v. 3. is that of Huet, in his demonstration, p. 339; it is fair to conclude that he meant to borrow it from him.* The reader will be surprised to find the following to be the real passage which Mr. English quotes: "Understand therefore, if you have any ingenuousness, that Christ is believed by us to be God, *not merely because he wrought miracles, but because we see in him the fulfilment of all things foretold by the prophets.*" And again, "his divinity is believed not upon his own testimony, (for no man's testimony of himself avails,) but upon the testimony of the prophets, who foretold all which he did and suffered." It need hardly be said that the first of these passages sets forth no more than that miracles are not the only proof of Christ's divinity, and the second has nothing to do

* This is the passage of Huet, *Aliter sentiebat Lactantius eum sic quendam Christianæ religionis adversarium alloquitur. "Disce igitur si quid tibi cordis est non solum idcirco a nobis Deum creditum Christum quia mirabilia fecit, sed quia vidimus in eo facta esse omnia quæ nobis annuntiata sunt vaticinio prophetarum."* Et rursus; "Non igitur suo testimonio (cui enim de se dicenti potest credi sed prophetarum testimonio, qui omnia quæ fecit ac passus est, multo ante cecinerant, fidem divinitatis accepit. Huet, Dem. Ev. p. 333.

with the comparison between miracles and prophecy, but holds only that Christ does not rest his claims on his own testimony, but on that of the prophets.

But Huet himself seems to have thought his argument would stand better by a *selection* from Lactantius, than by giving the authority, as it stands in that father's divine institutes. In justice therefore to the great Grotius, whom the bishop is overwhelming with a torrent of quotations, not less than to set Mr. English right, I give the whole passage. Lactantius is arguing against a heathen philosopher, who had written, as it should seem, a defence of the impostor Apollonius, against our Saviour. "Appollonius," says Lactantius, "could not be thought a god after his death, both because he was a man and a magician. But Christ was believed a God because he was not a magician, and because he was truly God. 'But we do not,' says our philosopher, 'withhold from Appollonius the character of a god because he declined that character, but to show ourselves wiser than you, *in not immediately attaching the idea of divinity to the working of miracles as you do*, who for some small prodigies make Christ a God. It is not wonderful that you should mistake what you read, when the Jews, the original repositories of the Scriptures, are ignorant of the meaning of the prophets, which they have read from the first. Understand therefore, if you have any ingenuousness, that Christ is believed

by us to be God, not merely because he wrought miracles, but because we see in him the fulfilment of all things foretold by the prophets. He wrought miracles; we might have thought him a magician, as you now call him, and the Jews then thought him, if the prophets had not with one breath foretold that he would work them. Therefore we believe him to be God, *not more for his miracles and his mighty works, than for his death and the cross, (which you so much reproach,) since that too was foretold.*"* And then follows the second passage of Huet. From this quotation it appears first, that the Christians predicated the divinity of Christ on his miracles, as they are reproached for so doing by the Appollonian; and second, That they did not consider miracles as the only proof, but as a proof corroborated by prophecy.

Next we have the testimony of Celsus ✓ quoted, as I must say with signal unfairness. Celsus, says Mr. English, observing upon the words of Christ that false prophets and false christs shall arise, and show great signs and wonders, sneeringly observes, "a fine thing truly, that miracles done by him should prove him to be a God, and when done by others should demonstrate them to be false prophets and impostors." I will just give the context from which this is abstracted. It is in the form of a dialogue between Celsus and some Christians. "By what reasoning," says Celsus to his Christian antagonists, "by what reasoning

* Lactanti Div. Inst. l. v, § 3.

were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God. *Ch.* We were induced by this, that we know his suffering was for the destruction of the father of wickedness. *C.* What then, have not many others suffered punishment, and that as ignominious? *Ch.* We esteem him to be Son of God, *seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and [C. as ye say] raised the dead.* *C.* O light and truth! With his own voice he hath expressly warned you, as ye also have recorded, that others shall come using the like powers, knaves and impostors, and he names one Satan, the worker of these things. Which is confessing that these things are indeed nothing divine, but the works of the wicked. And being forced by the power of truth he hath not only detected the imposture of others, but betrayed his own. How, is it not then miserable, from the same works to reckon one a God, and others impostors?*" This passage is inestimable, for it proves in the face of Mr. English's argument, at least if any credit is to be given to his own voucher Celsus, the notorious enemy of the gospel, that the common believers, those whom he introduces as the representatives of the Christians, believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God upon the ground of his miracles, "because he cured the lame and blind, and raised the dead." Celsus in another place makes his Jew tell the Christians, that Jesus, "being obliged through poverty to serve for hire in Egypt, had experience

* Origen contr. Cels. lib. ii. § 47, 48, 49.

there of certain powers whereof the Egyptians boast, and returning highly conceited with these powers, proclaims himself on account of them the Son of God.”*

Mr. English next gives an authority from Tertullian against Marcion. This is the passage: “Christ foretelling that many impostors should come, and perform many wonders, shews that our faith cannot, *without great temerity*, be founded on miracles, since they were so easily wrought by false christs, [not, ‘so early wrought by false Christians,’ as Mr. English translates it.]†

But had Mr. English examined the context, he would have seen that Tertullian was reasoning against a peculiar notion of Marcion’s, viz. that there were two supreme Deities, a benevolent and a malevolent, and that Jesus Christ was sent by the latter, while the Messiah, foretold by the prophets of the former, in the Old Testament, had not yet come. And against this notion Tertullian reasons by showing, *a priori*, that such a character as the Messiah’s

* Origen contr. Cels. lib. i. § 28.

† Tertull. adv. Marc. iii. 3. Mr. English in a postscript to his letter to Mr. Cary adduces the authority of Tertullian under the *same* reference a *second time*, assuring us however that there is no *want* of testimony to the point in dispute. He adduces it under the same reference, but in different words, viz. Tertullian reprehends the Marcionites for asserting, “that the mission of Jesus Christ was only to be proved by miracles,” and maintains against them that prophecy proves his mission more than miracles, and that miracles without prophecy ought to pass for *delusions*. I do not find this in Tertullian, but I do find in the very section referred to, the much less positive expressions; “A predicted Messiah ought to come, that the predictions might establish his claims, as well as miracles.” Contr. Marc. iii. 3

must be a subject of prophecy: and therefore that if Jesus Christ was not the Christ foretold in the Old Testament, he could not be sent from God. But allowing the passage quoted to have all its force, and we are by no means disposed to deny that Tertullian shared the popular sentiments upon the power of demons, and their application to miraculous testimony; yet he does all we require, in bearing express testimony to the truth of the Christian miracles, and in speaking of them as divine attestations. “Him,” says he, “whom the Jews had considered a man, from the humility of his appearance, they afterwards regarded as a magician for his power, when he cast out demons with a word, restored the blind, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, reduced the elements, showing himself the word of God, that is, the original, first begotten word attended with intelligence and power, and supported by the Spirit.”* Again, “I told you,” says he, “and ye believed not, the *works* that I do in my Father’s name bear witness of me! What witness? *Why, that he was that personage of whom they inquired, the Christ of God.*”† Again, “the words that I speak to you I speak not of myself, but my Father which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. By the miraculous works and the words of doctrine, the Father dwelling in the Son is discovered, *by means of the things he doeth, and the person in whom he dwelleth.*”‡

* Tertull. Apol. § xxi. † Advers. Prax. xxii. ‡ Advers. Prax. xxiv

Finally, Mr. English produces Origen to support his argument against miraculous testimony. "Origen, in his reply to Celsus, waves the consideration of the Christian miracles, for," says he, "the very mention of these things puts you heathen upon a broad grin." Had Mr. English given us the reference to this authority, it would have been easier to admit or reject it. The only passage which bears any resemblance to it, which I have met in the eight books of Origen against Celsus, is the following: "Let Celsus or his Jew sneer at the assertion, it is true that many have become Christians, as it were in spite of themselves; some spiritual appearance or vision moving them to give up their hatred, and be ready to die for the cause. Many cases like this I have known, which if I were to relate, I might set those upon a broad laugh, who, judging us by the practice of impostors, would suspect us of fiction."* As this has no reference to the miracles of Jesus Christ, I cannot but hope that it is not the passage which Mr. English produces, as a resignation of them on the part of Origen, and shall gladly find that I have overlooked some other, which he meant to quote. But it is at any rate a matter of extreme surprise, that Mr. English should have indulged himself in saying that this father "waves the consideration of the Christian

* Orig. contr. Cels. l. i. § 46. The power of imagination, as exemplified in the history of enthusiasm in modern times, may account for this remark of Origen.

miracles in his reply," when it is notorious that he reverts to the consideration of them, and defends their authenticity and divinity, upon every occasion ; whole sections are devoted by him to asserting them against Jews and heathens, and his words are : "Celsus often, because he cannot deny the miracles which Jesus is recorded to have wrought, calumniously attributes them to magick and sorcery, *but I on the contrary have as often defended them :*"* and elsewhere, "But Jesus openly shewed himself to be the power of God among the Jews, by performing miracles, which Celsus ascribes to magick."† And in precise contradiction to Mr. English's hasty assertion, that "in the two first centuries they were allowed very little weight, in proving doctrines," Origen says, "Jesus raised certain from the dead, not only that the works he did might have their particular application, but also be the means of themselves *of bringing many to the wonderful doctrine of the gospel.*"‡ Other passages, if more in so flagrant a case were needed, are referred to below.§

* Contr. Cels. lib. ii. § 48.

† Contr. Cels. lib. ii. § 9.

‡ Contr. Cels. lib. ii. § 48. Vid etiam, lib. i. § 38. lib. § 45. ib. § 63. lib. ii. § 50, 51, 52, 53, &c. lib. iii. § 5. ib. § 25. lib. viii. § 45.

§ It is a matter of some surprise, to find Mr. English placing Hierocles, a famous heathen philosopher and opponent of Christianity, among his Christian apologists of the two first centuries. "Hierocles," says he, "speaks of the little tricks of Jesus." But so do Voltaire, Paine, and Mr. English. And what reason was there for putting his name among his authorities from *Christian apologists*, unless he wished to pass him off with the uninformed for a Christian? For an account of Hierocles see Tactant. Div. Inst. l. v. § 7.

It easily follows therefore that if the question rested upon the authorities which Mr. English has produced, it must be decided against him. But let us not differ upon facts, lest we be thought to consult the authorities, with a design to find something more than the truth. Mr. English adopts a strange paradox of Collins, that prophetic testimony was the only testimony that could prove the Christian revelation; and not only denies the miracles to be real, but also asserts them to be of no value if they were. He finds in the fathers, as we will grant him, a preference given to prophetic testimony in the frequency and confidence with which it is quoted in controversy, and rashly or artfully seizes upon them, tells us that they are *shy* of appealing to miracles, and leads us to infer, by no distant implication, that they are really the patrons of his opinion. And yet this is not true. They did believe in the miracles of our Saviour, they thought them to be divine works, they expressly tell us they were successfully wrought as the sanctions of his mission. Why then do they not rest the argument upon them? Because they believed also the agency of demons, and knew that the force of miracles would be evaded by the enemies of Christ, by ascribing them to infernal origin. Mr. English also is aware of these popular superstitions. Nay, he tells us they account for the indifference, as he styles it, which the primitive Christians manifested to miracles.* Why then does he

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 10, note.

pretend to make this indifference an argument for his views of miraculous testimony. Notwithstanding however the objection, to which the belief of the works of demons continually exposed the Christian miracles, we still find them for ever adduced by the apologists, and when the argument is turned from this ground to that of prophecy, it is often done, as we have seen, in the passage of Justin, with an express statement of the reason, viz. to avoid the reply which that belief would suggest.

It seems indeed to have been only where the Christian apologists were expressly meeting the objection to their arguments, which the heathens drew from the popular belief in the works of demons, that they resorted to this preference of prophetic testimony. For it is well known that miraculous testimony was a favourite one with the fathers, and that they suffered their attachment to it, and their confidence in it, to carry them into the wildest extravagancies of faith and practice.* And though one might think from the facts contained in Mr. English's note, † that they were backward in adducing this testimony, yet we find them alleging it on every occasion, and claiming for the orthodox church, the possession of powers beyond those which the heathen and hereticks could command.

But all these remarks upon the validity of miraculous testimony are not intended by me

* Middleton's Free Inquiry, *passim*.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, note, p. 2.

as a preface to a dissertation on that testimony. Mr. English has made indeed a demand, that the merits of the question should rest upon one branch of evidence, (and that of necessity the least eligible,) where two are accessible. If I have succeeded in showing that this demand is impertinent and unphilosophical, it is enough; for if it be thought such, it can do no injury to any but him, who makes it. If he chooses to rest his own concern in a most momentous question, upon a partial view of the testimony, we may wonder at his singularity, but the responsibility is his own. But what is the meaning of this obstreperous pertinacity, with which we are continually challenged to the prophetic argument in Mr. English's book? Why, if the Messiahship as proved by prophecy, as he repeatedly says, is the question, and the main question, why is the greater part of his work filled up with extraneous and irrelevant discussions, upon the character of Paul, the gift of tongues, the historical testimony, the authenticity of the New Testament, and, as Mr. English ingeniously entitles one chapter, "Miscellaneous" matters. I do not say that he has not a fair right to discuss these, or any thing else; but certainly he has no right to make the clamour he does against the resort to miraculous evidence, when one chapter of his book is written expressly against Christian miracles; and the greater part of it has no

connexion with the subject of prophecy. It is well known that when Mr. English circulated his work in manuscript, a fact to which he alludes,* he did it with the express and solicitous apology for himself, that it was an abstract which he had made from unbelieving authors, principally Jewish; that "nineteen twentieths" of it was the work of others; that about two chapters was all he himself was accountable for; and that he felt all the weight of the work to lie in the eight first chapters, which he had thought of publishing anonymously, to invite answers, and of discarding the rest as of no consequence. He deliberately avowed, that though he should believe all the books of the New Testament not to have been written by the persons, to whom they are ascribed, he would yet believe that Jesus was the Messiah with all his heart, if it could be shown that his character corresponded with the descriptions of the prophets. Nevertheless, when Mr. Cary confined his attention to the seven first chapters, in which, strictly speaking, the discussion of the prophetic question is contained, he was met by Mr. English in a style of fierce reproach. Though Mr. Cary had reviewed that portion of his work, to which Mr. English himself, as is notorious, assigned whatever importance the book possessed, yet he turns upon him in a reply with unmanly petulance, and points out chapter after chapter which now, it seems, against

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 5.

his own express declarations, have grown into importance, and must be confuted.

Another circumstance must be named, which has a little perplexed the consistency of Mr. English's work. When he drew up his book in manuscript he was a firm believer in the Old Testament. It contained some eloquent passages, asserting its inspiration, authenticity, and divinity. And this of course gave weight to all he said upon the dissonance of the Old and New. But before he put his work to press he had begun to doubt, and finally, as I suppose is pretty apparent, ceased to believe in the Old Testament; and the eloquent passages setting forth its inspiration were omitted. He still however preserved the chapter upon the excellence of the Mosaick law, and felt himself obliged often to throw in here and there an answer to the anticipated application of his objections against the New Testament, to the Old. We might make some profitable observations upon the unjustifiable precipitancy, with which a work upon God's revelations was pushed into the world, even while its author's opinions were wavering and indigested. But it will be enough for our present purpose to say, that as Mr. English wrote his book in the belief of the Old Testament, in the belief of the Old Testament it must be answered.* We shall have perpetual occasion to resort to *l. c.* supposition, that the prophecies were given by inspiration, and in choosing

* Mr. English allows this himself, *Grounds of Christianity examined*, p. 65.

between two interpretations of a prophecy, to prefer that which is most honourable to the Being, who is supposed to have given it.

I have already said that the prophetic argument is least eligible. I mean not merely to the Christian, but to the unbeliever. It is a less eligible subject of discussion. For there is an uncertainty in the language of prophecy, which appears from the diversity of its interpretations, a diversity as great among Jews as Christians. Still the real meaning and proper fulfilment may often, may commonly be made apparent. At least of two totally different interpretations it will not often be difficult to say, which deserves the preference. I shall therefore think it sufficient reply to Mr. English, to show in any case that the Christian interpretation is more probable than his, though

NOTE. Mr. English's great deficiency with respect to references, had led me into a mistake, which I did not discover till after this chapter was written. But as it is quite immaterial, I did not think it worth the trouble of correcting. I have quoted (p. 9) a "Review of the controversy between the author of a discourse of the grounds and reasons of the Christian religion and his adversaries," by Jeffreys, as the work to which Mr. English referred, when he alleged that Jeffreys allowed that miracles "had nothing to do" with the question in controversy. I have since found that it is probable that he referred to an earlier work of the same author, entitled "The true Grounds and Reasons of the Christian religion, in opposition to the false ones, set forth in a late book, entitled, the Grounds and Reasons, &c." But, as I said, the mistake is immaterial. The two works were published within a year of each other, and not likely therefore to differ much. But that which I quoted, being the last, may be supposed to contain the author's maturest thoughts. I will however put down some extracts from the "true grounds," for the entire satisfaction of the reader. After some preliminary remarks, to prove that a revelation is possible and probable, Jeffreys proceeds to the main question, and inquires first, what are the *internal* characters, one might expect in such a revela-

the reader will generally find something added, not only to make it more probably but certainly correct.

tion, and next by what *external* evidence one might expect it to be supported. Under the first of these heads, he maintains that the professed revelation must appear to be worthy of God, before any miracles could prove it to have come from him, and his words are, "No miracles whatever can prove that to come from God, which our reason shows us to be unworthy of him," p. 31. But when he proceeds to the next point, what *external* evidence of revelation is to be expected, he says, "The external evidence for revelation is *either miracles or prophecies*. To begin with the first. We must remember what these miracles are to do, viz. *to prove that doctrine, already shown to be worthy of God, did actually come from him*, by shewing God's approbation of that person who pretends to a revelation," p. 39. He next treats of prophecy; and says, "that besides the evidence this may bring to a revelation, in the same way as miracles have been explained to do before, it carries some additional evidence, as it seems to discover a more immediate interposition of divine providence, in behalf of a person," p. 43. And this he puts upon the unphilosophical ground, that though miracles might be counterfeited by evil spirits, prophecies could not so easily be. He soon after says, that "it **DOES NOT necessarily follow** from his answering the characters given of him [*in prophecy,*] that he is that person [*predicted;*] but only when a person so and so qualified, bringing a doctrine worthy of God, *working miracles, &c.* answers those characters, he must be the man." p. 44. It was the opinion of Jeffreys, as the reader will have collected, that internal reasonableness, miraculous works, and prophecies fulfilled, must unite too as proofs of Christianity. I owe an apology for dwelling so long on this matter. But I felt myself bound to notice my mistake, however immaterial, and was willing to show more distinctly, in this early part of my reply, in what carelessness Mr. English had indulged in the statement of his authorities.

CHAPTER II.

THE Messiah expected by the Jews, and whom Mr. English supposes to be predicted in the Old Testament, is a “temporal prince, and a conquering pacificator.”* The Christians on the other hand maintain, that the prophets foretold not a political but a religious institution, not a temporal prince, but a moral teacher and spiritual Saviour. Which of these opposite views of the predicted character of the Messiah is correct, must be decided of course by an appeal to particular predictions. But it is also a matter of reason, and we have a right to argue upon the question, from the character of God, and the nature of man. Which then of these views, the Jewish or the Christian, doth most commend itself to the sincere believer in the moral government of God, and the rational and accountable nature of man? Considering the Old Testament as a revelation of God’s gracious purposes, shall we interpret its promises of the Jewish or the Christian Messiah? Regarding the mo-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 8. See also Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. iv. c. xxv. §7.

saick and prophetick dispensation as a grand preparatory system of religion and morality, instituted at so early an age, preserved by such apparent exercises of divine power, and promising in itself a new and better covenant,* which is the most worthy supposition, that the mediator of this new covenant was to be a temporal sovereign, or a moral teacher? And whether it is more probable that all this divine apparatus, which was in a high operation for near two thousand years, was meant to carry forward the hopes and expectations of men to a conquering prince, who should sit on a throne, and wield a sceptre in a city of Palestine, or to a spiritual instructor of the souls of men, who should give them new rules for this life, and better hopes of the eternal?

But it may be replied, that if the character of a temporal prince is really that which the prophets set forth, such general reasonings as these are of no avail. Let us then examine the prophecies. But let us do it rationally, and carry to the examination those principles of interpretation, which belong to candid and honest inquirers.

Most of the Hebrew prophetic writings are also poetical, and we discover in them all the peculiarity of style, which prevailed in their country and age. Also the uniform inspiration by which they wrote, did not destroy or diminish the peculiarities which belonged to them as individuals, and they ex-

* Jeremiah xxxi. 31

hibit throughout those traces of manner and thought, which must be interpreted by the common laws of sound criticism.* Nothing therefore can be more likely to result in a mistake of their particular meaning and general import, than a superstitious or *artful* adherence to what, at a distance of two or three

* The following beautiful passage of a celebrated foreign critick, will illustrate this; I am sure the reader will excuse its length. "That the Old Testament is not the forgery of a single impostor is proved, by every page. What variety in language and expression! Isaiah does not write like Moses, nor Jeremiah like Ezekiel, and between these and any of the minor prophets, there is again a great diversity of style. The style of Moses is distinguished by its scrupulous grammatical correctness: the book of Judges is filled with provincialisms and barbarisms: in Isaiah we meet with old words under new inflections: Jeremiah and Ezekiel have their Chaldaisms: and in short, as we trace the succession of writers from the earlier to the later ages, we find in the language a gradual decline, till it finally sinks into a dialect of broad Chaldee. Then too, what diversity in the march of ideas, and range of imagery! In the hand of Moses and Isaiah, the lyre is deep and loud, but its tone is soft when touched by David. The muse of Solomon is decked in the splendours of a luxurious court, while her sister wanders, with David, in an artless dress, by streams, and banks, through the fields, and among flocks. One poet is original like Isaiah, Joel, and Habakuk; another is imitative like Ezekiel. One strikes out the untrodden path of genius, while another strolls by his side in the beaten foot way. Rays of learning beam from one, while his neighbour never emits a spark of literature. In the oldest writers we see strong lines of Egyptian tint, which grow fainter and fainter on the canvass of their successors, and at last disappear. Finally, in the manners what a beautiful gradation! At first all is simple and unaffected, as in the poems of Homer, and among the Bedowin Arabs to this day. By degrees this noble simplicity declines into luxury and effeminacy, and vanishes at last in the luxury of the court of Solomon. No where is there a violent transition, but a gradual and progressive course throughout. It is but an ignorant or thoughtless skeptick who can think the Old Testament is the fiction of a *single* impostor!" This eloquent critick then proceeds to show that the Old Testament is not the fabrication of *several* impostors. Eichhorn's Einleitung ins. A. T. Th. i. p. 51—2

thousand years, and under the prevalence of totally different habits of thinking, feeling, and writing, we may affect to call the literal signification.* It has been indeed the practice of the Jews of the later ages to oppose Christianity by this resort; but who does not know that the Jewish nation, if judged by their ecclesiastical authors, their targums, and talmuds, and midrashim, are the most contemptible criticks, which have appeared. The darkest age of Christian credulity can produce nothing to be compared with rabbinical and cabalistical folly.† The cause therefore in which this folly is enlisted, and the system of interpretation connected with it, are suspicious. Familiar as these observations are, it is necessary to repeat them here. Mr. English, and Collins whom he imitates in this, have said much of the adherence of the Jews to the literal, and of the resort of Christians to a figu-

* Herder, a celebrated German scholar, and orthodox divine, (the same who is respectfully mentioned in the Edinburgh Review, vol. iii. p. 345,) has this remark, "The best study of théology is the study of the Bible, and the best study of this divine book, is that which regards it as human, (Das beste lesen dieses goettlichen Buchs ist Menschlich)—I use this word [human] in its broadest compass and strictest meaning. The Bible must be thus read, for it is written by men, and for men. The language is human, the external means by which it was written, and has been preserved, are human, &c." *Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend Erster Brief.*

† Grotius de veritate, lib. v. § xvi. p. 261. It has sometimes been thought, or at least been said, that the modern intelligent Jews reject the Talmudical absurdities; an incorrect opinion, if we may trust to Mendelsohn, the most intelligent of the modern Jews. Mendelsohn's Jerusalem, p. 2d. p. 63.

rative, allegorical, and typical sense.* It is to be regretted that the errors of other times have given so much pretence of justice to complaints like these. But no errors or extravagancies are to make us ashamed of the truth, and it is as certain now, as if the proposition had never been abused, that the style of the Hebrew prophets is highly figurative. Moreover, it is one thing to be figurative, and a far different thing to be typical or allegorical.† It is well known indeed that their style is also typical and allegorical,‡ but it is so easy to carry types and allegories to excess, and so easy also to maintain the cause of Christianity without them, that I shall confine myself to the illustration of the *figurative* language of the New Testament, and its application to this controversy.

The prophets foretel a moral and religious dispensation, a spiritual Messiah, and a Prince of peace. Their language in these predictions is highly figurative; and the following passages may serve as specimens and proof: “to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Won-

* Collin’s Grounds and Reasons, c. viii. [This is the fifth chapter of Mr. English’s work.] See also Collins’ scheme of literal prophecy, page 8.

† Collins himself judiciously remarks, the “*literal* sense may be signified as well and as obviously, by a *figurative*, as by the most simple or *literal* expression.” Scheme of Lit. Proph. p. 251.

‡ Voltaire’s Essai sur les Mœurs, t. i. p. 189. Edit. Didot. See too the Jews’ letters to Voltaire, i. p. 419 et seq.

derful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the *Prince of peace*.* These are the characters, on which the sacred writers delight to dwell. They delight to designate a mild and pacifick personage, who was to conciliate men, and to introduce a peaceful state. "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;"† "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."‡ The strict language of description fails them here, and the harmony of men is represented as descending to the brutes. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den."§ Inanimate nature shall partake of the general conciliation. "The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose. It shall

* I-aiah ix. 6. Mr. English has asserted, upon the authority of R. Isaac [Chissut Emuna, p. i. § 21.] that this should be read "for the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father shall call his name the prince of peace." So, says he, it is *pointed* to be read. Of Mr. English's familiarity with points we shall see hereafter. The LXX discountenance this version; and I know of no interpreter, Jewish or Christian, except the one just mentioned, who adopts it. See a note to p. 209 of Dr. Freeman's occasional Sermons.

† Isaiah xi. 9

‡ Isaiah lii. 4.

§ Isaiah xi. 6, 7, 8.

blossom abundantly, and rejoice with singing and joy."* Every one who reads the delightful visions of the prophets, knows how small a part is the above of the language to the same effect, which might be produced from them. This language too is some of that which Mr. English may interpret literally, if he is willing to be consistent, and wait for his Saviour, till the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the desert shall blossom like the rose. But it will suggest to a rational interpreter of the scriptures that character, in which our Lord is most frequently represented, the prince of peace, who is to reign without violence, and prevail without blood. How a state of universal peace is to take place, it needs but small acquaintance with human nature to say. We know that the springs of war and bloodshed exist in the passions of men,† and that if ever mankind is generally harmonized, it must be by such a subjection of their passions, and such addresses to their reason, as will resist the evil in its origin. All the ordinary political expedients of pacification are deplorably vain even to common experience, and ridiculously so, if spoken of as the topicks of prophecy. Nothing can be more improbable, as well as absurd, than to suppose that the prophets, in the language we have quoted, intended merely to carry forward the

* Isaiah xxxv. 1.

† "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not from hence, even of your lusts." James iv. 1.

Israelites to some future balance of power, and composition of interests, by which their victorious Messiah should conclude his wars. No, there is to be peace “because all the people will be righteous.”* There must be an internal and moral tranquillity, a peaceful disposition, before the intercourse of nations, or even individuals, can be conducted in harmony. That this state is to be a moral and religious one is therefore very obvious, but it may be abundantly confirmed by authorities. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that *the mountain of the Lord’s house* shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to *the house of the God of Jacob*, and he WILL TEACH us his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the *law*, and the *word* out of Jerusalem. And he shall *judge* among the nations, and *rebuke* many people, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, &c.† How particular here is the designation of a religious system, of an instructor, a law-giver, and a teacher. Again, “and there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of its roots, and *the Spirit of the Lord* shall rest upon him, the spirit of *wisdom*, and of *understanding*,

* Isaiah lx. 21.

† Isaiah ii. 2, 3, 4.

the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord, and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not *judge* after the sight of his eyes, nor *reprove* after the hearing of his ears. But with *righteousness* shall he judge the *poor*, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the ROD OF HIS MOUTH, and with the *breath of his lips* shall he slay the wicked: for the earth shall be FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, as the waters cover the sea.* “In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity. They also *that erred in spirit shall come to understanding*, and they that murmured *shall learn doctrine*.”† “Behold a king shall reign in *righteousness*, princes shall rule in judgment, and the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The *heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge*, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly,” &c.‡ Until the spirit be poured on us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted as a forest. *Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteous-*

* Is. xi. 1, 2, 3, 4. The ancient Chaldee paraphrast appears to have had a worthy idea of the nature and foundation of the Messiah's peace. For in explaining the words of Isaiah, “the chastisement of our peace was upon him,” he renders, “and in his DOCTRINE peace shall be multiplied unto us.” Targum Jona. in Is. liii. 5.

† Is. xxix. 18, 24.

‡ Is. xxxii. 1, 3, 4

ness in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."* "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put *my spirit upon him*, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he bring forth judgment unto truth. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and keep thee, and give thee *for a covenant of the people for a light of the Gentiles*, to open the blind eyes."† "Lo, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. *Incline your ear*, and come unto me, HEAR, and your SOUL shall live, and I will make an *everlasting covenant* with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold I have given him for A WITNESS to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold thou shalt call a nation, that thou knowest not, and nations that know not thee, shall run after thee," &c.‡ "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed

* Is. v. 15, 16, 17.

† Is. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. The first verse is one of those important passages, in which the Chaldee paraphrast makes an express distinction between the Messiah, and the *מְסִיחָא*. Thus he paraphrases it, "Behold my servant, the Messiah whom I support, my beloved, *in whom my memra* [my word] *hath taken delight*." See this subject treated in Fleming's *Christology* i. 133.

* Is. iv. 1, 3, 4, 5.

me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.*

From all these passages, which yet are but specimens of what might be produced, it is most clear, as was stated, that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be a kingdom of religion, instruction, and moral improvement, and that he himself was to be a spiritual and moral personage. How different from this character is that which the Jews of our Saviour's time, in the bitterness of national depression, and their descendants in all subsequent ages, have vainly imagined.† And how dishonourable to God is the supposition, that he should have ordained such a series of dispensations as the

* Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, 3. In the diversity between this passage, as it is quoted, Luke iv. 10, and the reading in the text, the evangelist follows the Septuagint. This passage is applied by R. David Kimchi, and Saadiah Gaon, two of the most respectable rabbins, to the Messiah. Huetii demonst. evan. p. 387.

† If however we may trust a favourite authority of Mr. English's, there were those among the Jews who cherished more enlightened views of the character of the Messiah. "Pauci numero erant, qui internæ religionis indolem ipsi divinitus didicerant, atque provinciam Messiaë, Dei et Davidis filii, catholicam informabant, BENEFICIORUM MORALIUM AUCTOREM et ministrum, non ipsis tantum, sed et gentibus aliis, illo omine optantes, quod vetusti quidam doctores, non raro, etsi obscurius portendebant. Semleri Inst. ad Doct. Christian. liberal. descend. p. 116.

Old Testament recounts, sanctioned a preparatory code of discipline, miraculously separated and preserved a nation, and favoured them with a succession of inspired teachers, and all to prepare the way for “a temporal prince, a conquering pacificator, and a [political] deliverer.” One might ask, if the science of politics or the art of war be so difficult, so noble, or so salutary, that God must raise up and prosper a proficient in them, as his last and greatest messenger to men? Does a character like this recommend itself to the reason or feelings, any more than it coincides with the passages we have adduced, as that which the Deity would be likely to select as the head of a miraculous dispensation for the welfare of men? A temporal prince! and what has he to do with improving the hearts of men, and realizing the lofty visions of the prophets. A conquering pacificator! and what sort of peace is that which the conqueror makes, and how long does the olive branch flourish “which is watered with tears, whose leaves grow green in an atmosphere filled with cries and groans, and whose roots have been moistened and fattened with blood?”* How unworthy of man to imagine, and of God to ordain! Is this the dignity of a spiritual nature, the destiny of an immortal soul, that it is to be guided through a probationary to an eternal state, by temporal princes and conquering pacificators? This is certainly an error which refutes itself. But

* Grounds of Christianity examined, preface, p. xviii.

how distinctly does our Saviour's character and doctrine correspond with these predicted characters of the Messiah. A spiritual not a temporal prince, a gentle, forbearing, persuasive, and moral, not a conquering pacificator. Not a life can be pointed out in the annals of man, in which was exemplified a principle of such uniform and universal benevolence, dispassionate justice, collected prudence, propriety, and dignity: and the doctrine he taught—Mr. English has made it a matter of reproach—is a doctrine of perfect peace. “What sweetness, what purity,” says Rousseau, “in our Saviour's manners, what affecting grace in his instructions, what elevation in his maxims, what profound wisdom in his discourses, what presence of mind, what delicacy, what justice in his replies.”*

But as Mr. English has adduced passages in support of a different character of the predicted Messiah, it is necessary to examine them. As I propose at present to direct my remarks to the general character predicted, and not to particular prophecies, I quote such only as may be a fair and sufficient specimen of the rest. Many of the passages, which are quoted by Mr. English in his third chapter as illustrating “the characteristicks of the Messiah as they are given by the Hebrew prophets;” and by which he would confirm the notion of a temporal conqueror, are such

* Rousseau's *Emile* ii. 303. See also *lettre a l'archeveque de Paris*.

as I have already adduced in proof of the opposite interpretation. It is for the reader to compare and decide. The following are the most remarkable of the remaining ones which Mr. English has collected. "There shall arise a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth."* "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."† "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that shall be ruler in Israel."‡ "Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey, and I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a *prince* among them."§ From these, and passages like these, Mr. English has thought to authorize the Jewish expectation of a temporal prince; and I proceed to show that such language in the mouths of the Hebrew writers will not justify the conclusion. Is the Messiah spoken of as a conqueror, as one who will smite the corners of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth?

* Numbers xxi^v. 17, 19.

† Isaiah ix. 7.

‡ Micah v. 2.

§ Ezekiel xxiv. 22.

The supreme God himself is spoken of under the same character. “The Lord of hosts mustereth the hosts of battle : they come from a far country, from the ends of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the land.”* “The Lord of hosts shall come down, to fight for mount Zion and for the hill thereof.”† “In that day, the Lord, with his sore, and great, and terrible sword, shall slay he dragon that is in the sea.”‡ “Behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots—for by fire and sword will the Lord plead with all flesh.”§ “God came from Teman, and the holy one from mount Paran.—Was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thy horses and chariots of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked. Thou didst march though the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in thine anger ; thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses. When he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.”||

Now we all understand that passages like these are either a bold representation of God’s spiritual judgments, or else an ascription to him, (as the immediate author,) of inflictions made in the course of his providence. So when the kingdom of the Messiah is represented, in similar language, we are to under-

* Isaiah xiii. 4, 5.
§ ib. lxvi. 15, 16.

† ib. xxxi. 4.
|| Habbakuk iii.

‡ ib. xxvii 1.

stand a reference to be made to those judgments, which Christ has exercised or will exercise against the enemies of his religion, especially at the final day—or else perhaps to the successful warfare which Christian princes have waged against heathenism. At least the analogy of scripture demands that we should no more infer from the literal interpretation of one class of the passages, that the Messiah was to be a human conqueror, than we should infer the same of God from the other.

Is the Messiah spoken of as a king, and seated on a throne, so is the supreme Being: “The Lord most high is terrible, he is a *great King* over all the earth, he shall subdue the people under us, and all nations under our feet. God is gone up with a shout—sing praises to God, sing praises unto our King, sing praises; God reigneth over the heathen, God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.” “The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us. The Most High ruleth in the kingdom OF MEN.” “Sing praises to the Lord who DWELLETH IN ZION.” “In Judah is God known, his name is great in Israel, in *Salem* also is his tabernacle, and his *dwelling place in Zion.*” “For the Lord dwelleth in Zion.” “*Is not the Lord* IN ZION, IS NOT HER KING IN HER.” “I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion.” “The sun shall be ashamed *when*

Jehovah of hosts shall REIGN IN MOUNT ZION, AND IN JERUSALEM." "JEHOVAH SHALL REIGN *over them* IN MOUNT ZION." "Let them know that God ruleth in Jacob." "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubim."* Now to what reader of the scriptures need it be said, how poor a gleaning this is, and how safely one might promise to produce ten passages, nay a hundred, in which the supreme Being is spoken of, *without qualification or caution*, as a king, a ruler, a warrior, and a conqueror, to every one in which the Messiah is spoken of under those characters. Yet is it most certain that the kingdom of God is, in the strictest sense, a spiritual kingdom, and his government of the world, a moral government? It may be submitted without hesitation to any candid inquirer, whether the prophetick representations of the Messiah, under the character of a prince, and a warrior, are at all so numerous, positive, and various, as such as those we have quoted last. But will this prove that the Almighty is a victorious general, who draws his sword, and slays his enemies in battle, and rides on his horses, and invades with his troops? Why then should similar descriptions, fewer as

* Psalm xlvii. Is. xxxiii. 22. Daniel iv. 17. Ps. ix. 11. Ps. lxxvi. 12. Joel iii. 21. Jer. viii. 19. Joel iii. 17. Isai. xxiv. 23. Mic. iv. 7. Ps. lxx. 13. Ps. xxiii. 1. Ps. lxxxv. 1

they are in number, and less decisive in amount, prove that the great personage, who is the object of the scriptural predictions, is that wretched thing, a “conquering pacificator?” What would be thought of one, who, after making a collection of passages, which ascribe these attributes of royalty and conquest to God, such as Mr. English has made of those which ascribe such attributes to the Messiah, should infer, as he does, that God is “a just, beneficent, wise, and mighty monarch, reigning on a throne in Jerusalem?” I cheerfully leave this part of the controversy with the answer to this question, which every rational inquirer will give. We have not, I trust, lived to an age of refinement and philosophy, merely to insist on principles of interpretation, which would turn the Supreme himself into a sanguinary commander of armies.

But Mr. English objects, that whereas “the first characteristic of the Messiah was, that he was the Prince of peace, in whose time righteousness was to flourish, and mankind be made happy, that he was to sit upon the throne of David,” &c. of Jesus Christ we read, that he asserted that his kingdom was not of this world. Instead of effecting peace among the nations, he said, “think not I am come to send peace on the earth; I am come, not to send peace, but a sword. Think ye I have come to put peace on the earth? I tell you nay, but division. Again, I have

come to put fire on the earth.”* Now it is not to be supposed that Mr. English really thought that these passages expressed the ultimate intention of our Lord; though to give the defenders of Christianity the trouble of answering one more plausible objection, he affects to think it. Mr. English is not so ignorant, as he would seem to be, of the style of the Old Testament, as well as the New; and he is perfectly aware that, by the same mode of interpretation, by which this objection is founded on the words of our Lord, it might be proved from many texts of the Old Testament, that God is the immediate author of sin. This language may seem harsh; let the reader judge if it is not authorized. The objection that Christianity has brought confusion and war, is made by Mr. English on page 21 of his book, and on the 163 page he makes another objection to Christianity, and it is this; *that “The Christians hastened the downfall of the Roman empire—that they would not serve in the armies of the emperor, if they could possibly avoid it: that they justly considered the profession of a soldier, and that of a Christian, incompatible: that no Christian, without being inconsistent, can serve in the army; and at this day the Quakers and the Menmonites refuse to carry arms, and in so doing they are CONSISTENT CHRISTIANS.”* This is as it

* Grounds of Christianity examined, page 21.

should be. If all the world then were consistent Christians, none would carry arms, they would learn war no more, they would beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and the visions of the prophets be fulfilled. Nothing, by Mr. English's confession, stands in the way of the prophesied peace of the world, but that all men should be consistent Christians. But this is not all, Mr. English in his haste to accumulate objections to our religion, has not only passed this compliment upon Christianity, in saying if it were consistently and universally professed, there would be no more wars; but he has shown that he knows upon what principle this blessed event would take place. "A Christian," says he, "who *ought to love his enemies,*' is he not guilty of the greatest of crimes, when he inflicts death upon a hostile soldier, of whose disposition he knows nothing, and whom he may, at a single stroke, precipitate into hell?"* If all then felt the force of this single command of our Lord, and faithfully obeyed it, not another drop of blood would be shed on a field of battle, and the desolation of mankind would cease. This is the state of peace, which the prophets foretold, and which only waits for Christianity to be "consistently believed," that it may universally prevail.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 184, 5.

A peace founded on the only sure basis—principle and affection.

It is for Mr. English to reconcile his two objections to the gospel, and also to account for this other seeming contradiction. He confesses that the Messiah is to be a prince of peace, and his reign a reign of concord. And yet he espouses the notion of the Jews, that he is to be a temporal prince, and a *conquering pacificator*.* Now I would willingly be told how a temporal prince is to conquer without division, sword, and war. And it is no ordinary war, which the Jewish Messiah is to wage. In the rabbinical books,† it is set forth in the darkest colours, through what seas of blood he is to wade to the throne of Jerusalem; and is it to a character like this, that we are to give the courteous name of pacificator? But he will first conquer the nations, and then make peace. This we know is the way of temporal princes. *Ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant.*‡ But can it be soberly supposed that this is the peace which the prophets foretold, the glorious state, which was to consummate God's government on earth?

It would grieve me, should prejudice reach so far as to sustain in the mind of one candid inquirer this objection of Mr. English. And as it is a topick of no little interest, I may be pardoned for a few more remarks.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 8.

† Vid. Buxtorfii Lexic. Chald. Talm. et Rab. Art. ארמילוט et משח.

‡ Tacit. Vit. Agric. § 30.

“Think not I am come to send peace on the earth; I am come not to send peace but a sword.”* Who can think that our Lord here expressed the final object of his mission? Is it necessary to say, by how trite a figure of speech it is, that a contingent consequence is spoken of as an intended effect, nay, that events are said in scripture to be done and brought about, by that course of providence, in which they are only permitted. “And the Lord said unto Moses, I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, THAT I may lay my hand upon Egypt.”† Does any one, in reading this passage, suppose that the Deity intended to declare that he would give to Pharaoh a miraculous hardness of heart, that he might then exert his power in punishing that hardness?‡ The meaning of our Saviour in like manner was expressed in the language of his nation, though in a form of speech not forbidden among us. It is abundantly manifest that he spoke of division, not as the design of his mission, but as the consequence, which flowed from opposition to it.

Hear Mr. English himself in this self-contradictory passage: “From the very commencement of Christianity, we perceive very

* Matt. x. 34.

† Exod. vii. 3, 4.

‡ “Pharaoh SET HIMSELF to weaken the Israelites with hard bondage, and when he saw that did not do, he SET HIMSELF to extirpate the race, by commanding that every male child be drowned.” Edwards’ History of Redemption, p. 65.

violent disputes among its founders and teachers ; and through every succeeding age of the church, nothing but schism and heresy. These are followed by persecutions and quarrels, exceedingly well adapted to destroy the vaunted spirit of concord, said by its defenders to be peculiar to Christianity, and the existence of which is in fact impossible in a religion, which is one entire chaos of obscure doctrines, and impracticable precepts. In every religious dispute *both parties thought that God was on their side*, and consequently they were *obstinate and irreconcilable*. And how should it have been otherwise, *since they confounded the cause of God with the miserable interests of THEIR OWN VANITY!* **THUS BEING LITTLE DISPOSED TO GIVE WAY ON THE ONE PART OR THE OTHER,** they cut one another's throats, they tormented, they burnt each other, they tore one another to pieces, and having exterminated and put down the obnoxious sects, they sung **Te Deum.**"* This is as loose and indefinite as it is vulgar. If it mean any thing however it is this, that the persecutions and quarrels of professing Christians, which ended in bloodshed and death, sprang from two sources: 1. The *vanity* of the contending parties, in "thinking their cause the cause of God," and 2. Their *selfishness*, or "not being disposed to give way on the one part or the other." Meagre as is this account, in a

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 182.

philosophical view, let us grant it to be correct. And is it not somewhat moving to the patience, to hear Mr. English in one breath charging upon Christ and his apostles, what in the next he involuntarily ascribes to their true causes, the *vanity* and the *selfishness* of man?—"How could it be otherwise, since they confounded the cause of God with the miserable interests of their own vanity: and being little disposed to give way on the one part or the other, they cut one another's throats!" Why then is the reason of the reader insulted with having these sad calamities ascribed to the gospel of Christ? Does that encourage *vanity* and *indisposition to give way*? Let a single passage of the New Testament cover the charge with reproach. "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be *likeminded*, having *the same love*, being of one accord, of *one mind*. Let nothing be done through strife or VAIN GLORY, but in LOWLINESS OF MIND let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also ON THE THINGS OF OTHERS."*

The supposition itself, on which the objection rests, that the period during which Christianity has prevailed in the world has been one of unusual discord and war, though a favourite topick of infidel declamation, is erroneous. For though it be true that there has not been an age free from these plagues, yet they have not been less frequent in the countries

* Phillipians ii. 2, 3, 4.

where Christianity is unknown, nor were they less frequent, extensive, or distressing, in the ages before the advent of our Lord. It is not a fact, which approves itself to the unprejudiced mind, that Christendom is marked out as the theatre of unexampled desolation. There is nothing in the annals of the Christian nations, which rises above the atrocity of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, or Roman wars. But it is not on this truth, unquestionable as it is, that we rest the Christian cause. How large a portion of the wars and tumults which have wasted the world have no connexion, nor the pretence of any, with Christianity. The causes of war are the mistaken interests, and bad passions of men. And he has little claim to the character of a fair observer, who can examine the sources of these convulsions, and then attribute them to the Gospel. Here nation is arrayed against nation, to decide by the effusion of human blood which of two pretenders shall sit upon a throne; and there the treasures and lives of a country are exhausted to vindicate some worthless foreign possession. One country is convulsed with war to gratify the military ambition of the reigning prince; and another, to promote the private intrigues of ministers or rulers. The order and establishment of government are the source of some wars, the privileges and immunities of commerce are the prize of others; and many, perhaps most, are the unhappy results of conflicting interests, unnessa-

rily wrought up into open discord and hostility. Why then are they ascribed to Christianity?

But it may be asked whether wars, profess- edly undertaken in the cause of religion, such for instance as the crusades, and the wars of the reformation—whether these are not justly to be charged to the account of the Gospel? Why should they be? Did Christ leave an injunction to levy these wars, or encourage the spirit which finds sustenance in them? Did any precept of Christianity bid the nations of Europe pour forth their millions on the plains of Palestine; did any passage of the gospel enjoin on men to disregard every law and ordinance of Jesus, in a fanatical attempt to redeem his tomb? Would the spirit which burst forth in these lawless inroads have found no opportunity, if it had not been for the Gospel? Were there no passions, no vices in ancient days? Is it Christianity which has made men ambitious, proud, and cruel? If it was the gospel that poured down the hosts of Europe upon Asia, what was it that fifteen hundred years before overwhelmed the states of Greece with the armies of the Persian despot, as numberless and as barbarous? What was it that reared the Macedonian state, and led its conqueror from the hills of Thrace, across the world, destroying nations of whom he had never heard, and subduing regions unexplored and unknown? What formed at Rome that monstrous power, which for a thousand years was the terror and curse of the nations? What

stirred up in the savage deserts of the north the hosts that burst upon the Roman empire, and swept away its glory and strength? And what in the later ages has hurried on the Saracen, the Tartarian, the Arabian conquerors; and spread a waste of confusion, misery, and death from the south of Europe to the China sea? It was not the gospel that did all this. It was done in ages and regions, that knew not Christ; it was done by that which has been doing it now, by that which will do it again, the passions of wicked men.

It only remains in this connexion to examine the assertion of Mr. English, that it is foretold by the prophets, that the restoration of the Jews shall be contemporary with the advent of the Messiah. This manifestly supposes the Messiah is to be an ordinary temporal conqueror; and not, as we have shown he was predicted to be, a spiritual and moral teacher. If his kingdom is to be a moral one, it must of course be progressive and gradual in its prevalence and influence.

The decision of the question therefore, whether the restoration of the Israelites is to coincide with the appearance of the Messiah, will probably depend, in the minds of all, upon the decision of the previous question, whether he was to be a temporal or a spiritual character. But as Mr. English has produced some authorities from the Old Testament upon this question, it will be necessary to examine them.

His first quotation in the order of the prophets in our Bibles is from Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 8: "Behold the days are coming, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch: *in his days* Judah shall be saved," &c.* I am aware that this prophecy is usually interpreted of the Messiah, by modern Christians and Jews, as it was by the Chaldee paraphrast. But it is probable that it relates to the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and the government of Zerubbabel,† who was a descendant of David, and who is called in Zechariah vi. 12.‡ *the branch*. This I say is probable, for the whole context, in the two preceding chapters, relates to the siege and capture of Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar, and the consequent captivity of the Jews, and in ch. xxiv. 4, 5, 6, to which the subject is pursued, we read these words, "Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel; like these good figs, so will I acknowledge *them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them up and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up; and I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they*

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 18.

† Grotius in Loc.

‡ Compare Zech. vi. 13. with iv. 9.

shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." The prophet then proceeds to denounce judgment on Zedekiah *by name*, and on his princes ; so that we can hardly doubt that it is the Babylonian captivity, and the restoration therefrom that is intended. But if Mr. English is willing to make a concession, which will be highly inconvenient in other parts of his argument, that the prophet bursts forth from the connexion, in which he was speaking of impending events, to foretel the days of the Messiah ; then he must show that it was in the *beginning* of those days that Judah shall be saved. The prophet only says "*in those days ;*" and Mr. English has no right to limit the prediction to the commencement of them. But he must allow the contrary, since he supposes the reign of the Messiah will be perpetual, and one of the authorities he quotes declares, that "the sons of Israel shall return, and shall seek after the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness, IN THE LATTER DAYS."

The passage also in the thirty-third chapter of the same prophet is referred to for the same purpose : "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing, which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up, unto Da-

vid, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely ; and this is the name wherewith SHE [Jerusalem] shall be called, ‘the Lord our righteousness.’ For thus saith the Lord, David shall NEVER want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. Neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me, to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice before me continually.” Now here, as in the preceding passage, the reference is probably to the restoration from the Babylonian captivity, and to Zerubbabel, since these are the subjects of the context, in which Babylon and the Chaldeans are called by name, and a deliverance promised from them. When therefore a few verses after it is said, that the days come, in which, saith Jehovah, I will perform that good thing, which I have promised, it can hardly be supposed that any other promise is referred to, than that just made. But if it be insisted that this also should be interpreted, by a bold transition, of the times of the Messiah, then it may be remarked, that as it is near two thousand years since David has failed of a temporal prince upon his throne, and a temporal succession of Levites, and since it is declared he shall NEVER fail of these, we must suppose that a spiritual successor and a spiritual service were intended ; or

else the solemn promise of God has been, for two thousand years, without fulfilment.

The next passages to which Mr. English refers, are Ezekiel xxxiv. 22, &c. and xxxvii. But these passages certainly contain no comparative designation of time. If they refer to the reign of the Messiah, all that they show is, that under his reign the Jews shall be made happy.

Hosea iii. 4, 5, is the next passage. It is as follows: "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness IN THE LATTER DAYS." It is difficult to see by what right Mr. English refers his reader to this passage to prove that the advent of the Messiah, and the restoration of Israel are to be contemporaneous. Certainly no such idea is presented in it. The use of the name of David, in this and some similar texts, will be hereafter explained.

The only remaining text referred to in this connexion is Micah v. 3, in which he has applied to the birth of the Messiah a figurative expression of the prophet's concerning the sufferings of the Jewish nation; as will be seen by comparing Mic. v. 3, with iv. 9. 10. And on this mistake the

application of the prophecy to the present purpose depended.

These are all the passages, to which Mr. English refers in proof of the supposition that one of the most considerable effects of the Messiah's reign should be contemporary with its commencement. How improbable this supposition is, will appear from a few considerations.

Mr. English allows, that a great and blessed change is to take place in the condition of men under the Messiah. Is it not contradictory to every principle of our nature, and to all we see of the government of God, to suppose that such a change will be instantaneous? If we compare the present condition of the world with its condition in the primitive ages, what a change has taken place, but how gradually too; and when we reflect that this change is principally external, one of education and refinement, but the change to be produced, under the Messiah's reign, is one of the moral character, it appears little short of absurd to fancy it will be instantaneous. Moral means are gradual, and it was the office of Christ at his advent, to put these means in operation.*

* "We must allow," says Lord Bacon in his 'Advancement of Learning,' book 2d. "that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of the author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age." Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, Introd.

That their effect would be slowly produced and their power be resisted, is not only a necessary consequence of the evil which is in the world, but was expressly foretold by the prophets. "Lord, who hath believed our report," is the language of Isaiah, in a prediction referred by the Jewish paraphrast to the Messiah.* David in a psalm,† unanimously acknowledged as a prediction of him, says, "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and his Messiah." Isaiah says, "of the INCREASE of his government and peace, there shall be no end;" and represents the Messiah as saying, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain;" and again says, "He shall *rebuke* many people, and smite the earth with the *Rod* of HIS MOUTH."‡ Are not these direct and positive intimations of great and general resistance, which the gospel would experience, and of course, of the gradual progress it would make? Mr. English says, that every tittle§ of the prophecies must be fulfilled, before assent can be demanded to the pretensions of one who claimed that character. According to him therefore, as he is to prevail over and bless the whole world, no one could believe on him till all had been converted.

* Isaiah liii. 1. The most ancient of the Jewish Commentaries, the Beresith, Rabba, as also Maimonides refer this to the Messiah. Huetii Demonstr. Evan. p. 362.

† Psalm ii.

‡ Isaiah ii. 4. xlix. 4. also Micah iv. 3.

§ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 41.

Indeed it is not in the course of cause and effect, that intellectual revolutions, changes in the mental and moral character of nations and the world, should be produced by sudden efforts or violent impulses. The dispensation of the Messiah was indeed to be miraculous, but miraculous only in the application of the means, which were to produce the moral change; there was nothing promised in the means themselves, which should operate with supernatural rapidity. These means were the instruction, example, and the encouragement of powerful motives, which the Messiah was to afford. The Mosaick dispensation was miraculous, and furnished with an apparatus of means, usually much more effectual in their operation upon common minds, than those which were assigned to Christianity: but the truth of the unity and supremacy of God, the great truth which this dispensation was intended to impress on the minds of the Jews, does not appear to have gained a general and genuine credence, till after the Babylonian captivity, a period of one thousand years from the time of Moses.* How unauthorized the expectation therefore that, on the advent of the Messiah, an era of peace, happiness, and virtue, would immediately commence on earth; how inconsistent with the known constitution of our minds, and the established laws of improvement! Christianity, as might be expected of a moral system, offers

* Lessing's sämmtliche Schriften. Th. v. p. 77, 78.

no constraint to the understanding or the will of men. It addresses them as intelligent, rational beings, free to choose, and able to refuse. It operates on their conduct not by mechanical force, nor yet by mysterious impulse. But it teaches, exhorts, and warns them. And must not the effect of all this discipline be gradual, in the individual, and still more so in the world? While passion exists, will it not operate, while our nature is imperfect, will it not fall into error? To remedy this imperfection and correct this error, must be a long and gradual work. Christianity has begun it, in introducing and cultivating the domestick character, one almost unknown in antiquity, and in revealing the all-powerful sanctions of the future state. The effects are known. It has turned some of the old virtues into vices, and some of the old glories into shame. This may be seen on the publick theatre of the world, where the degradation of the female character, the cruel contests of gladiators, and the miseries of domestick slavery,* with other spots on the ancient character yet more offensive, have passed away. But it is too true that the mighty passions which agitate the publick intercourse of the world, are almost beyond the *direct* reach of moral means. The trophies of the gospel are in a humbler sphere, the path of social private duty, the season of trial, suffering, and sor-

* It must be lamented that some sad exceptions prevent the universal application of this remark to nations professedly Christian.

row, and the hour of death. Its power and its spirit shine on these, its hopes and comforts gather here, and while the world without is tossed with the ceaseless storm of passion and vice, a patient, submissive, and faithful character has been formed and cherished within the church, which gives the last grace to human nature, and seals the assurance of heaven. And thus it will still continue to operate; the character of man will be improved hereafter, as it has been heretofore, by slow accessions of piety and virtue; which after being long and often displayed by individuals, will be gradually attached to the publick standard of character, and copied into the lives of the mass of men.

CHAPTER III.

MR. ENGLISH having attempted in general to show, that our Lord could not be the Messiah, (with what success we have already seen,) proceeds to say, "But since one would esteem it almost incredible, that the apostles could persuade men to believe Jesus to be their Messiah, unless they had at least *some* proof to offer to their conviction, let us next consider and examine the proofs adduced by the apostles and their followers from the Old Testament, for that purpose." I pass over the unfairness of thus representing the writings of the apostles, as a professed statement of the prophetic or any other arguments in favour of Christianity, as I shall find an opportunity to speak upon this subject hereafter.

The reader might expect from this show of candour which Mr. English makes, that he was going to present him with a fair discussion of the relative merit of the Jewish and Christian interpretation of the prophecies. Far otherwise. Mr. English transcribes for us a portion of the eighth and ninth chapter of Collins' *Grounds and Reasons*, and espouses the unworthy artifice to which that writer resorted.

It is well known that the sacred writers, in conformity to the style of their country and age, made an application of passages of the Old Testament to subsequent events, to which they had no original reference. This they did, not to intimate that these events were the primary objects of the predictions, but to gratify the minds of those who venerated the prophetick writings, by showing the correspondence which could be traced between them and passing events. It was on passages thus quoted by the evangelists from the Old Testament, that Collins disingenuously seized, and Mr. English has followed him. They set before us the texts of Isaiah and Hosea; show us that one had an immediate fulfilment, and the other was merely historical, and neither of course was accomplished in our Lord. On this summary process they charge* the sacred historians who quote these texts, with ignorance and fraud, and the cause they defend with imposture. I have but alluded to this at present, as a reason for not seriously attempting to show that passages so quoted were really fulfilled as prophecies in the person of Jesus Christ. I shall endeavor in the sequel to give the subject a fair examination, and pass now to the consideration of those prophecies, which are really to be regarded as proofs of the religion. In these

* I say, "*they charge*," for though Collins reasons in the person of a Christian, and speaks respectfully of the religion; yet the argument implies the falsehood of the pretensions of Christianity.

It will, I hope, be made to appear, that the Christian interpretation is the only one, which can reasonably be adopted.

The first of these is from Deut. xviii. 15 : “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me ; unto him ye shall hearken.” This is applied by St. Peter to our Lord, Acts iii. 22, and it was certainly most remarkably fulfilled in him, allowing the truth of the evangelical history, as it records our Lord’s prophetick character and actions. But the question, which has been asked is this, whether it was a prophecy solely of the Messiah, or 2. of any other single person, or 3. of a succession of inspired messengers? Some advocates of Christianity defend the first ; other interpreters have set up the second ; but the majority, whether Christians or Jews, maintain the latter. In granting therefore to Mr. English that this interpretation is correct, we should only follow the example of the most learned and judicious Christian interpreters. With this I might leave the question, but I cannot forbear to remark, that Mr. English, in what he has done in support of this interpretation, has been restrained too much by the authority of Collins. Otherwise he might have added to the names of Grotius, Stillingfleet, and Le Clerc, produced by him, those of Michaelis, Dathe, Rosenmuller, and Priestley, and particularly Delgado, a Jew. In adducing the authorities of Gro-

tius and Stillingfleet, he should have done, what Collins did not set him the example of, quoted them fairly. The impression, which would be left on the minds of the reader from Mr. English's observations upon their authority would be, that they did not allow this prophecy to have had reference to a fulfilment in Christ;—whereas Grotius remarks, in commenting upon the words of the prophecy: “The divine command has this general reference, that every prophet which arose in Israel should be obeyed, who wrought miracles and made predictions, and did not teach idolatry, although he should require things contrary to the law. But this divine command has an *eminent* reference to Jesus, than whom none was more illustriously designated by the marks, which God appointed, of a prophet.”* And Stillingfleet says, that “these words, though in their *full* and *complete* sense they do relate to Christ, (who is the great prophet of the church,) yet whoever attends to the full scope of the words will easily perceive, that the immediate sense of them doth relate to an order of prophets which should succeed Moses among the Jews.”†

One thing is sufficiently clear from incidental passages in the gospels: that the Jews of our

* Generaliter hæc Dei lex eo pertinet, ut quicumque propheta in populo Dei surrexerit miracula faciens, aut futura incognita certo prædicens, nec abducens populum ad deos falsos ei pareatur, etiamsi quid contra legem præcipiat. EXIMIE AUTEM *pertinet* ad Jesum, quo nullus illustrior illis signis, per quæ prophetas cognosci Deus voluit.”—Grotius ad Actor. liii. 22.

† Origines Sacræ, book ii. c. iv. § 1.

Saviour's time did understand this to be a prophecy of the Messiah. Witness the message to John the Baptist, "art thou THAT prophet," (ὁ προφητης;)* also this in John vii. 40, "Many of the people, when they heard this saying, said, of a truth this is *the prophet.*"†

Finally, many Jews of high repute, (and among them Joseph Albo, who makes a great figure in Collins' scheme of literal prophecy fulfilled, and is mentioned from that, by Mr. English in his appendix to the letter to Mr. Cary,) do apply this prophecy of Moses to the Messiah.‡

The next passage is from Psalm xvi. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption." Having quoted this passage, St. Peter argues that David, having been buried and exposed to corruption like other men, could not have signified himself in these words; and being also a prophet, must have spoken them of Christ, the only person to whom they would apply. §—This argument, says Mr. English, though imposing and apparently plausible, yet rests upon two mistakes. For, 1. the Hebrew word translated *corruption* really here means *destruction and perdition*, and 2. that instead of the original passage being "thy holy one," in the singular number, it is "thy saints," in general, in the plural.—As to the first of these assertions it is either ambiguous or erroneous. The corruption of the grave is one kind of destruction or perdi-

* John i. 21.

† Chandler's defence of Christianity, p. 205.

‡ Ibid. p. 307.

§ Acts ii. 29.

tion. But if Mr. English means, that the original *תחת* signifies *not* this kind of destruction, but some other kind, he is plainly in an error. The parallelism of the passage requires us to render it, the corruption of the grave. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, [*תחת* the place of the departed,] nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption." What sort of destruction is that, which is experienced in the place of the departed? Doubtless the corruption of the grave. This is confirmed by the use of the same word *תחת* in other places.—"They draw near unto the *gates of death*—he sent his word, and delivered them from their *destructions*."*—Again,—"therefore," says Daniel, "I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me, into *corruption*, and I retained no strength."† It is plain that in the first of these passages the *destruction* intended is that which is found within 'the gates of death;' and in the second, that Daniel compares the prostration of his faculties and strength, in consequence of the vision, to the effect of dissolution. Nay, so preeminent is the *corruption of the grave* among the significations of the original word *תחת*, that it has come to mean sometimes simply a pit or grave, as in Prov. xxviii. 10.

The second mistake, which Mr. English charges upon the apostle, is the quoting of the

* Pslm cvii. 18—20

† Daniel x. 8.

psalm “thy holy one,” in the singular, instead of “thy holy ones,” or saints, in the plural. It is a mild term to say, that this charge is a piece of intolerable dogmatism. True it is indeed, that our present printed Hebrew Bibles read “thy holy ones,” in the plural,* and this is all that authorizes Mr. English’s assertion. While he conceals from his reader, that two hundred and sixty manuscripts of the Old Testament, collated by Kennicott and de Rossi, many of them the most ancient extant, forty-two printed editions of the scriptures, together with five editions of the Babylonian Talmud, in two several citations, the Midrash Tehillim, Jalkuth Simeoni, and other Jewish books, the Septuagint, the Chaldee paraphrast, the Syriack, the Vulgate, and the Arabick versions all read with St. Peter, THY HOLY ONE, in the singular number. Moreover, in our present printed copies the text is *pointed* in the singular number, that is, a sheva precedes the jod, † and many manuscript and printed copies, and that of Van der Hooght among them, have a marginal note, that the jod, (in which the plurality consists,) is redundant; and “very many,” says De Rossi, “have a keri, or marginal reading of קדסך, in the singular.” This eminent collator of manuscripts closes his list of some distinguished criticks with these words, “all these authors

* See upon this text Kennicott’s Dissert. Gen. § xvii. and xxxv. and De Rossi Var. Lect. Vet. Test. tom. iv. in loc.

† I have added the Arabick to the versions, upon the authority of Eichhorn Einleitung ins. A. T. Th. p. 51?

‡ Vid. Grotium in loc.

rightly rejecting the masoretick reading, adhere to the defective [that is, the omission of the ׀] singular form, which so many copies, manuscript and printed, demand, and which the context itself, referring to one person, the Messiah, requires.* Michaelis, in speaking of the reading of a manuscript collated by Lichtenstein, which is תְּסַדֵּךְ “thy holy one,” declares it a new confirmation of this reading, now almost incontestible;† and in another place decides, that “this important reading is now so well established, that it may be considered certain.”‡

I cannot reconcile to my sense of honour and fairness the absolute omission of facts like these—especially while charging a mistake of the scriptures on a most solemn occasion, to men like Peter and Paul.

The next application of prophecy, to which Mr. English objects, is that by Peter, Acts iv. 25, who quotes the words of the second psalm: “Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and his Messiah.” To these words Peter, in a most rational and intelligent manner subjoins: “for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with

* “Qui omnes auctores, recte repudiata masorethica lectione, defectivæ et singulari adherent quam tot codices et editiones confirmant, contextusque ipse requirit, ubi de uno, Messia, agitur.” Var. Lect. Vet. Test. iv. p. 10.

† Michaelis Oriental. und exeg. Bib. t. xi. p. 69.

‡ Ibid. t. i. p. 179.

the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together." To this application Mr. English objects, 1. that the "nations," as it is in the original, "did not assemble to crucify Jesus, as this was done by a few soldiers." But the apostle does not say they assembled to 'crucify' him; their joint opposition was not limited to this single act; they were gathered together against him. And it is certainly true that Jesus was an object of the united persecution of the nation of the Jews, by means of their bigotted priests and furious multitudes, and of the nation of the Romans, by means of their tributary sovereign Herod, and their proconsul Pilate. 2. It is objected, "that the kings of the earth had no hand in the crucifixion; they knew nothing about it." But it certainly was done by the agent of the Roman emperor, the sovereign of the earth, and Mr. English knows better than I whether it be not a maxim of the law, "qui facit per alium facit per se." 3. It is objected that "they who were concerned did by no means form 'vain designs,' since they effected their cruel purpose." But their design was not simply to cut off Jesus, but to crush his doctrine; and Mr. English will therefore own upon reconsideration, that their design was vain. They did not crush his doctrine. And lastly, it is objected, that "from that time to the present God has not set Jesus, as his king, upon the holy of Sion, (as the psalm imports,) nor given him the

* Acts iv. 25, 26, 27.

nations for his inheritance, nor the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." But the psalm no more imports in its sixth verse, that the long expected Messiah was to be a temporal king in Jerusalem, than it imports in its fourth—"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision,"—that God hath literally a seat in the clouds, in a bodily form, subject to external affections and contemptuous passions. It is also most certain that God *has* given the heathen to his Son for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And rapidly too. Theodoret, in the year 420, could say, "the apostles while on earth visited the various nations, the Romans, the Spaniards, the Gauls. All people received their labours, not only the Romans, with the powers tributary to them, but the Persians, the Scythians, the Massagetæ, the Sauromatæ, the Indians, the Ethiopians, in a word, the utmost limits of the civilized world."* Chrysostom, at the beginning of the same century could say, "it is beyond mere human power to compass such a vast region in so short a time, and to engage to such truths by such means, men of all characters, brought up in such bad habits, and filled with such perversity; but he [Christ] was able to liberate from these evils the whole race of men, not only the Romans, but the Persians, and

* Theodor. adv. Græc. Serm. viii. Opp. t. iv. p. 592.

all the barbarian nations.”* Athanasius, near a century earlier could say, that “among the Christian churches were to be numbered those of Spain, Britain, Gaul, Italy, Dalmatia, Mysia, Macedonia, Greece, Africa, Sardinia, Cyprus, Crete, Pamphylia, Lycia, Isauria, Egypt, Lybia, Pontus, and Cappadocia.”† Arnobius, at the beginning of the fourth century could say, “The open miracles, and the wonderful effect of his deeds and those of his disciples throughout the world, produced a general concord in faith among nations and regions of the most contradictory manners. We might recount what was done in India, among the Seræ, the Persians, and the Medes; in Arabia and Egypt, in Asia and Syria, among the Galatians and the Parthians, in Phrygia, in Achaia, Macedonia, and Epirus, in every island and province, from the rising to the setting sun, and in Rome, the mistress of them all.”‡ Tertullian, a century earlier, could say, “In whom else have all nations believed, but in Christ who has come? In him indeed have believed all people. The Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, and Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Africa beyond Cyrene, both colonists and natives, Jews of Jerusalem, and of other parts, with the various tribes of Getulians, the borders of the Mauritanians, the

* Oratio, Christum esse Deum. Op. t.vi. p. 625.

† Athanas. Epist. Synod.—Apud Theodoret. l. iv. c. 3.

‡ Arnobius contr. Gentes, l. ii.

limits of Spain, the different tribes of Gaul, the retreats of Britain, unapproached by the Romans, but subdued by Christ, the Sarmatians and Dacians, Germans, and Scythians with nations, and provinces, and islands, remote and unknown, over all which the name of Christ who has come, prevails."* "We are of yesterday, and have filled your empire, your cities, your provinces, your senate, your camp, we leave you nothing but your temples."† Irenæus, at the end of the second century, could say, "There are many languages in the world, but one only faith. The churches in Germany neither think nor hold unlike, nor those in Iberia, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Lybia, nor those in this centre of the world. As the created sun in the universe is one and the same, so the light of the preached Gospel shines through the world, and illumines all, who will come to the knowledge of the truth."‡ And Pliny, a Roman, a heathen, in the year 112, but two generations after the crucifixion, was *obliged* to say, "The thing surely deserves attention from the number involved, for many of every age, of every rank, and of each sex, and not only the cities, but the villages, and the country, are infected with this contagious superstition."§

* Tertull. adv. Judæos. l. i.

† Tertull. Apol. c. xxxvi.

‡ Irenæus Adv. Hær. l. i. c. 3.

§ Plinii Epist. l. x. ep. 97. For these authorities, except the last, and the second of Tertullian, the reader is referred to Grotius de Ver. l. ii. § 18. where many others are given. For a

The next prophecy is that of Micah v. 2. "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall *he come forth* unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mr. English remarks upon this, that the 'coming forth' does not intend the *birth* of the Messiah in Bethlehem, but his *derivation* from Bethlehem, through David, who originated there. And this interpretation is known and acknowledged, says he, by Hebrew scholars.† But the truth is, that the original word מֵצַיִם is familiarly used of the birth of a man;—as "Mizraim begat Pathrusim, and Cashuhim, out of whom *came* Philistim."‡ Who the 'Hebrew scholars' are that acknowledge this turn to the passage, I know not. Rabbi Isaac indeed proposes it,§ but Rabbi Lipman,¶ the other chief Chaldean, agrees with the common translation; as do also the Chaldee paraphrast, the Talmud in two places, the Midrach Tehillim, with Rabbies Jarchi and Kimchi, as respectable Jewish authorities as could be produced.|| But Mr. English says, "he will *permit* the passage to be interpreted as signifying, that Bethlehem was to be the birth place of the Messiah. What then, will a man's being born in Bethle-

striking testimony to the same effect, from Cosmas Indicopleustes, too long to be transcribed, see Fabrici lux evangelii, p. 767.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 40.

‡ Gen. x. 13, 14. See Chandler's defence, p. 125, and Grotius in Mich. v. 2.

● Chissuk Emuna, P. i. § 33.

¶ Nizzachonp 115. Apud Wagenseil's tela ignea.

‡ Huet Dem. Evangel. p. 384

hem be sufficient to make him the Messiah, foretold by the Hebrew prophets.”* Now if we were willing to be consistent, and cling to our principles, wherever they carry us, it would almost seem that this concession might decide the controversy. The Messiah is to be of Bethlehem. This reduces to a little span the number of those, among whom he can be found. Moreover, Bethlehem is now in ruins; to all moral purposes, its identity is gone.† It is the habitation of Turks, of Arabs, of Christians; and if there be any Jews there, none will pretend that the divisions of the tribes are preserved among them, so that the tribe of David, from which the Messiah is to arise, is known in Bethlehem, from the rest. Neither can it be argued that hereafter when the Jews are restored, Bethlehem will be re-peopled with Jews, the family of David be discriminated, and the prophecy admit of fulfilment; because Mr. English himself allows it to be the sense of prophecy, that the Messiah shall be born *before* the restoration.‡ It only remains therefore to look back, and to see of all that have appeared in Bethlehem, which has the greatest claim to this character. And I ask whether this fact does not strike the mind with an irresistible force, viz. that the founder of a

* This is from R. Isaac Chissuk Emuna, ubi sup. Apud Wagens. T. I.

† Dr. Clarke's Travels in various countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa, vol. ii. p. 336. Amer. Ed.

‡ “It should seem also that the Messiah was not to be born, till the time of that restoration should be nearly arrived.” Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 19.

religion, which has existed for two thousand years, which exists now throughout the civilized world, a master, to whom thousands of churches are reared, and millions of knees are bowed, that he should have descended from this little city of Bethlehem? Can a doubt exist that he is the character foretold by the prophet? Is it probable that another such unparalleled personage will arise from this village, which in every Jewish connexion has for centuries ceased to be? And above all is it not absolutely incredible, that if two such characters were destined to arise from this place, the one a true, and the other a false Messiah, no warning of the latter should have been given by the prophet, and that his countrymen should be left to struggle against the presumption, that Jesus of Nazareth must be the Christ; a presumption strengthened by the accumulated confirmation of eighteen hundred years? I envy not the constitution of that man's mind, who can answer these questions in the negative.

Zechariah ix. 10. "Rejoice greatly, oh daughter of Zion: shout, oh daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, *and having salvation*, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." 1. Mr. English, in giving this passage, instead of "having salvation," reads, "saved or preserved," adding in a parenthesis, "according to the Hebrew." The Hebrew, it is true, has the form of a passive part-

inciple, but it should not have been concealed, that all the ancient versions—the Vulgate, the Arabick, the Syriack, and the LXX, read “a Saviour :” and especially that this is done also by the *Jewish paraphrast** himself: “It is remarkable,” says Grotius, “that not only the Latin, but the Greek and Chaldee, [and, as I have added above from the Polyglot, the Syriack and Arabick,] should unite in rendering ‘a Saviour.’”†

2. A second objection is, that the evangelists have made a blunder here in saying, “that Jesus rode both upon the ass, and the ass’s colt. They spread their garments upon them, and placed him upon them. See the evangelists in loc.”‡ There is a small blunder here made by the detector himself. The evangelists do not all use the phrase, which Mr. English quotes from Matthew.§ John, whose account is more concise, expressly says, that our Saviour, “having found a young ass, sat thereon,”¶ and Mark and Luke agree with him.∥ A very ingenious and simple account of the whole transaction, and of the causes of the variation of Matthew from the other evangelists in relating it, may be found in Jones’ Illustrations, section xliii.

* R. Isaac, with great insolence, accuses the Christians of imposing this translation on the word, Chissuk. Em. P. I. § 35.

† Vid Grotium in loc.

‡ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 41.

§ Even in Matthew the Syriack translator renders “they placed their mantles upon the foal, and Jesus rode on *him*.”

¶ xii. 14.

∥ Mark xi. 8. Luke xix. 35.

“Finally,” says Mr. English, “the event spoken of is contemporaneous with the restoration of Israel, and the establishment of peace and happiness; and this *seems* to cut up the evangelists’ interpretation by the roots.” But obscure as is the coherence of the context of the prophet, it is sufficiently apparent that he sets forth a series of events, commencing with a period near his own, and continued onward to the Messiah, with whose advent he naturally closes the train. The first event was the destruction of Tyre,* which, as it must be understood of New Tyre, was accomplished by Alexander, about 330 years before Christ. The next event is the destruction of Gaza,† and this took place under the reign of Alexander Janneus, about 100 years before Christ. After other prophecies of this kind, which our ignorance of the geography and history of the age and place prevent us fully from understanding,‡ it is added, “I will encamp about mine house with an army,” &c.§ This must

* Zechariah ix. 4. Newcome notes upon the text, “that it is true Alexander the Great took Sidon, Tyre, and Gaza, but that the prophecy was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar.” But as Newcome places the age of Zechariah in the year 518 A. C. and Nebuchadnezzar must have taken Tyre at least 585 A. C. sixty years before Zechariah prophesied, who nevertheless speaks of it as an event yet to come, it is probable that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Old Tyre or Palæo-Tyros, as it was called by the ancients, (Quint. Curt. l. 4. c. v. and Justin l. xi. 1.) and therefore that this prophecy of Zechariah regards the destruction of New Tyre, by Alexander the Great, as stated in the text. Newcome in loc. and Calmet, art. Tyre.

† Zech. ix. 5. Joseph. Ant. xiii. c. xiii. § 3.

‡ Michaelis Orient. und Exeg. Bib. Th. iii. p. 76.

§ Zech. ix. 6.

refer to some event which took place, while God's house was standing, probably to the wars of the Asmomean princes; and then bursts out the prophet in the words in question, "Exult, oh daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee." So that the tenor of this oracle of Zechariah exhibits a series of predictions, commencing with the divine vengeance on certain wicked nations, which was soon after fulfilled, continued through the successes of the wars of the brave descendants of Judas, and ending with the last and great event, the coming of the Messiah.

I observe in conclusion, that this passage is applied to the Messiah by the ancient Jews, twice in the Talmud, and by several of their commentators; Jarchi among the rest says, it is impossible to expound it of any but the Messiah.* The epithet *lowly* is also an indication of the humble character of the Messiah, and one so positive, that the most judicious Jewish interpreters have resorted to their fiction of a twofold Messiah,† of which we shall speak at large hereafter, to avoid the manifest incongruity of these marks of humility, with their triumphant hero.

The *pacifick* character of the Messiah is also plainly indicated, and that he is not to be

* Chandler's defence, p. 87.

† Aben Ezra, pronounced by Geddes, (Crit. Rem. p. 146,) the most learned and acute of the Jews, expresses his doubts whether the passage refer to Messiah Ben Joseph, or Messiah Ben David.

‡ Vid Grotium in loc

a “conquering pacificator” is expressly taught in these words of God, “*I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and he shall speak peace to the nations.*”*

The next prophecy adduced is Zechariah xii. 10. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon *me*†, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son,” &c. A part of this prophecy is already fulfilled, and a part is yet to be fulfilled. St. John expresses both: “one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; these things were done, that the scripture might be fulfilled. A bone of him shall not be broken, and again, another scripture saith, they shall look on him whom *they have pierced.*”‡ The other part is yet to come, according to St. John in the revelation, “Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and *they also which pierced him*; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”§ Upon this prophecy Mr. English remarks: “The next passage, which has been offered as a prophecy of Jesus, is to be found

* Zech. ix. 10.

† I render *me*, because I cheerfully allow with Eichhorn (Allgem. Bib. ii. 1607,) and De Rossi in loc. that it is supported by most authorities. The opposite authorities will appear in the sequel.

‡ John xix. 34. 36, 37

§ Rev i 7.

Zech. xii. 10. and *part* of it has been *mis-quoted* by John: ‘And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look on *me*, whom they have pierced.’ So it stands in the English version, but before I state what it ought to be, I would observe, that before the evangelist (who in his account of the crucifixion, applies this passage as referring to Jesus being pierced with a spear,) could make this passage fit his purpose, he had to substitute the word *him* for *me*, as it is in the Hebrew, confirmed I believe by *all* the versions, ancient and modern, *without exception*. Yet with this change, it will by no means answer his purpose; for the Hebrew word here translated *pierced*, in this place signifies *blasphemed* or *insulted*, as is understood by Grotius, who confirms this rendering from the Hebrew of Leviticus xxiv. 11. where, in this passage, ‘the Israelitish woman’s son *blasphemed* the name of the Lord,’ the Hebrew word translated *blasphemed*, is from the same root with the Hebrew word translated *pierced*, in the passages in Zechariah, quoted above. So that the passage ought to be translated thus: ‘I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look towards *me* whom they have *blasphemed*. [To ‘look towards God,’ is a phrase frequently met with, and well understood.] Now to enable us to

understand more perfectly this passage; let us consider the context, where we shall find that it states, * [that there was to be a war in Judea, and a siege of Jerusalem, and then a deliverance of the Jews, by a destruction of all the nations that should come up at that time against Jerusalem. Immediately after which matters, follows the prophecy under consideration: ‘I will pour upon the house of David,’ &c. Now from these things thus laid together; I crave leave to argue in the words of Dr. Sykes, Essay, &c. p. 268. ‘Did *any one circumstance* of all this happen to the Jews, about the time of the death of Jesus; or rather was not every thing the *reverse* of what Zechariah says? and instead of all nations being destroyed that came about Jerusalem, Jerusalem itself was destroyed. Instead of a spirit of grace and supplication, the Jews have had their hearts hardened against Christ; instead of mourning for him whom they have pierced, they curse him and his followers to this day.’†] This is a long extract, but I hope the reader has attentively gone over it, as it furnishes, I fear, too fair a specimen of the want of candour, with which Mr. English has pursued this inquiry, and the want of care with which he has written this book. He says, that “a *part* of this prophecy” is adduced by John; and why a part? Certainly because a *part* only was fulfilled. The Roman officers,

* This bracket will be presently explained.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 41, 42.

at the instigation of the Jews, had crucified and pierced the Lord, but the time was yet far distant, when they should “look upon him whom they had pierced, and mourn for him.” But it is “misquoted,” says Mr. English, “and before St. John could make it fit his purpose, he had to substitute *him* for *me*.” But why, if truth is the object desired, why this perpetual suppressio veri? Why does not Mr. English state, 1. That fifty manuscripts of the Hebrew scriptures, and *the first printed edition*, (collated by Kennicott and De Rossi,) read *him* and not *me*.* 2. That the valuable Pachomian manuscript of the LXX, reads *him whom*.† 3. That the Syriack version reads, “they shall look to me *through him whom they pierced*,” making *him* the person pierced.‡ 4. That archbishop Newcome, an impartial and learned critick, felt himself authorized to render *him* in his version. 5. That Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius, who cannot here be accused of following the LXX against the Hebrew, read *him*. 6. That the learned Jews, Saadiah Gaon, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, read *him*, and have been charged by Christian polemicks with as much zeal with changing “*me*” into “*him*,” as Mr. English charges the evangelists with doing the same. 7. That the Talmud, in a citation of this passage,

* De Rossi Var. Let. V. T. iv. p. 217.

† Newcome in loc.

‡ According to the text of the Polyglott.

reads *him*, and not *me*. 8. And above all, that by changing the present masoretick points, (which, it cannot too often be repeated, are of no manner of authority, except as the representatives of a single manuscript,) the rendering of the evangelists coincides exactly with the Hebrew text.* One might think that authorities like these, especially four distinguished rabbies, and the whole host of Talmudical doctors, might, in the mind of a professed champion of the Jews, have secured the evangelist from the charge of *misquoting*. But the “word rendered pierced,” says Mr. English, “should be rendered *blasphemed*, as it is by Grotius, who refers to Leviticus xxiv. 11. in which it is so rendered, and where the word is from the same root, as the text in Zechariah.” This I fear would authorize a charge of misquotation against another, besides the evangelist. Grotius does refer to Leviticus, but *not* to say that the Hebrew word in the two texts is the same. *They are totally different, they have but one letter in common.*†

* אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר in the present pronunciation is, “to me whom.” אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר is the reading of the authorities adduced above. אֵלַי אֶת אֲשֶׁר would signify simply, “to whom;” and Dathe, a learned and liberal critick, supports this reading, if I rightly understand the Rossi. The same reading is also proposed in Newcome *ad loc.* The whole evidence upon the text is admirably reduced into a narrow compass in De Rossi *ad loc.*

† The root in Zechariah is קָרַךְ, which Grotius says, “*confixere*” rendered *confixere* “*nam confingere Deum dicuntur, quod a se probris lacesunt; nam sic et קָרַךְ, quod proprie est peccare, ponitur pro βλασφημειν—blasphemare. Lev. xxiv. 11.*” *ad loc.*

But if Mr. English would compare the use of the word in Zechariah, with its use in other passages, he can look at Isaiah xiii. 15. "Every one that is found *shall be thrust through*, and every one that is joined to them, shall perish by the sword." And Zechariah himself, within seven verses* of the one in question, repeats the word, in the following connexion: "And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and mother shall say unto him, thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord of hosts, and his father and mother shall *thrust him through.*" Shall *blaspheme* him? But, says Mr. English, let us consider the *context*, yet so far from proceeding to do this, he does not trust the reader with the whole of the *text*. "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, *and they shall mourn for HIM, and the bitterness for HIM shall be as the bitterness for a first born.*" Was what is here given in italicks suppressed, in his survey of the context, because the repetition of HIM was another reason for thinking, with fifty manuscripts and the Talmud, that *him* also should be read in the first clause? One might almost call this *misquoting a part of a prophecy*. But adds Mr. English, after locking at the context, "now from these things thus laid together, I crave leave to argue in the words of Dr. Sykes, 'Did any one circumstance of all this happen,' " &c. as above. And the reader is left to conclude that Mr. English's argu-

* Zech. xiii. 3.

ment is really that of Dr. Sykes. But this learned and ingenious advocate of Christianity had previously declared, that the prophecy of Zechariah was a real prophecy of our Lord.* He then states the authorities concerning the text, gives an analysis of the context, and adds, "Did any one circumstance of all this happen to the Jews about the time of the death of Jesus, or rather was not every thing the reverse of what Zechariah says, and instead of all nations being destroyed that come about Jerusalem, Jerusalem itself was destroyed; instead of a spirit of grace and supplication, the Jews have had their hearts hardened against the Christ. Instead of mourning for him whom they pierced, they curse him and his followers to this day. *It is certain that this whole prophecy plainly relates to a time, yet future, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and the Jews shall be received again. And as THIS IS PERFECTLY CONSISTENT WITH THE WHOLE TENOR OF SCRIPTURE, we must wait the event with patience, and pray for those happy times when Christ shall come with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him, even so, Amen, Rev. i. 7.*" The sentence in italicks is suppressed by Mr. English, while "he craves leave to argue in the words of Dr. Sykes;" and yet he adds, with all imaginable composure, "It is tiresome thus to waste time in proving that orts and ends of

* Sykes' Essay upon the truth of the Christian religion, p. 172.

verses, *disjointed from their connexion, prove nothing.*" The reader has not forgotten that it was these orts and ends, according to what he calls his own "candid confession," which he allowed at the beginning of his chapter, might be thought by "wise and good men" to afford "plausible arguments" for Christianity.* I know not whether it be an aggravation, or a humiliating apology for this unfairness in mutilating authorities, that it has not the poor merit of originality; that even while he uses the personal style, "I crave leave to argue," he is copying the words of Collins, and that the whole passage marked in brackets, (p. 102,) is transcribed verbatim, from that author's second work.† To hear the evangelist charged in vulgar terms with misquoting and changing words, by one, who could himself fall into the errors and the misrepresentations we have just exposed, has moved me to a warmth of language, which I did not think to have used. But I beg pardon: it is the New Testament which teaches us that we "beware lest we condemn ourselves, in what we judge another." And Mr. English has let us know that the New Testament morality is pernicious to society. Justly, most justly, does Dr. Leland observe, that "it would be

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 34.

† Scheme of literal prophecy, p. 147, 148. This is not actually the second of all his works: though Collins is principally known as the author of the Grounds and Reasons, and the Scheme of literal prophecy.

hard to produce any persons whatever, who are chargeable with more unfair and fraudulent management in their quotations, in *curtailing*, adding to, and *altering the passages they cite*, or taking them out of their connexion, and *making them speak directly contrary to the sentiment of the authors,*"† than the **D**eistical writers.

† Leland's View of Deistical Writers, vol. i. p. 101, note.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. ENGLISH, being tired of examining “orts and ends of verses,” proceeds to the consideration of the three most celebrated texts, viz. Gen. xlix. 10. Isa. liii. and Dan. ix. 24 : and first, of the prophecy in Genesis, a portion of the dying speech of Israel to his children. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh come.” On this he first observes, that “though this prophecy is allowed by the Jews to refer to their Messiah, yet that it does not define or limit the time of his coming. For that it is perfectly evident to all, who will look at the place in the Hebrew Bible, that it is *pointed* to read *not*, as in our English translation, ‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, *till* Shiloh come,’ but ‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet *forever* ; for Shiloh shall come.’ So that the prophecy does not intimate that the Messiah should come *before* the sceptre be departed from Judah ; but that it should not depart *forever*, but shall be restored when Shiloh comes.”* Now the *points*, commonly so called, have nothing to do with the division

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 43.

of a sentence into its members, or with what we call *punctuation*. But Mr. English intended to intimate, that according to the *accents*, the verse should be divided, as he proposes. If this were true, it would not be of the least consequence to the argument; for whatever may be pretended of the authority of the masoretick *vowel points*, no one will contend a moment for that of the *accents*.* But I will not resort to this, for though Mr. English says, that it is perfectly evident to all who will look into the Hebrew, that it is so accented as to authorize his division; I say, that whoever will look a second time, will find that it is *not* so accented, but that the accents require our present translation and division. And this, if the reader will lend me his patience, I will prove. The passage in the original is as follows: לֹא יִסּוּר שֶׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה וּמִדָּוִד מִבֵּית רִגְלָיו עַד כִּי יָבֹא שִׁילֹה מִבֵּית רִגְלָיו. Here the point under רִגְלָיו is about equivalent to a colon, and that under עַד somewhat less than a comma, so that the pointing of the passage is, as nearly as it can be represented, in English: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet: till Shiloh come. Moreover, the point under רִגְלָיו "feet," called Athnach, is styled a *king major*; and that under עַד "until" is *Jetib*, a king minor; and Athnach is therefore said to be superior in command to Jetib. Now it is a principle of Hebrew accentuation, that the accent be attached to the last word, under

* Eichhorn's Einleit. ins. A. T. Th. i p. 159.

its command :* and as Athnach is attached to רגליו—‘feet,’ this word ‘feet’ is the last word under its command ; and עד or ‘till,’ which follows, is excluded from the command of Athnach—*i. e.* from the whole first clause of the sentence, and must be read—as in our common version—in the latter clause. Moreover, it is only the *major kings*, that are usually called pauses, and are considered as at all affecting the pronunciation.† As Jetib is but a king minor, it ought not to be regarded therefore in dividing the passage. But if it be regarded it demands, as just stated, the punctuation of our Bibles.‡ And if the reader be still inclined to credit Mr. English’s dogmatical assertion, he may trust to the authority of Michaelis, the greatest Hebrew scholar of his age, and who wrote expressly on Hebrew accents, that “if we follow the accents, עד must be construed with בני יבא שילה §

If we consult the other passages, where the same words occur, we shall attain a similar

* Subditi præcedunt suos dominos, sive silicet sint dominorum suorum subdistinctivi, vel solummodo ministri; semper dominos suos antecedunt, erga initium versûs, seu versus dextram. Robertson’s Manip. de Hebræo Bib. Accentuat. p. 203. Vid. etiam Van der Hooght, præf. ad Bib. Heb. § xi.

† Accentus reges majores, qui *pausantes tonici* vocantur, maxime scitu necessarii. Jac. Robertson’s Gram. Heb. p. 54.

‡ Noldius declares, *Ex omnibus biblicis exemplis constat, Jetib, post majorem distinctionem, non distinguere. ET ABSURDUM EST QUOD majus distingueret quam Athnach.* In confirmation of this assertion he refers to Ex. xxiii. 8. Judges iv, 24. Ruth i. 12. and 1 Sam. xxii. 3. which if the reader will consult, cannot but satisfy him. Noldii Vindic. p. 927.

§ Michaelis begins a sentence thus: “Wenn man den accenten folget und עד mit בני יבא שילה כִּי יבא שילה construiert, das sceptre wird, ו,

result. Gen. xxvi. 13. "And the man waxed great and went forward, and grew until (עַד) he became very strong." Here the עַד is disjoined from the ו, by a minister, (Merca,) but is nevertheless united with it in the sense, and rendered 'until.' Gen. xli. 49. "And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until עַד) he left off numbering." Here is precisely the same point, Athnach, under מְאֹד, 'very much,' that there is under 'feet' in the prophecy in question, and under עַד, a point, Tebir, of precisely the same force as Jetib, in the other. 2 Sam. xxiii. 10. "He arose and smote the Philistines, until (עַד) his hand grew weary." Here the punctuation is altogether similar to that of the text in question. 2 Chron. xxvi. 15. "The name of Uzziah spread far abroad, for he was marvelously helped till (עַד) he was strong." These are all the texts of scripture,* in which the words occur, and in all of them are they necessarily rendered *until*. Indeed the Jewish correspondent of Rittangelius, to whom Mr. English refers us, does not pretend to any such use of the accents, nor do Lipman or Isaac.† He probably borrowed this incorrect

s. w. Or. und Exeg. Bib. ix. 226. "Preterea," says Huet, "*futilis est interpretatio illa quâ עַד a sequentibus disjungunt cum sequatur ו quod cum עַד præcedenti conjungendum esse sciunt, qui literis HEBRAICIS VEL LEVITER TINCTI SUNT. Demonstr. Evang. p. 490.*"

* According to Noldius, Art. עַד ו.

† "I was disputing," says an author quoted by Noldius, Vindic. page 927, "with a Jew, who urged this perverse interpretation of עַד ו; and I referred him to his own Hebræo-Germanick version,

nation from an anecdote related by Masclef.*

Mr. English refers the reader to the correspondence of Rittangelius and a Jew, preserved in Wagenseil's *tela ignea*; "where," says he, "the reader will find Rittangelius first amicably inviting the Hebrew to discuss the point, who does so most ably and respectfully to his Christian antagonist, and unanswerably establishes the interpretation above stated, by the laws of the Hebrew language, by the ancient interpretation of the Targum, by venerable tradition, and by appealing to history. Rittangelius begins his defence by

which reads "till the Messiah come." (*bisz dasz er koimt Maschiah,*) at which he was silent, and went away."

* Masclef. *Nov. Gram. Argum.* p. 66, 67. "In the year 1712, about the beginning of August, two Jews from Mentz passed a few days at Amiens. The elder and more learned was named Daniel Zei, the other Elias Prag. Having had much conference upon the subject of religion, we came at length to the famous prophecy of Jacob, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.' I asserted that it was plain from this, that the time of the Messiah was passed. 'Nay,' said Zei, 'you do not punctuate the sentence rightly. How, said I, is it not read, The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,—pause—nor a lawgiver from between his feet,—pause—until Shilo come—full stop? Does not the sense close with Reglio, and Odki begin a new clause? Do not both the meaning of the passage, and the ancient interpreters demand this division. Nay, does not the accent *Athmach*, which is placed, in your own Bibles, under Reglio, confirm it? and I then appealed to the Bible of Manasseh Ben Israel, which was at hand. To this, answered Daniel, WITH AN ARCH LOOK, you are not yet fully initiated into our mysteries. Observe the accent under ׀, it is the office of that to connect the word, under which it is placed, to the preceding. [This we have seen is false.] And though it does that grammatically, yet it does it also as a musical accent. For in cantilating the verse, we raise our voices, and pause upon Od, and begin another hemistick with Ki."

shuffling, and ends by getting into a passion, and calling names, which his opponent, who is cool, because confident of being able to establish his argument, answers by notifying to Rittangelius his compassion and contempt.”*

Were the opinions of Rittangelius and his correspondent of any consequence, I should feel greater satisfaction, than I do, in calling the reader's attention to them. Let us however examine the reference, which is so emphatically made. It is good to be positive, but better to be correct; and the reader, I doubt not, will agree with me, that such dogmatical blundering as this, is prevented from being offensive, only as it is ludicrous.

Rittangelius, a converted Jew, while residing at Amsterdam, was requested by his friends, to discuss the truth of Christianity, with a certain Jew, whose name does not appear. Being engaged in editing the *Sepher Jetzira*, he consented with reluctance. Mr. English tells us, that he first amicably invites the Jew, that he begins with shuffling, and ends by calling names. That he invited the Jew is probably true, but how he began or ended is not so apparent, since both the commencement and conclusion of the correspondence are lost.† The first letter however was

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 43, 44.

† Wagenseil's *tela ignea*, p. 365.

‡ “*Id unum,*” says Wagenseil, “*me cruciabat eas literas quibus cæpta fuit disputatio desiderari, postremas quoque, quæ finem sine dubio liti imposuerunt et hominem Judæum ad turpe ac ignominiosum silentium adegerunt, maximâ sui parte truncas tantum comparere.*” *Ibid.* p. 327.

probably written by the Jew, who after stating his opinions adds, "this was the argument of my first letter, and the beginning of the controversy." This however is a matter of small consequence. Mr. English says, that the Jew *unanswerably established the interpretation above stated*, viz. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet *forever*; for Shiloh shall come." But the Jew, so far from unanswerably establishing this operation, *does not even adopt it*. In his first letter, he stated two interpretations, of which this of Mr. English was one;* but instead of maintaining it himself, he brings forward a far different one, which he professes to have received from his father. Instead of rendering שבט "a sceptre," he renders it "chastisement or calamity," and appeals to 2 Sam. vii. 14. "I will chastise him with the rod of a man," and understands the prophecy to import, that the chastisements and calamities of the dispersion shall not cease, *till* the Messiah come. He notes indeed, and commends the interpretation of Mr. English, but declares the other to be the most approved, probissimam, and most agreeable to the context. He of course acknowledges with the Christians, that ער כ is to be rendered, 'until,' and even adduces Gen. xli. 49. in proof of it. He declares that his rendering of שבט by a 'rod of chastisement,' flows directly from

* Wagenseil's *tela ignea*, p. 330.

scripture ; though the word may sometimes signify a sceptre. So far from appealing to the Targum, in confirmation of his own opinion, he calls Rittangelius a monster of stupidity and depravity, for asserting that he did ; “I did not,” says he, “affirm my opinion and that of my father to be the same with the Targum of Onkelos ; but I said that of two interpretations which I adduced, one was the very same as that of Onkelos, was quoted by R. Bechai, and was the opinion of our doctors :” and again declares the assertion of Rittangelius, that he had adduced Onkelos in support of his opinion, to be false.* And yet, says Mr. English, he unanswerably established this interpretation !

But it may be said, though the Jew does not support Mr. English’s interpretation for himself, yet it seems he brings it forward, and does he not—if not unanswerably establish it—at least defend it, as Mr. English asserts, “by the laws of the Hebrew language, by the ancient interpretation of the Targum, by ven-

* I cannot forbear to present the reader with an abridgement of Basnage’s account of this controversy of Rittangel and the Jew, which Mr. English so totally misrepresents. “A Jew of Amsterdam pretended to decide this oracle, Gen. xlix. 10. by an interpretation, which he had learned from his father. He maintained, that by the word sceptre which properly signified a rod, Jacob foretold to Judah a long train of afflictions TILL the coming of the Messiah, and that this oracle is now fulfilling. Rittangel represented to the Jew, that his explication was not new, that he had no reason to honour his father with the invention of it, for that he had seen it in a book, and that it is contrary to the explication of all the Jewish fathers.” &c. Basnage *histoire des Juifs*. l. xiv. c. xxii. § 18, 19.

erable tradition, and by appealing to history?⁸⁹ On the contrary he hints at no law of the Hebrew language; and though he allows that עד may be rendered in æternum, the punctuation, of which Mr. English speaks as a matter perfectly evident, *he does not once mention*, nor does he appeal to one of the texts where עד occurs, except once, as we have said, to Gen. xli.49. and then to prove that it means *until*. He does indeed appeal to the Targum of Onkelos, but with equal dishonesty or ignorance, as his adversary shows. Instead of quoting Onkelos at length, as he ought in fairness to have done, the Jew quotes but a *part* of his interpretation, and withholds the other part, which gives a totally different turn to the whole passage. Onkelos renders, “There shall not fail from Judah one exercising dominion *forever*; *until* king Messiah come.” Here, it is true, we find the word ‘*forever*,’ but we also find *until*, a circumstance which the correspondent of Rittangelius did not think fit to notice. The Chaldee is as follows, עד עלמא, עד דייתי מלכא משיחא, and in inserting ער עלמא, ‘*forever*,’ before ‘*until*,’ Onkelos meant to provide against those *temporary* departures, which took place at the time of the various captivities and subjections of the Jews, and to give to the prophecy of Jacob this force, “that the sceptre should not *finally* be removed, should not depart forever, till the advent of Messiah;” in which illustration he displays

his usual good judgment.* The difference between the two renderings will best appear by contrasting them.

MR. ENGLISH.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet *forever*; for Shiloh shall come.

ONKELOS.

There shall not fail from the house of Judah one exercising authority, nor a scribe from the sons of his sons *forever*, until Shiloh come.

The Christian interpretation is greatly confirmed by the two other targums: that of the Pseudo-Jonathan, and the Jerusalem. Both of which read “until *the time* [עַד מָה,] when the king Messiah shall come.” As for “the venerable tradition,” which Mr. English mentions, it is a fact, that the Jew names no authorities for this interpretation, but R. Bechai, R. Solomon, and Ben Gerson, and with these exceptions accedes, by his silence, to the assertion of Rittangelius, that the Targums, the Talmud, and the whole Catena of interpreters patronize the Christian explication. “Finally,” says Mr. English, “he establishes it by appealing to history;” when it is most cer-

* Huet has an illustration of the paraphrase of Onkelos; “Dicere enim possumus, non ablatum fuisse Angliæ sceptrum a Stuartorum gente, postquam in eum semel concessit; quamvis per multos annos Carolus II. rex patria et regno depulsus vixerit, nam tum quoque jus suum retinebat. Hunc sensum, præter alios quos indecavimus Judæos, *ferè secutus est Onkelos.*” Dem. Ev. p. 413.

tain, that he does not adduce nor even mention a single historical fact, incident, or event, from the beginning of the correspondence to the end!

There remains only one part of Mr. English's statement to be answered. "This [the interpretation above mentioned] is the plain and obvious sense of the prophecy, and moreover, it is the only one consistent with historical fact. For in truth, the sceptre had departed from Judah, several hundred years before Jesus of Nazareth was born. For from the time of the Babylonish captivity, Judah has never been free, but in subjection to the Persians, the Syrians, the Romans, and all the world." It might be answer enough to Mr. English to repeat, that his Jewish correspondent and his two Chaldeans read, 'until,'* with the Christians, and that they supply instead of 'sceptre,' some one thing, and some another, but at any rate, something. Thus his favourite Isaac says, "the kingdom was transmitted from David, of blessed memory, to Zedekiah, king of Judah, and of the tribe of David; and then it would have failed from the tribe of Judah, except that there were left of that family commanders, princes, and æchmatarchs, who come under the name of *lawgivers*, during the two captivities, the Babylonian and the present. So that throughout the time of the second temple, even during the reign of priests, and the slaves of priests, there

* Nizzachon, p. 29. Chissuk Emuna, p. 141. apud Wagenseil.

were not wanting princes of the house of David. Wherefore this is the literal sense of the first clause—the sceptre shall not depart from Judah: “As long as the royal power obtains among the Jews, the sceptre shall not depart from *Judah* ;” and the sense of the second clause, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, is “there shall not be wanting lawgivers, wise men, and scribes, not even in the time of captivity; some shall remain and administer authority from the tribe of Judah. For the commanders and æchmatarchs, who exercise authority in captivity, are of the posterity of David, since most of the exiles are derived from the tribe of Judah, and refer their origin to Solomon. These doctors and masters are therefore called lawgivers, by the Scripture, as is Moses, the prince of the prophets.”* Isaac also renders עַד כִּי “until,” though he gives it a figurative meaning.† The correspondent of Rittangelius,

* Chissuk Emuna, p. i. § 14.

† So does Dr. Geddes, whose version is the more unsuspecting, as not believing in any prophecy, he does not of course consider this a prediction of the Messiah. He says “the word עַד כִּי, which I have rendered *until*, does not mean that then Judah shall cease to have a sceptred chief, but merely that he shall not be without one, until *prosperity* (for thus Geddes renders Shiloh) come;” and again, “the words עַד כִּי imply not discontinuance, but only the arrival of an event.” But how hasty a criticism is this. The discontinuance is not implied in עַד כִּי, it is true, but in the express word יָסוּר shall depart. He says of עַד כִּי that it never signifies ‘propterea,’ ‘because,’ for—and therefore Mr. English’s interpretation is, according to Geddes, incorrect. Crit. Rem. p. 145—7—8.

as we have already seen, rendered the word, which we translate, sceptre, by ‘a rod of chastisement,’ and Lipman, the Chaldean, or the author, whoever he be,* of the Nizzachon, renders it by *captivity*, and “the corruptions of the Christians shall not depart from the tribe of Judah.” Similar is the rendering of R. Nachmanides (apud Rittangel;) the real Lipman, in his carmen memoriale,† renders it ‘a prince of the captivity;’ and Abarbanel, a learned and acute Rabbi, declares, that the sceptre has not departed from Judah to this day.‡ The argument which Mr. English builds upon the interpretation of שבט by supreme sovereignty, is therefore sufficiently answered, with respect to him. But this, as Dr. Sykes says, is not to convince the understanding, or confute any errors, but to bear down men with names and authorities, which never satisfy or convince the mind.

There are various interpretations given of this prophecy, both by Christians and Jews; for the discrepancy of commentators, at which Mr. English sneers in another place, is by no means confined to the advocates of Christian-

* Clarissimus Buxtorfius, in Synagoga Judaica c. 3, et alibi, libri hujus mentionem injiciens, Lipmannum autorem existimavit, sed perperam omnino, et nomine deceptus.” Wagens. præf. in lib. Niz.

† This carmen memoriale is a brief statement of Jewish arguments in a poetical form, that they might be the more easily remembered, and written by a Rabbi of the name of Lipman.

‡ Limborchii Amic. Col. p. 223.

ity.* The reader has already seen two different interpretations, a third is given by Aben Ezra, and a fourth by the Spanish Jew Delgado.† These it is not necessary to notice. The Christians are equally divided as to the explication, and application of the prophecy. I must confess, for my own part, that I think the Christian interpreters have commented upon the passage in a rabbinical spirit, and handled it with a critical and philosophical accuracy, which poetry will rarely permit, and eastern poetry still more rarely. They have scrutinized שבט and מוֹדֵקֶק to ascertain the precise political difference between a ‘sceptre’ and a ‘lawgiver,’ whereas the parallelism of the Hebrew language implies that they are

* Dr. Geddes, in his note upon this passage, has collected the most prominent Crit. Rem. p. 144 et seq. Limborch also gives a summary, which it is worth while to transcribe. “Scio Judæos acriter negare hisce verbis contineri prophetiam de temporibus Messiaë. Verum ipsorum explicationes sunt adeo multiplices, tam coactæ, et directe inter se pugnantes, ut alter alteram evertat. R. Manasses Ben Israel in suo *Conciliatore* refert nobis plures, casque admodum diversas Rabbinorum suorum explicationes. Aliqui per *Shilo* non intelligunt Messiam, sed Mosen, vel, ut alii, *tabernaculum in Shilo positum*. Alii per *Shilo Messiam* intelligunt, sed contendunt non de *Sceptro* sermonem esse, verum de *virga castigationis*, quam a Juda non recessuram dicat Jacob, donec Messias venerit. Alii de *sceptro* interpretantur, sed de *sceptro Messiaë*, et hunc sibi fingunt verborum Jacobi sensum: *Non recedet sceptrum a Juda in æternum, quia Shilo hoc est Messias venit*, id est cum venerit Messias. Isaac Abarbanel interpretationem habet ab aliis multum diversam: quod sceptrum a Juda non sit auferendum donec Messias venerit, contenditque *sceptrum a Judah hactenus non esse ablatum*: Sceptrum autem ipsi imperium aut jurisdictionem quamvis exiguam notat. Ecce quanta opinionum diversitas et pugna, et quam coactæ sunt omnes et violentæ! Quod ipsum non exiguum falsitatis earum indicium est.” *Amica Collatio*, p. 223.

† A larger view of these than elsewhere may be found in *Huetij Demonstr. Evan.* p. 399—424.

here synonymous. So too they have perplexed themselves for an interpretation, which is literally applicable to the tribe of Judah, without remembering, that this name became very soon the general appellation of the Israelites ; that after the return of the two tribes, Judah, being by far the largest, was literally the Jewish nation ;* and that as Israel intended to bestow a peculiar blessing on each, it was the peculiarity of Judah to have such a pre-eminence as would entitle him to be the representative of the whole. Had less attention been paid to subtilities like these, and more to the obvious and natural meaning of the passage, as it strikes an impartial reader, I cannot but think much controversy had been saved. It would then have been seen, that long before the Jews had a king or a sceptre, it was foretold by the dying patriarch, that a sceptre and a lawgiver should not depart from Judah, till a distinguished personage came, to whom the gathering of the nations should be : that in fulfilment of this a regal government was established, and long continued in Judah ; that though the prophecy seemed threatened with a falsification by a captivity, such as generally results in national destruction, the Jews were restored to their land, to their religion, and traditions, and were governed by their own princes in what may be called a state of tributary independence ; that

* Prettyman's theology, vol. i. p. 214. Basnage, hist. des Juifs, l. iv. c. xxi. 15.

this government, without perhaps a parallel instance in history, was continued to them, through a series of disasters and subjections; that especially in the persons of the Herods they were restored to an independence greater than they enjoyed before the time of the Maccabees, and that under one of these princes a personage was born, to whom the prophecy is applied, because, about his time, Judah was expressly reduced from a kingdom to a province, the kingly power and style withdrawn, the name changed, and that soon after the country itself was invaded, desolated, and destroyed, its wretched inhabitants dispersed and enslaved, scattered through the world without civil princes, without a centre of union, or any thing which belongs to a political state: while to this personage the nations have been gathering from the coast of Asia, to the lakes in the west, from the northern to the southern poles. Now are we to shut our eyes on facts like these, because Zerubbabel, one of the rulers after the captivity, was not a sovereign despot, and the Asmoneans were of the tribe of Levi? Especially when the Jews themselves maintain that the signification of 'sceptre' is various, and that the kind of government it expresses, is even such as exists among them to this day.* To say that the sceptre did not belong to Judah, under the Asmoneans, who were Levites, or under Herod, an Idumean, is as much unphilosophical, as to

* Basnage hist. Juifs, l. iv. c. xxi. 14

deny that the sceptre belonged to Rome under Maximin, who was a Thracian, and Probus, who was an Illyrian, or to maintain that the sceptre departed from Great Britain, from France, or from Sweden, at the accession of the German, the Corsican, or the French families, who now rule respectively in those countries. With these general ideas, which I cannot but think commend themselves to reason and common sense, we may be spared the trouble of examining all that has been said by Christians and Jews, in the way of applying this prophecy. That there is great diversity among them has been hinted, but that this diversity conveys an implication unfavourable to the application of it to the Messiah, is so far from being true, that one may safely affirm that the discordance of the commentators, who deny that application, is twice as great as of those who affirm it. "Away then," says the great Grotius, "with the modern fictions of the Jews."* And it is no small confirmation of this exposition of the passage, that it receives the sanction of this critick, as cautious as learned. With what therefore has been said, I would commit this prophecy to the private judgment of the reader, with one word more of reply to an objection, which is urged by Mr. English after most of those who have opposed its application to the Messiah, viz. that it is not quoted in the New Testament.

Dr. Sykes's account of this, though his in-

* Grotius in loco.

terpretation of the prophecy differs a little from that which is given above, is quite satisfactory; “that the epistles and all the gospels, except St. John’s gospel, and Jude’s epistle, [and according to Semler this exception need not have been made] were written before the Jews were dispersed, and consequently before this prophecy was fulfilled. Now while the Jewish state continued, it was possible, (for aught any one could say to the contrary, at that time,) that somebody else might have arisen, and laid claim to the title of Shiloh. But when once the temple and the state were entirely destroyed, the prophecy had its event, and then, and not till then, it might very justly be quoted as fulfilled.”* This is reasonable and intelligible,† but as I apprehend, quite unnecessary. The objection that the prophecy is not quoted in the New Testament proceeds upon the supposition which is of all others the most incorrect, that the books of the New Testament contain a formal and forensic defence and exposition of Christianity;‡ that they are a record of all our Saviour did or said, and an authoritative argument for the truth of his religion. Had this prophecy been omitted by the evangelists from a work

* Essay upon the truth of the Christian religion, p. 304.

† It is also confirmed by the fact, that when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews dispersed, the Christian apologists are forward in quoting this prophecy. Witness Justin Martyr, the earliest extant.—*Apologia prim.* p. 50, 51.—*Dialog. cum Tryph.* p. 242. Edit. Thirlb.

‡ Considerations touching the style of the holy scriptures; by the Hon. Robert Boyle, p. 18.

like that, it would have been indeed an objection, though still of the negative kind. But when the Gospels and Acts are looked upon in their true light, as separate and concise narratives of facts, of a part of the incidents in our Saviour's life, and of a few of his discourses ; and the epistles are regarded as occasional letters extracted by the circumstances of those to whom they were written, I cannot but think it a small objection that this prophecy is not expressly urged in them. I say "expressly urged," for this is, or ought to be, the whole of the objection. That our Saviour and his apostles quoted it, we have numerous intimations, though for the reason of Dr. Sykes, it was not *recorded* in the gospels. "Had ye believed Moses," says our Saviour, "ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me."* And again, we are told, "that beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself."†

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the next prophecy of the Messiah, of which Mr. English opposes the Christian, and adopts a Jewish interpretation. After clearing our way of a few errors, I shall proceed to examine this interpretation. "This prophecy," says Mr. English, "is the only one, which Paley thinks worth bringing forward in his *elaborate* defence."‡ It is a mere mistake in point of

* John v. 46.

† Luke xxiv. 27.

‡ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 44.

fact to call Paley's Evidences an elaborate work, but it is something more to say, that he thinks this prophecy the "only one worth bringing forward." His words are, "There are other prophecies of the Old Testament, interpreted by Christians to relate to the gospel history, which are deserving both of *great regard*, and of a *very attentive consideration*; but I CONTENT MYSELF *with stating the above*, because I think it the clearest and the strongest of all, and because most of the rest, in order that their value be represented with any tolerable degree of fidelity, *require a discussion unsuitable to the limits and nature of this work*. The reader will find them disposed in order, and distinctly explained, in bishop Chandler's treatise upon the subject."* Paley says, that as his work excluded learned discussion, *he was content to bring forward this alone*; and Mr. English says, "that this is the only one which Paley *thought worth bringing forward in his elaborate treatise*." The misrepresentation was not worth the trouble of making. "We know from Origen," says Mr. English, "that the Jews of his time *derided the Christians for relying on this prophecy*."† Origen gives no authority to this assertion; he simply observes, that a Jew with whom he had contended, *said the Christian interpretation was wrong*; and he implies, that the Jews were hard pressed with one part of it.‡

* Paley's Evidences of Christianity, p. 162, Boston Ed.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 44.

‡ ΕΛΕΓΕΝ ὁ Ἰσραηλιος, ταυτα πεπροφητευθαι ως περι ενος.

Mr. English, having just stated the Jewish interpretation, adds, "And this interpretation of the prophecy, the learned Vitranga in his commentary upon Isaiah, at this place, allows to be the *most respectable* he had met with among the Jews, and according to him 'to be by no means despised.'"* I will not here doubt that Mr. English meant to quote correctly, but the error I am to mention, will measure the care, with which his book was prepared for the publick. The praise, which this opinion of Vitranga, even as here represented, confers on the interpretation, is rather cold, as Mr. English seems to have felt, when he translated 'minus absurde,' [less absurd] by the courteous phrase of 'most respectable.' But the assertion, that according to Vitranga this interpretation was "to be by no means despised," is a less pardonable mistake. The words of this learned critick are, "I confess that of the different hypotheses for interpreting the prophecy, this is the only one which can be produced in defence of a desperate [the Jewish] cause, *not indeed with any appearance of truth, yet less absurdly* than others. No one will deny that the church of Israel may be called the 'servant' of God, and that it is so called occasionally by Isaiah. Wherefore IF the qualities, which are attributed to the servant of God in this prophecy,

τὸ οὐκ ἄλλο. Μαλιστα δὲ εδοξάμεν θλειβεῖν. Origen contr. Cels. l. i. § 55.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 45

will apply to the Jewish church, in the afflictions of the Babylonian captivity, the Syrian oppression, or in the present exile, *there is no reason that this interpretation should be despised.* BUT INDEED THEY DO BY NO MEANS APPLY, WHICH I PROCEED TO DEMONSTRATE.*

I cannot also but remark the deliberate unconcern with which Mr. English begs the question of the whole controversy. He says, he “will premise, that since it has heretofore been *abundantly made evident* that the Messiah of the Old Testament was not to *suffer and die*, but to live and reign, it is according to the rules of sound criticism, and I think sound theology too, to interpret this solitary passage, so that it may not contradict very many others of directly contrary import.” We shall presently see, that Mr. English is

* “Utique non diffiteor, ex diversis hypothesibus hujus prophetiæ interpretandæ, hanc unam et unicam esse, quæ in defensione causæ desperatæ produci potest; *non aïo cum aliqua specie*, tamen *minus absurde*, quam hypotheses aliæ. Nemo enim inficias eat, ecclesiam Jacobidarum dici posse עֲבָדֵי יְהוָה, servum Jehovæ, et sic quoque appellari ab Isaia. Quare si ecclesiæ populi Judæi afflictæ, sive in exilio Babylonico, sive in afflictione Syriacâ, sive in præsentî exilio Romano, conveniunt predicta, quæ dicuntur Servo huic Jehovæ attributa in prophetiâ, *nulla ratio est hanc interpretationem spernendi.* Sed sane *neutiquam convenient, quod mihi demonstrandum est.*” The other hypotheses to which Vitringa alludes, are those which make Jeremiah, or Josiah the king, the subject of the prophecy: and he observes in another place, “Et tamen hypothesis hæc, licet a Ratione Remotissima, vel sic preferenda est sententiis modo recensitis quæ hic Jeremiam vel Josiam regem demonstrant.” Vitringa in loc. The question all turns upon *if*, that notorious peacemaker, and I hope it will therefore move no hostile feeling. Mr. English at least, who has charged Mr. Cary with *falsehood and malice*, in saying that he copied his interpretation from Vitringa, will not complain of this notice. English’s Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 113.

not so averse as he would seem to contradictory interpretations: meantime I would remark, that, I know not from what distressing habit, he here even misrepresents himself. Upon reperusing the former pages of his work, expressly for the purpose, I do not find that he has even *attempted* to show that the Messiah was not to suffer and die. He attempts to prove, with what success the reader has seen, that the Messiah was to be a victorious temporal prince. But this is all; and Mr. English does not surely need to be informed that temporal victors generally suffer, and always die.*

The whole prophecy, according to the version of bishop Lowth stands thus: ✓

Behold, my servant shall prosper;
 He shall be raised aloft, and magnified, and very highly exalted.
 As many were astonished at him;
 (To such a degree was his countenance disfigured,
 more than that of man;
 And his form, more than the sons of men;)
 So shall he sprinkle many nations:
 Before him shall kings shut their mouths;
 For what was not before declared to them, they shall see,
 And what they had not heard, they shall attentively consider.
 Who hath believed our report;

* Maimonides, in expounding this very prophecy, says that the Messiah will be subject to death. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. p. 742. Mr. English might not have been aware of this, when he declared it the 'gist of his argument that the *Messiah* of the Old Testament was not to die.' Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 78.

And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been manifested ?

For he groweth up in their sight like a tender sucker ;
And like a root from a thirsty soil :

He hath no form, nor any beauty, that we should regard him ;

Nor is his countenance such, that we should desire him.

Despised, nor accounted in the number of men ;

A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;

As one that hideth his face from us :

He was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely our infirmities he hath borne :

And our sorrows, he hath carried them ;

Yet we thought him judicially stricken ;

Smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions ;

Was smitten for our iniquities :

The chastisement, by which our peace is effected, was laid upon him ;

And by his bruises we are healed.

We all of us like sheep have strayed ;

We have turned aside, every one to his own way ;

And Jehovah hath made to light upon him the iniquity of us all.

It was exacted, and he was made answerable ; and he opened not his mouth :

As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before his shearers

Is dumb ; so he openeth not his mouth.

By an oppressive judgment he was taken off ;

And his manner of life who would declare ?

For he was cut off from the land of the living ;

For the transgression of my people he was smitten to death.

And his grave was appointed with the wicked ;

But with the rich man was his tomb.

Although he had done no wrong,

Neither was there any guile in his mouth ;

Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction.

If his soul shall make a propitiatory sacrifice,

He shall see a seed, which shall prolong their days,
And the gracious purpose of Jehovah shall prosper in
his hands.

Of the travail of his soul he shall see [the fruit,] and
be satisfied :

By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify
many ;

For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.

Therefore will I distribute to him the many for his
portion :

And the mighty people shall he share for his spoil :

Because he poured out his soul unto death :

And was numbered with the transgressors :

And he bare the sin of many ;

And made intercession for the transgressors.*

Is this a prophecy or rather a history† of
Jesus of Nazareth? At least can any one
doubt that it is the prophecy of the fortunes
of an individual, and not of a nation? But let
us in justice to Mr. English produce his in-
terpretation.

“ My servant Israel, though he be in great
affliction for a time, yet hereafter shall be re-
leased from captivity, and be honoured and
raised to elevation, very high among the na-
tions of the earth. As many were astonished
at thee, on account of thy abject state and mis-
erable condition, being squalid with misery,

* I have given the version of bishop Lowth, as that of the
standard authority. Where the bishop has been biassed by his
theological prejudices, the reader must judge for himself.

† It is a remarkable concession of Orbio's, “ Notatu dignum
est, quod si adeo clare de Messia agitur, in hoc capite, mortem
passuro, quòd vix in Novo Testamento in sui comproba'ionem il-
lius mentio facta fuerit, cum nullum posset ex Testamento vetere,
adducere ita clarum, et rei significativum, ut caput hoc, *cum
totum negotium ut in Evangelio descriptum, IN EO GRAPHICE DEPIN-
GATUR.*” Limborch. Am. Coll. p. 54.

and suffering more than any men ; as the gentiles wondered at their abject state, so as to make them a proverb of reproach, so shall they admire at their wonderful change of circumstances, from the depth of degradation to the height of prosperity and honour. So that they shall lay their hands upon their mouths, which had before reproached them, when they shall see their felicity to be so far beyond what had been told them, and they shall attentively consider it, and they shall say to each other, Who believed what we heard concerning them, and to whom was the interest the Lord took in them made known? For it was a despised people, feeble and wretched, like a tender plant springing up out of a thirsty soil. Their appearance was abject, and there was nothing attractive in their manners. They were despised and held in abhorrence, they were men of sorrow, and familiar with suffering. We looked upon them with dislike, we hid our faces from them and esteemed them not. Surely their sufferings are as great, as if they had borne the sins of the whole world, [or] they are nevertheless the means appointed to remove the sufferings of an afflicted world ; for God hath connected universal happiness with their prosperity, and the end of their sufferings is the beginning of our joys. Nevertheless we considered them as a God-abandoned race, and devoted to wretchedness by him, for having crucified their king. But instead of being the victims of God's wrath, they were wounded through

our cruelty, they were bruised through our iniquitous treatment, we being suffered to do so to chastise them for their sins, and to prove their obedience ; and this chastisement is that by which our peace is to be effected ; for their chastisement and probation being finished, God will by them impart and diffuse peace and happiness. But it is we who have sinned more than they, we have all gone astray in our ignorance, being without the knowledge of God and his law, yet the Lord hath permitted us to make them the subjects of our oppressive iniquity. How passive and unresisting were they ! when oppressed, they were afflicted, and complained not ; when through false accusations and mistaken cruelty, they were plundered and condemned to die, they went like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so they opened not their mouth. They were taken from the dungeon to be slain, they were wantonly massacred, and every man was their foe, and the cause of the sufferers, who condescended to examine ; for the thoughtless crimes of my people, they suffered. Yet notwithstanding their graves were appointed with the wicked, yet they were rich in their deaths. This did God grant them because they had not done iniquity. After, and for their sufferings, they shall be abundantly rewarded ; by their superior knowledge of religious truths shall they make many wise, for many nations shall go and say, come ye, and let us ascend to the mount of the Lord, and to

the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways. Therefore their reward shall be exceeding great, because for the sake of their duty they willingly exposed themselves to death, and were accounted as transgressors, and bore the cruel afflictions inflicted by many, and made intercession for them who afflicted them.”*

After finishing his observations upon this prophecy, and proceeding a little way in those upon Dan. ix. 24. Mr. English says, in a note, “the remainder of this chapter is taken from Levi and Wagenseil’s” [tela ignea ;] nevertheless, this whole interpretation of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is also copied from Wagenseil.† But whencesoever derived, I doubt not but common sense, that excellent resort from ingenious or shallow sophistry, has already decided in the language of Vitrunga, that it has not *even the appearance of truth*. The Jews “passive and unresisting!” They are the most obstinate and unyielding of the tribes of the earth, and have resisted the arm of power and the lapse of time, which have crushed all other nations into oblivion.‡ They “afflicted and complained not!” Their complaints have been fiercer than their afflictions have been cruel.§ **Revenge.**

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 45—8.

† Chissuk Emuna, P. I. § 22.

‡ Gregoire’s histoire des sectes Religieuses, tom. ii. p. 246.

§ Mr. English elsewhere adopts the words of Dr. Sykes, that the Jews have been animated with a spirit of malediction against Christ and Christians. Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 42.

is stamped on all their institutions ; even their sacred books are filled with curses :* their Talmud, their Midrashim, and Tephilloth, are crowded with maledictions, secret, deep, and bitter.† “ They have done no iniquity !” When no iniquity ? Not in the age of Isaiah, their own prophet, who cries, “ Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, seed of evil doers ?” ‡ Not in the age of Josephus their own historian, who sets forth scenes of depravity which turn common wickedness into virtue, and declares, “ that the earth would have swallowed them, if the Romans had not swept them from its face ?” § No iniquity in the ages since, throughout the cities of the dispersion, where they are proverbially dishonest, || and

* Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, p. 416, 422, 461, 476, 557.

† Vid. Schoetgenii *Hor. Heb. et Talm.* II. p. 824. Buxt. *Syna Jud.* p. 9. Basnage *hist. des Juifs*, l. vi. c. i. § 13. Toland's *Nazarenus*, p. 50.

‡ Isaiah i. 4.

§ Josephus thus concludes his account of some of the enormities of this period : “ And here I cannot but speak my mind, and what the concern I am under dictates ; and it is this : I suppose that had the Romans made any longer delay in coming against these villians, that the city would have been swallowed up, or deluged with a flood, or else have been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah ; for it had brought forth a generation of men more abandoned than those, who suffered these judgments.” *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* l. v. c. xiii. § 7.—“ It was a time,” says he in another place, “ most fertile in all manner of wicked practices, insomuch that no kind of evil deeds were left undone ; nor could any one so much as devise any bad thing, that was new. *Bell. Jud.* l. vii. c. viii. § 1.

|| I cheerfully agree with one of the most active benefactors of the Jewish nation, who, while he acknowledges these facts, charges the blame of them to the Christians. Nay, I know not that Jews are worse than Christians ; but what should we say of one who would declare, that Christians, or any other set of men,

professedly unfaithful? * The Jews no iniquity! What, not the mass, who pass their lives in base and fraudulent traffick! † not their Rabbies, whose books, with a few exceptions, are a tissue of folly, falsehood, and obscenity! ‡

“had done no iniquity.” See Gregoire *histoire des sectes religieuses*, tom. ii. 354.

* Basnage *hist. des Juifs*, l. iii. c. vi. § 12.

† Gregoire *ubi supra*. Also a melancholy instance in Adams' *History of the Jews*, ii. p. 207, 208.

‡ I feel that a criticism like this, is so harsh and sweeping as to be suspicious. It is well known that the Mishna, which is the text of the Talmud, is the most favourable specimen of Rabbinical literature. Its style approaches nearer than that of any other of their writings to the scriptures; and it contains, among a mass of the most absurd and odious trash, a little that is creditable, and a very little that is honourable. The tractate *Pirke Avot*, which is a *Gnomologia*, would much of it do credit to any school of moral philosophy. But yet, to confirm the remark in the text, it is enough to name the tractates *Jevamoth*, *Sota*, *Gittin*, *Kiddushin*, *Niddah*, and *Zabim*, which, with something that is absurd, mingle much that is shameful. And I do not find that the annotations of Maimonides, esteemed the most prudent and philosophical of the Jews, are at all more decent. *Vid. ad Tract. Saned. c. vii. § 4. Surenhusii Mishna*, iv. 239. If this be said of the text, what shall we say of the Gemara, the comment. And yet it is of these that the maxim holds, *בן המשנים למקרא בן עשר למשנה בן חמש עשרה לתלמוד* at five years old to the Bible, at ten to the Mishna, at fifteen to the Gemara.—*Pirke Av. c. v. § 21*. And the Jewish commentator, Bartenora, explains this by saying, that “five years should be spent in studying the Scriptures, FIVE in studying the Mishna, and FIVE in studying the Gemara.” What must be the effect of exposing minds of this tender age to the corruption of books like the Talmud! The following may be more unsuspecting than any thing which rests on my authority.

“A member of the grand sanhedrim of Paris, disgusted by the confidence reposed in the Talmud, by most of his coreligionists, intrusted a learned Jew with the care of collecting every thing in it, which wore the stamp of folly. But the person intrusted with the charge discovered, that this would be to transcribe the greater part of the twenty-four folio volumes, of which the book consists. The result however of his labours in manuscript sets forth, that the Talmud, written in the Babylonian

But let us descend to a few particulars. The Gentiles, who are introduced, one hardly knows how, into this interpretation, are made to say, "the end of their sufferings is the beginning of our joys"—which is precisely contrary to the opinion of the Jews, who hold that the end of their sufferings is to take place in a restoration to the holy land, and that there all the nations of the Gentiles are to invade them, and be defeated and destroyed. And if this defeat and destruction are the beginning of the joys of the Gentiles, what will be their end? "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Nor does this interpretation agree better with itself than with the opinion of the Jews. In one part the gentiles say, 'they were wounded and bruised, we being suffered to do so TO CHASTISE THEM FOR THEIR SINS, and to prove their obedience,' and shortly after it is most consistently remarked, 'This did God grant them, BECAUSE THEY HAD DONE NO INIQUITY.' And what is this reward, which the supreme Being vouchsafes to his faithful servants who have done no iniquity? *They were RICH in*

patois, without taste, without method, without correctness, mutilates all texts of scripture, and absurdly interprets them; and is nothing but a tissue of childish fables, of obscure precepts, and of the most open obscenities." Gregoire, hist. des sectes rel. ii. 358. The reader is aware that it is of this precious compend that the Jews say, the law is water, the Mishna wine, and the Talmud pure wine; and that he who sins against Moses may be forgiven, but that he who contradicts the doctors deserves death. Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. iii. c. vi. § 12.

their deaths. This is a Jewish interpretation truly.

Again, it is about half a dozen pages since Mr. English craved leave to argue in the words of Dr. Sykes, “that instead of a spirit of grace and supplication, the Jews have had their hearts hardened against the Christ, and instead of mourning for him whom they have pierced, they CURSE HIM AND HIS FOLLOWERS even until this day;”* and here he brings forward and toils in the defence of an interpretation, which says, they were “*passive and unresisting* when oppressed, that they were afflicted and complained not, that as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, *they opened not their mouth.*”*

Nay, I think Mr. English may be brought to issue here, and be compelled, in common consistency, to resign either this interpretation, or one which he proceeds to give of the seventy weeks of Daniel. It is a part of this interpretation of Isaiah, that “notwithstanding their graves were appointed with the wicked, yet they were rich in their deaths: This did God grant them BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT DONE INIQUITY.” While it is only eight pages onward that Mr. English says, and I earnestly ask the reader’s attention to it, “that Daniel appears to have thought that the sins of his nation would be done away by the seventy years of the captivity of Babylon: and therefore the

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 45—8.

angel informed him of *his error*, by telling him that this was not to be the case with his nation, for that their wickedness was come up before God, and *that their sin was very grievous*, and that therefore their sins would not be atoned for by the seventy years, as is the case with the other nations, to whom he allowed seventy years, to see if they would repent, and if not then he would punish them; but as for Israel he would not only wait seventy years, but seven times seventy, [making them seven times more guilty than the other nations,] after which, if they had not repented and reformed, their kingdom should be cut off, and they return into captivity, to make atonement for their transgressions—*if they did not repent and amend, if they did evil AS THEIR FATHERS*, then their kingdom was to be cut off, at the expiration of the seventy weeks, WHICH IN FACT TOOK PLACE.* What a compliment to his understanding will the reader feel, in observing that this nation, ‘whose wickedness came up before God, and whose sin was very grievous,’ seven times beyond that of the other nations, is the very same of whom Mr. English has just made the gentiles say, “But it is *we* who have sinned *more than they*,” and whom God is to reward with riches, at their death, ‘because they have done no iniquity.’ This latter clause is barefaced indeed, for the Jews cry out with one

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 53—4

voice, that the Messiah is delayed on account of their sins.*

Mr. English, having gone through his interpretation, adds, "such is the explication given by the Jews of this prophecy." He best knows, whether he was willing to deceive the reader here. It is indeed the explication of the Jews, but not of all the Jews. The ancient Jews, who transmitted the traditions on which the Targum of Jonathan was formed, gave no such explication. This paraphrase begins, "behold my servant, the Messiah, shall prosper, shall be exalted, shall be magnified, and abundantly comforted;" and the application to this personage is continued throughout.† The Jewish doctors of a later day gave no such explication, for it is the assertion of one of the most respectable of the nation, "Our Rabbies, of blessed memory, established this passage of king Messiah, having received it thus by tradition; and let us follow them."‡ And the Jewish commentaries, the Beresith Rabba, Midrash Tehillim, and Tanchuma, with Jarchi, Abarbanel, and Alshek allow, that the Messiah is understood by God's servant, who shall prosper

* Limborchii Amica Collatio, p. 284.

† I have been particular to say *throughout*, and had prepared a translation of the whole of the paraphrase, to verify the word, but its length obliges me to omit it. Eichhorn and other criticks have erroneously thought, that parts of it only were applied by the paraphrast to the Messiah. Eichhorn's Einleit. ins. A. T. I. 419. Ben Mordecai's Apology, vol. i. p. 533.

‡ Rabbi Alshek apud Vitringa in loc.

and be exalted.* Mr. English may say of all these rabbies, as he does of Alshek,† that he neither knows who they are, nor cares for their opinion.‡ But he should remember that when he deliberately states, that such is the opinion of the Jews, he is bound, *in veracity*, to inform himself on the subject, and that it is not correct, nor fair, to call that the interpretation of the Jews, which is opposed by the Chaldee paraphrase, which the nation venerates as divine,§ by the confessed sense of the ancient doctors, and by several of the most respected modern authorities. The truth

* Huetius Demonstr. Evangel. p. 362.

† Mr. English says, "As for the Rabbi you quote, [R. Alshek,] I know nothing of him, and care not for his interpretation." This avowal does more credit to his candour, than to his acquaintance with the Jewish controversy. Is there not some reason, which does not appear, for his treating the poor Rabbi so cavalierly? The following, from Basnage, may perhaps suggest a reason. "Moses Alshek was born in this city, [Saphe-ta, near the ancient Bethsaida,] and distinguished himself in the seventeenth century, not only by the eloquence of his sermons, but by the commentaries he composed upon a part of the law. He is much praised for attempting, in his explications of scripture, to produce something original, and being more devoted to the old interpreters than the modern, HE HAS EXACTLY RELATED THEIR SENTIMENTS, EVEN WHEN THEY FAVOURED THE CHRISTIANS. HE DOES NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, DISSEMBLE THAT THE MESSIAH OUGHT TO BE AFFLICTED. On the contrary, he proves it by the division which the ancients have made of afflictions, into three portions: one for the patriarchs, another for the Jews when they were banished out of the holy land, and the third relating to the Messiah. The confusion he was in is obvious, as to Isaiah's prophecies: for having acknowledged that the prophet had the Messiah in view, in the fifty-third chapter, he afterwards applied the oracle to some other person, and finally to Moses, which is absurd." Basnage, hist. des Juifs, l. vii. c. xxv. § 6.

‡ Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 82.

§ Leusden's philologus Hebræo Mixtus, p. 50.

is, there is no trace of Mr. English's interpretation higher than the time of Origen,* and it does not appear, and is not probable, that even then it was extended to the passage, "Behold, my servant shall prosper."† It is well known, notwithstanding Mr. English's sneer, that this prophecy is, what Hulse‡ called it, the 'carnificina Rabbinorum,' and that many of their best doctors have been converted to Christianity by it.§ Isaac Levita, the most valuable of their writers, confesses, that it was this prophecy which made him more indulgent to the Christian doctrine.|| Aben Ezra complains sadly of the fluctuation of his brethren, who resort now to one explication, and now to another, so they can but give a sense of some kind to the words; and owns the difficulty which attends it. While Mr. Frey, the learned convert, lets us into the secret of the mode in which the Rabbies of the present day dispose of this prophecy, viz. that while they read the fifty-second and fifty-fourth chapters, they OMIT THE WHOLE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER, in the appointed lessons, which are read in the synagogues on the Sabbath day.**

If any thing needs be added, the following

* Origen contr. Cels. lib. i. § 55.

† Huetius Dem. Evang. 363. ‡ Paley's Evidences, p. 162.

§ Chapman's Eusebius, vol. i. p. 530.

|| Huetius Dem. Ev. ubi sup. Simon's hist. crit. du V. T. tom. V. p. 539.

¶ Vitringa in loc.

** Adams' history of the Jews, ii. 67.

observation is important, viz. that there is one passage so clearly inapplicable to the Jewish nation, and so totally incongruous with the rest of the interpretation, that Mr. English passes it over, *without even the attempt of an explanation*. It is this: in a part of the prophecy, which he puts in the mouth of *the gentiles*, we read, “for the transgressions of *MY people* was he stricken.” This Mr. English paraphrases, “for the thoughtless crimes of my people they suffered.” But what the gentiles could mean by ‘*MY people*’ he does not say. And this difficulty is fatal to the whole interpretation.

Having referred us to R. Isaac, in the Chisuk Emuna, for more information, Mr. English says, he shall content himself with proving that the prophecy can by no means relate to Jesus Christ from these circumstances. 1. “Jesus certainly was not exalted, and magnified, and made very great upon earth, which, *as has been shown*, was to be the scene of the exaltation of the Old Testament Messiah, but was put to a cruel and disgraceful death.” Mr. English, no doubt, meant to show this, but we would again remind him that he has not. However, neither have the Jewish nation, to whom he applies this prophecy been exalted, and magnified, and made very great, but by his own confession, have been oppressed and degraded. If it be replied to this, that the Jews will be hereafter exalted and magnified in the earth, so I answer has Christ been, is, and

will be, till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth. 2. "Jesus was not oppressed by pecuniary exactions, as was said of the subject of this prophecy." This objection rests upon a mistranslation. See 1 Sam. xiii. 5, 6. Roberston declares the radical idea of the word, which Mr. English insists upon rendering, 'he was oppressed by pecuniary exactions,' to be 'fearful distress.*' 3. "He was never taken from prison, for he never was in one." But how will Mr. English understand this of the Jewish nation? Was that nation (for if intended at all, it must be as a whole) ever in a prison? This is poor captiousness in Mr. English. Christ was arrested by the officers of justice, and detained in a judgment hall. Moreover, the objection rests upon a mistranslation, as will be seen by looking back to page 132. 4. "He did not see his seed, nor prolong his days, since he died childless; and we will not permit the word, seed, to be spiritualized on this occasion, for the word, seed, means nothing else in the Old Testament, but literally, children, which it is not pretended that he ever had. And how could he prolong his days, when he was cut off in his thirty-third year?"

The attempt at grossness is rather more successful here, than that at criticism. Mr. English's remark, which he takes from Levi, as Levi did from Kimchi,† if it mean any

* Robertson's clavis Pentateuchi Rad. 1139.

† Apud Pocockium, in notis ad Maimonidis Port. Mos. p. 245

thing, means this, that the Hebrew, זרע, here translated 'seed,' always signifies literally, children, in the Old Testament, whereas the Hebrew concordance furnishes upwards of eighty instances, in which the signification is figurative.* We commend the following to Mr. English's notice. "Did not he [Jehovah] make one flesh? and is there not one spirit thereto? and what doth he seek? A SEED OF GOD?" זרע אלהים. Nay, what indolent carelessness it is, to say that the word, seed, shall not be spiritualized here, when the very next verse says, *he shall see of the TRAVAIL of his SOUL.* Mr. English asks, 'how could he prolong his days when he was cut off in his thirty-third year?' But the difficulty is equal on his own interpretation; whether a nation or an individual, the same person that was "cut off from the land of the living," was to "prolong his days." And it is as easy to apply this last expression to an individual, who died, as a nation which was exterminated. However, while the historical fact, *that the Jewish nation never was cut off from the land of the living,* makes it absolutely inapplicable to them, the resurrection of our Saviour finishes its completion in him. ה. Finally, "Who were the strong and mighty with whom he divided the spoil; were they the twelve fishermen of Galilee, and what was the spoil divided?" This objection is founded on a mistranslation,

* Calasio in Verb.

Vid. page 133,* though we might answer, he has divided even the honours and glories of the world, with the greatest princes that have ever ruled, and exceeded them in his share.

“In a word, the literal application of this prophecy to Jesus is now given up by the most learned Hebrew scholars, who allow that the literal sense of the original can never be understood of him.” Why does not Mr. English name these Hebrew scholars? Simply because his assertion is not true. Priestley and Grotius are all he claims. Priestley was a learned man, but he has no pretensions to celebrity as a Hebrew scholar, and though Mr. English quotes Grotius, he does it incorrectly: he declares that Grotius has applied it to Jeremiah, and says, “that Jesus Christ has nothing to do with it, except in a *secondary* sense, but that the whole of it, *from beginning to end*, refers to Jeremiah.” There are few to whom I need say, that the words of Grotius in his commentary are, “These marks have their first fulfilment in Jeremiah; but a more *especial*, sublime, and OFTEN *indeed* MORE LITERAL fulfilment in Christ.”† And the same great critick elsewhere declares, “What king or what prophet can be named, with whom these things agree? Truly none!”‡ Also, in adducing the authority of Priestley for his interpretation, without reference or

* The version of Lowth, which appears above, is sanctioned by the Arabick, Vulgate, LXX, and Chaldee.

† Grotius in loc.

‡ Grotius de veritate, l. v. § 14

qualification, Mr. English gives cause to think that he did not know, or knowing, forbore to state, that Priestley pronounces it impossible, in one of his works, to explain this prophecy of any but Jesus Christ.* What Hebrew scholars are to be named with Lowth and Michaelis, who both assert the literal application to Christ!—Mr. English may one day learn, that asseverations like these, whatever immediate effect they produce, will finally stand in the way of his character for veracity.

The reader will doubtless be ready to ask, how the Jews, who confessed that this was a prophecy of the Messiah, reconciled it with their preposterous ideas of his worldly success. To answer this question, I would give, principally from the Latin of Dr. Pococke,† a short account of their fiction of the two *Messiahs*.‡ The one the son of Joseph, or according to others the son of Ephraim, who was to be slain by the Gentiles, and the other the son of David. To the former of these, the Jews referred those passages of the prophets, which Christians interpret of the first coming and sufferings of our Lord, and to the latter those which we apply to his second triumphant appearance. Aben-Ezra, in commenting upon the words of Malachi, “behold I send my messen-

* Theolog. Rep. v. p. 213. See Magee on sacrifice and atonement, p. 227. Ed. Amer.

† Appendix ad Comment. in Mal. c. iii. l. Op. i. 203.

‡ Buxtorf's Synagog. Jud. p. 717.

ger," says, that "this messenger was to be Messiah, the son of Joseph."* "Of this personage," says Dr. Pococke, "it is a well known fact, that frequent mention is made in the commentaries upon the sacred books, and in other Rabbinical writings." The interpretations given by the ancient Jews to those prophecies which speak of the sufferings of Christ are, as we have sufficiently seen, for the most part coincident with those of the Christians. The tradition of these ancient interpreters is to this day reluctantly confessed by the Jews, and apparent in the more ancient Chaldee paraphrases. But when, after the advent of Christ, the Jews were involved in the Christian controversy, and found themselves pressed with the predictions of his suffering character, they resorted to the fiction of a twofold Messiah. Accordingly, no vestige of this fancy is found in the paraphrase of Onkelos, or the genuine Jonathan, nor in the Mishna, which is the text of the Talmud. The first notice of it is found in the paraphrase of the Pseudo-Jonathan, which was written, according to Eichhorn,† about five hundred years after Christ. He speaks in his paraphrase of Ex. xl. 11. of Messiah, the son of Ephraim, by whose aid the Israelites should conquer Gog and his bands in the end of days, and who was afterwards to be slain. A targum on the Canticles, of uncertain author and age, iv. 5, 7. contains

* Chandler's defence, p. 57.

† Einleit. ins A. T. th. i. 423.

a similar exposition.* An allusion more important and distinct is found in the Talmud, in the tractate upon tabernacles, where in commenting upon the words of Zechariah, xii. 10. "they shall look on him whom they have pierced," it is said, "some of our Rabbins, though others differ, understand these words of Messiah, son of Joseph, who should be slain in war."† This exposition is given in two other passages of the same tractate of the Gemara. R. David Kimchi, in his commentary upon Zechariah, recognizes this exposition, and adds, "I wonder that our Rabbins have expressed it so obscurely and imperfectly." As we descend to the writings of the later and less valuable Rabbins, this interpretation is more frequently found, and dressed out with more variety of circumstance. It is generally given by them as a tradition of their fathers, without a pretence of any *express* scriptural authority. Finally, however, this last was adduced, and in the eleventh century, when R. Saadiah Gaon, the author of the first Hebrew grammar,‡ and a very famous Rabbi,

* *Et duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnulli gemelli capre: Cant. iv. 5.* Sic enarrat Paraphrastes "duo liberatores tui, qui liberaturi te sunt Messias filius David, et Messias filius Ephraim, similes Mosi et Haroni." Pocock ut supra. Schaaf, in his *Opus Aramæum*, after adducing this passage of the Targum, furnishes several references upon the subject of the twofold Messiah. Shaaf. *Opus. Ar. in loc.*

† Orobio apud (Limborchii *Amic. col. p. 54.*) though he endeavours to evade the conclusion, confesses, "Certe alicujus doctoris Talmudici opinio fuit (scil. de Messia Ben Ephraim) ut versum Zachariæ prophetæ explicaret."

‡ "After so many preparatory labours," says Eichhorn, "and

presented his countrymen with an elaborate view of the twofold Messiah, containing an appeal to express scriptures. His narrative sets forth, that in the severity of the oppression of the Israelites by the Gentiles, some one of the tribe of Joseph shall arise in the mount of Galilee, and march, with those of his brethren, who assemble under his standard, to Jerusalem, and there he is to be invaded by the Gentiles, under a portentous monster, Armilus, and finally slain.* R. Saadias adduces Zechariah xii. 10. as a prophecy of his being slain, and takes credit to himself for arranging the scattered traditions of his predecessors into a regular form. It is unnecessary to add, that the scriptures he adduces, are interpreted in the highest strain of Cabbalism. Maimonides, with his customary good sense, rejects this fable, but Abarbanel, though he speaks obscurely, assents to it, and expounds it. He declares that the evangelists borrowed many of their accounts of Christ from the ancient tradition of the Messiah, son of Joseph.

the collection of so many detached grammatical remarks upon the Hebrew tongue, R. Saadias Gaon, preceptor of the academy at Babylon, anno 942, made the first attempt at a Hebrew grammar, which repeated efforts brought to some degree of perfection." Einleit. ins Alte Test. Th. i. 261. See also Simon Hist. Crit. du V. T. 544. and his Castigationes Vossii, p. 6.

* This, say the Rabbins, is the Antichrist of the hereticks, אַנְטִיכְרִישְׁטוֹס: his height is twelve cubits, and his breadth twelve: The space between his eyes a span; his eyes deep and glaring; his hair the colour of gold, the soles of his feet green; and his neck [or head, vertex duplex?] twofold. See Buxtorf. Lexicon Chald. Talm. et Rab. voc. אַרְמִילוֹס.

How futile is this notion is apparent to those, who have just seen with us, that it is an invention of a much later age. Dr. Pococke judiciously remarks, that it is probable that the first suggestion of it was taken from our Saviour's being the *reputed son of Joseph*. However this be, I cannot but think it is a very important testimony to the reality of the predictions of the sufferings and death of our Lord. It is analogous to circumstantial evidence in law. As that is more certain than an unsupported positive testimony, so this fiction of two Messiahs is more valuable, as a confession of the prophecies of the sufferings and death of that personage, than any single direct acknowledgment of those prophecies made by an individual commentator. We have in it this fact, that the predictions of the death of Christ were so abundant and clear as to lead two Chaldee paraphrasts, the Talmudical doctors, the majority of the succeeding Rabbies, and among them some of the most famous and intelligent, as Saadias, Aben-Ezra, and Abarbanel, to invent or adopt a fiction of a twofold Messiah, which is absolutely without authority of scripture, and unknown to the ancient paraphrasts and the traditions and records of the earliest and best ages. What better illustration than this undesigned one of our enemies can we have, of the application of such prophecies to the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ? Mr. English, though professing to vindicate the opinions of the Jews, has shown an admirable

prudence in taking no notice of this part of their mythology.

Mr. English concludes his seventh chapter with an explication of the celebrated prophecy of the seventy weeks, which he calls* the *instar omnium* of the prophetic proofs of Christianity. Thus it stands in our translation: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate." Of this prophecy Mr. English re-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 50

marks, that many learned Christians, in the last and present century, now freely acknowledge, “that Daniel is not on their side, but as much a Jew as his brethren.”* Considering the importance of the subject, this might have been stated more seriously, if stated at all. I have not met with these learned Christians. On the contrary, I presume that there is no prophecy of the Old Testament more unanimously and confidently applied by Christians to their Saviour than this. I solicit therefore the careful attention of the reader to an examination (which shall be as concise as possible,) of Mr. English’s explanation. This explanation, which originated, I believe, in R. Isaac, is obscure in him;† in Levi who abridges him, and with unsuccessful officiousness would illustrate him, it is yet more obscure;‡ and in Mr. English, who has yet farther altered and abridged, and added the confusion of typographical inaccuracy, it is almost unintelligible. If I have succeeded in understanding him, I attribute it to having seen his exposition, in its sources. Let us fix upon the leading points, and examine their correctness.—

1. The first error of this exposition consists in supposing that this prophecy was a conditional one: viz. that the Jews were allowed to build a temple and return to their

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 50.

† Chissuk Emuna, § 42.

‡ Levi’s Letters to Priestley, let. i. p. 38—70.

own land, that they might the better be enabled to do the works of repentance, and at the end of the time assigned, viz. seventy weeks, bring in everlasting righteousness. "But if they did not repent and amend, if they did evil as their fathers, then their kingdom was to be cut off, at the expiration of the seventy weeks, which in fact took place." Now of this condition, which lays at the basis of Mr. English's subsequent exposition, *there is not A TRACE* in Daniel, neither in the original, nor in his own translation; nor has he pointed out any.*

2. The second error consists in dividing the twenty-sixth verse into two periods, and separating, by a stop, the first seven from the sixty-two weeks. The words are translated by Mr. English thus, † "from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the anointed prince, shall be seven weeks; and IN three score and two weeks,

* Limborch makes so judicious a reply to this argument as urged by Orobio, that I cannot but quote it; "It is equally forced," says he to Orobio, "to maintain that the angel declared that seventy weeks were granted to the people to repent and fulfil the prophecies of universal redemption, and that God declared, that if the people did not thus repent, this redemption should not be granted; for this would be to suppose, that God had foreordained the era of the Messiah, and yet upon the perversity of the Jews, deferred it. Nothing like this is found in the sacred text; on the contrary, the angel says, seventy weeks are determined. And God is so far from deferring the advent of the Messiah on account of the non repentance of the Jews, that it is by their own confession, the great end of his mission to convert the Jews, "to take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh," &c. *Amica Coll.* p. 260.

† *Grounds of Christianity examined,* p. 50.

the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.” “Now here,” says Mr. English, “are two members of the prophecy, and Christians connect and join them in open defiance of the original Hebrew.” It would have been more satisfactory to be told in what the violation consists. And no doubt it will excite the reader’s surprise to learn, if indeed he be not already aware of it, that of the preposition “in,” which is inserted in Mr. English’s second member, and which, though in fact it is necessary to help out his sense, was not ventured upon by Levi, *there is no trace in the Hebrew*. Remove the preposition, which is an *absolute interpolation*, and, (connected with the charge upon the Christians of doing violence to the original,) a *shameless* one too, and we shall read “from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the anointed prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times.” So that to make two members is clearly a grammatical impossibility.*

3. “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem unto the anointed prince, shall be seven weeks.” “That is,” says Mr. English, “it shall be seven weeks, or forty-nine years from the destruction of the

* The division which Prideaux mentions is entirely different in principle. Prideaux’s Connection ii 415

first temple to Cyrus the anointed prince, who shall give leave to build the second." But what confusion is here! The prophecy does not speak of the interval between the *destruction* and the anointed; but between the *decree of restoration*, and the anointed, whoever he were. And this is a capital objection to the fiction of the two members. Moreover there were fifty-four years, not forty-nine, between the destruction of the temple and the permission granted by Cyrus to the Jews to return.*

4. "And (in) three score and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times." Mr. English makes this mean, that the city, which is built in troublous times, shall exist three score and two weeks. An idea which, whether correct or erroneous, has no other connexion with the text of which it professes to be an explanation, than that a few words are the same in each. The text teaches when it shall be built, the exposition how long it shall continue. After translating the original by the words "in three score and two weeks the street shall be built again," to what purpose is it to observe, that it *lasted* sixty-two weeks? I have already observed, that of this "*in*," on which the sense of the passage depends, there is no trace in the Hebrew; and it may be added, that the duration of the temple,

* Vid. Usseri Annales, p. 146. Prettyman's Christian Theology p. 209, 211.

instead of being sixty-two weeks, as is alleged, was ninety-four, (six hundred fifty-nine years.)*

5. "After three score and two weeks shall the anointed be cut off, and have no successor." Having maintained, that Messiah, in the twenty-fifth verse, meant Cyrus, Mr. English will here explain it of the *high priest*. Here he deserts the rabbins, Isaac and Levi, to tread in the uncircumcised footsteps of Anthony Collins.† The two Jews declare that the Messiah, who was cut off, was Agrippa. It is a sufficient objection to this rendering, by whomever it was made, that there is no authority whatever for translating קצ"ב , when used absolutely, by *high priest*.‡

By comparing these remarks with the interpretation of Mr. English, it will be seen that they affect the pillars on which it stands. But it may be worth while to pursue them a little farther. He observes, that Marsham, a learned Englishman, declared and demonstrated, that his predecessors in this inquiry had been grossly mistaken, for that the prophecy, in all its parts, *was totally irrelevant and irreconcilable to the time of the crucifixion.*§ It is true Sir John Marsham gave a new explanation of this prophecy, which, perhaps, Mr. English has not read, or if he has, (and as it is transcribed into Wagenseil it is possible

* Scaliger Emendat. temp. pp. 219, 243. Usseri Annales, p. 128.

† Scheme of literal prophecy, p. 184. Levi's letters to Dr. Priestley, let. i. p. 85. Chissuk Emuna, P. I. § 42.

‡ See more particularly, p. 168.

§ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 50.

he may,) there is a laudable magnanimity in thus calling the attention of the reader to it, inasmuch as in all principal points it is *as directly hostile to his own interpretation*, as to the Christian. For Marsham* does not, as Mr. English seems to intimate, attempt to show *directly* that the periods of the prophecy are irreconcilable with the time of the crucifixion; he passes that point in deep silence. He endeavours to prove that the prophecy had its fulfilment two hundred years before this time; and if this be true, Mr. English's interpretation falls with the Christian; for Mr. English ascribes the fulfilment of the prophecy to the age of Christ, or rather to that of the destruction of Jerusalem, seventy years later. It is not, as if Sir John Marsham had first shown, *directly*, that the prophecy was inapplicable to the crucifixion, and then applied it to the reign of Antiochus. The latter is all he does, or attempts to do, and it is as deeply a concern of Mr. English as of the Christians,

* Marsham supposes the sixty-two weeks to terminate in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. "Hujus autem intervalli tres sunt partes sive termini. Pars prima continet hebdomadas LXII annos 434. Illius terminus est initium regni Antiochi Epiph." Can. Chron. p. 572. Mr. English applies the period to Titus, more than two hundred years after, and of course he applies the whole passage to a series of events two centuries removed from those, in which Marsham finds its fulfilment. Sir John considered the passage as admitting an accommodation to the Christian era. Illud το ενθεν δια τρις προφητας non innuit peculiarem editam fuisse prophetiam de calamitate a Tito inferenda, sed significat verba Danielis rei de qua sermo est optimum *convenire*. Vid. Marshami. Chron. Canon. Egyptiac. Ebraic. Græc. p. 572—3—4—5—6. Edit. Lond. 1682.

to refute him. In thus commending an interpretation so fatal to his own, Mr. English, if he lose the credit for consistent criticism, will certainly gain that of romantick generosity,—a quality, doubtless, of greater use in construing Hebrew texts.

In his attempt to prove, that Jesus could not have been “Messiah the prince,” Mr. English would show too much. He is not contented with urging that the title might be applied to Cyrus, but he injudiciously adds, “Messiah the Prince can never apply to Jesus in this place at any rate, because he was certainly no prince or ‘Nagid,’ (נָגִיד,) a word which in the Hebrew Bible *always, without exception*, denotes a prince or ruler, one invested with temporal authority or supreme command.” This, abating the characteristic airs of positiveness, is taken from Levi,* but it is not true; witness the following examples: “They brought in the offerings and the tithes, and the holy things faithfully, over which Coniah the Levite was Nagid,” נָגִיד.† Here this word, instead of one invested with a temporal authority or supreme command, expresses no more than a tithing-master. Again “Hilkiah, and Zechariah, and Jehiel, Nagids of the house of God.”‡ Here it means but priests, as it does also Nehemiah xi. 11. and

* Letters to Dr. Priestley, second series, let. iii. p. 98. Levi, after making his assertion, appeals to some texts, but omits all those which I quote.

† 2 Chronicles xxvi. 12.

‡ 2 Chron. xxxv. 3.

Jeremiah xx. 1. Nay, the word implies only a *leader*, and so far from being limited to a temporal and supreme command, it expresses a person, or even a thing, which is first *in any respect*. This is clear from the four examples already given, but is powerfully confirmed by a fifth from Prov. viii. 16. "Hear, for I will speak Nagids, נגידים," that is, *excellent words*.* There is but one point more of Mr. English's illustration, which needs particular notice. He says, "The difficulty that learned Christians have met with in their attempts to do this, will be easily conceived by any person who knows that more than a dozen different hypotheses have been framed by them, for that purpose. But that they have lost their labour will be obvious from this single observation, that the 'anointed one,' or Messiah, who the prophet says was to 'be cut off,' was to be cut off after the three score and two weeks; that is, at the destruction of Jerusalem, or within seven years preceding that event. Now we know from the evangelists, and from profane history, that Jesus was crucified more than forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem. In addition to this, nothing need be said, for this circumstance lays flat their interpretation at one stroke." Which interpreta-

* Est autem *Nagid* proprie dux, antecedens alios sibi commissos, et quidem *Neged* coram, publice, et solemniter; quomodo David? appellatur *Nagid*, *dux super Israel*, 2 Sam. vi. 21. Ebuel *Nagid* dux super thesauros, 1 Chron. xxvi. 24. Coniah *dux* super primitias, 2 Chron. xxxi. 12. MESSIAS DUX ECCLESIAE. Isa. lv. 4. Dan. ix. 25." M. Geierus in Prov. viii. 6.

tion? the whole dozen? But dreadful as this stroke would be to whatever it fell upon, I do not recollect a Christian interpretation which is affected by it, or in other words, one in which the period of sixty-two weeks, at the end of which the Messiah was to be cut off, is brought down so low. On the contrary, it has been the custom, however arbitrary, to assume the crucifixion as the era of calculation, and count the sixty-two weeks backward, to the decree of Artaxerxes.

But since one objection, separately stated, is often more effectual than the accumulation of many, I have reserved till now an error in Mr. English's exposition, which invalidates the whole. He assumes the era of calculation to be the permission, given by Cyrus, to rebuild the temple. "The temple continued," he says, "till its destruction, by the Romans, sixty-two weeks, besides the last week, at the beginning of which the Romans came, and warred against them, and entirely destroyed the cities of Judah, and Jerusalem, and the temple. For from the time that Cyrus first gave leave to build the temple to its completion, was twenty-one years, and its duration four hundred and twenty, in the whole sixty-three weeks, or four hundred and forty one years."* Now Cyrus granted this permission in the year of the Julian period 4178,† or

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 55.

† Usseri Annales, p. 128, 146. Scaliger Emendat. temporum, p. 219. 243.

the 536th before the Christian era. Jerusalem was destroyed in the year of the Julian period 4783, or the 70th year of the Christian era, making the time of its duration six hundred five and a half years :* more than one hundred and fifty different from Mr. English's calculation, which, though he took it from Levi, and Levi from Isaac, and Isaac from an impostor of the dark ages,† is, if there be any truth in history, sacred or profane, notoriously incorrect. And this alone makes his application of the prophecy inadmissible.

The pains which have been taken to evade this prophecy of our Lord, are an illustrious confirmation of its fulfilment in him. One of the most famous resorts is that of Porphyry, who maintained that it contained such clear notices of the era and history of Antiochus Epiphanes, that it must needs have been written after the time of that prince.‡ But that it was written, at any rate, before the time of our Saviour, is certain from its being found in the Septuagint.

The Jews have had their resorts. They have denied it a place among the prophets, in open defiance of their ancestors, in the days of Jo-

* Sir John Marsham, whom Mr. English mentions in such high terms, may be added to the authority of these dates. "Templum Salomonis excisum est an. Nabon. 141 sive per Jul. 4107. Adjici annos 444 (scil. hebdomadæ LXII cum dimidio) habes annum Per. Jul. 4551. Is erat principatus Assamonæi annus secundus. Canon. Chron.

† Joseph Ben Gorion. Also the greater and less Chronicles, both miserable rabbinical fabrications.

‡ Grotius præf. Ad Danielelem.

sephus, and the confession of the more sensible of their nation in later ages.* They pretend, that the communications to Daniel were made in dreams, and that this must exclude him from the number of prophets, who were subjects of direct inspiration.†

They have neglected to explain it, to their countrymen, by a Chaldee paraphrase.‡ Or if it ever was rendered into the Chaldee, as there is some ground to think it may have been, the paraphrase has been suppressed or lost. The policy of this has betrayed itself, in the unguarded apologies by which it has been excused. “When Jonathan,” says the Talmud,§ “had prepared to

* Simon acquits the Jews of any sinister design in this, though they were charged with such a design by most of the fathers, and by some sensible critics of the moderns, as Vossius. Simon hist. crit. du vieux test. t. v. p. 60.

† Grotius in loc.

‡ A commentary, by Jacchiades, of very recent age, does not furnish an exception to this remark. The non appearance of the Targum, however, is indeed not of itself a proof that there never has been one. It is but 150 years since the Chaldee paraphrase of the books of Chronicles were discovered; which were first published in 1680, from an Erfurth manuscript, by Matthias Frederick Beck. Eichhorn, in his admirable sketch of the history and criticism of the Targums, enumerates eleven, viz. 1. Onkelos on the five books of Moses. 2. Jonathan on the prophets. 3. Pseudo Jonathan on the Pentateuch. 4. Jerusalem Targum, also on the Pentateuch. 5. Joseph the blind upon Psalms, Job, and Proverbs. 6. An anonymous one upon the five Megilloth. 7, 8, 9. Anonymous Targums upon Esther. 10. Upon the book of Chronicles. 11. Upon the Apocryphal parts of the book of Esther. None of these were known to the fathers. Eichhorn's *Einleitung ins A. T.* p. 402 and 438. Vid etiam Leusden's *Philologus Hebræo-Mixt.* p. 33 et seq.

§ Talmud tract. Megil. Apud Chandler's *Vindicat.* i. 95.

finish his Targum on the Hagiographical books, a voice from heaven stopped him, saying, he had done enough, and why? because in this is contained the end (or era) of the Messiah." The Jewish commentator, Jarchi, also understands that the book, at which Jonathan was to stop, was Daniel, as indeed, with the exception of Ezra and Nehemiah, neither of which contain any prophecy of the Messiah, that is the only book of which we have not a Targum. This tradition is certified by another learned Jew, in the book Juchasin, who declares, that when Jonathan had finished his Targum on Job, Proverbs, and the Psalms, and was come to Daniel, he was restrained by a voice which bade him "give over there, lest the sons of men should learn from Daniel the time of the Messias." I doubt not that the reader will find in fables like these, that satisfactory confirmation of the Christian application of this prophecy, which the concessions of an enemy always afford.

The last evasion has been to propose different explications of the prophecy. The ancient Jews understood it of the Messiah. This is confessed by Manasseh Ben Israel, a learned Rabbi of the seventeenth century. "There are those," says he, "who understand the seventy weeks in such a manner, that after them will come the Messiah, who will constitute them masters of the whole world. This was the opinion of *all* those who at that time took up arms against the Ro-

mans, and though they were exposed to much labour and misery, they persevered in their hope of the advent of the Messiah, who they thought would appear in the midst of their sufferings.”* This is confirmed by Josephus, who declares “his countrymen were incited to arms by an ambiguous oracle, which also was found in their sacred books, that about this time some one of their nation would obtain the empire of the world.”† But the Jews were defeated and Jerusalem taken, their sanguinary Messiah did not appear, and their doctors were obliged to provide some new refuge from the weeks of Daniel. Hence began the series of interpretations advanced by the Jews, as numerous as those advanced by the Christians.‡ The latter, however, have this great advantage and presumption in their favour, that their theories, however discordant in detail, unite in the person of Jesus,§ while the Jews have ransacked their own and all other nations, Judea, Persia, Egypt, and Italy, to find a character that fulfils the prophecy; and have laid at the foundation of all their attempts an outrageous retrenchment of a century and a half, from the authentick history of the world.||

* Apud Wagenseil's T. I. conf. Lipman. 613, etiam Mantiss. p. 71. Vid. quoque Basnage, l. iv. c. xxii. § xxii.

† Joseph. Bel. Jud. l. vi. c. 5. § 4.

‡ Calovius, whose day had passed a century ago, (see Michael. Or. und Ex. Bib. III.) in a dissertation upon the mysteries of the seventy weeks, numbers twenty-five different Christian hypotheses. Vid. et. Wagenseil Lipm. Conf. 608.

§ Limborchii Amic. Col. 256.

|| Josephus, their own historian, is against them here. Vid. Basnage, l. iv. c. xxiv. § 18.

That this is a prophecy of the Messiah, and of Jesus Christ, both of which the modern Jews deny, is clear from some general considerations. First, that the name Messiah, used as it is *absolutely*, would not have been applied, by the prophet, as a mere appellative of a common prince.* It is quite true that the expected Saviour is no where else in scripture but in the second Psalm, called by this name. But it is equally true, that not long, at least, after Daniel, the title of Messiah began to be appropriated to him, and that there is hardly a doubt but that this prophecy gave occasion to this appropriation.

It is highly improbable that the cutting off of a high priest should have been thought an object of sufficient importance to have been so formally predicted. Besides it does not, that I recollect, appear that a high priest was cut off by the Romans, during the final siege of Jerusalem. Collins, from whom Mr. English borrowed this application of the prophecy to the high priest, understands the high priest Onias, in the days of the Maccabees, whose death is recorded 2 Mac. iv.†

* Verum est Messia epitheton aliis etiam in Scriptura tribui, ut Sauli Regi. 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 23. Davidi ii. 2. lxxxix. 38. Cyro Isaiah xlv. 1. Josiæ vel Zedekie Lam. Jerem. iv. 20. Verum manifesta est relatio ad aliquem cujus in antecedentibus aut consequentibus aliis verbis aut alio nomine fit mentio, et quem respici totus contextus demonstrat. Verum hic absolute et per excellentiam vocatur Messias, et nec in antecedentibus nec in consequentibus ulla alicujus mentio fit ad quem hæc denominatio respiciat. Is ergo intelligendus qui per excellentiam Messias vocatur, &c. Limborch. Amic. Coll. 261.

† Scheme of literal prophecy, p. 183—4.

Finally, if this prophecy do not apply to Jesus Christ, it will remain a most unaccountable fact, that in a prediction *confessedly* relating to the age in which he appeared, and descending to details like the death of a high priest, the discontinuance of the daily sacrifice, and the negotiations for an armistice,* no hint should be given of the extraordinary personage, who introduced, in that age, a religion, whether true or false, which has risen and prevailed on the ruins of Judaism. And it is not less noticeable of this prophecy, than of the others which we allege to have been fulfilled in Christ, that the Jews, who interpret them of other persons and events, leave in their scriptures *no* prediction of this personage of their nation who, whatever the truth of his pretensions, is certainly the most singular character in their history. Is it probable, that in a series of prophetic writings, embracing a period, to say the least, of two thousand years, foretelling events of inferior, local, transitory importance, descending to the fortunes of single cities, families, and men, not a word should be said of Jesus Christ, of that original personage, who sprung from their nation, and introduced by far the greatest revolution in sentiment, which the world has witnessed? Grant that he was an impostor; why is he not foretold as such; and why, among the communications which were made by the prophets, do we not find an express

* See Blayney's dissertation.

precaution, a forewarning, or preparation, which is applicable to him, who has been more intimately connected with the welfare and condition of the Jews, than any other since the time of Moses?

From reflections like these, added to the concession that this is a prophecy of events which occurred in the age of Christ, we shall be ready to expect, that whatever difficulty may have been found in arranging the details of the prophecy, its capital reference is to our Lord. A happy discovery of the last age has at once explained to us the causes of this difficulty, and afforded the means of removing it. The inexplicable entanglements of calculation, in which the expositors of this prophecy, both Christians and Jews, had involved themselves, had excited the suspicion that there must be some corruption of the original text of the passage. But as this conjecture was unauthorized by manuscripts or versions, if we except some various readings noted by a learned Jew,* it added rather to the anxiety of learned men, than to the illustration of the text. The books of the Old Testament were translated, at different periods before the Christian era, into the Greek language; and these translations, when collected together, were called the Septuagint, from a fable, that they were made by seventy Jews. This translation of course represents to us the Hebrew manuscripts from which it was made, and

* R. Saadias Gron. Kennicott's dissertatio generalis, § 43

as these manuscripts are a thousand years older than any which have actually come down to us, is an inestimable means of correcting the corruptions of the Hebrew text.* After the Christian era, other translations of the scriptures were made into the Greek, and among the rest one by Theodotion. These, though not publickly read by the eastern churches, were yet preserved in the libraries of the wealthy, and consulted by the learned. In the progress of time the Septuagint translation of Daniel was removed from the Greek Bible, and that of Theodotion substituted in its place; and it is this translation of Theodotion, which has come down to us from antiquity, in the manuscripts of the Septuagint. The reason of this substitution, Jerom,† who informs us of the fact, confesses that he cannot tell. Whatever the reason for rejecting the version of the seventy may have been, the rejection is a most favourable circumstance to the present argument. For it removes the suspicion that it could have been corrupted, to favour the views of the Christians, in interpreting this prophecy. Whatever, therefore, the reason was, being thus ejected from its

* Michaelis Orient. und Exeg. Bib. Th. ii. s. 97.

† Jerom appears to contradict himself upon this subject. Upon Ch. iv. 8. he says, "LXX translators hæc omnia (scil. de cantico trium puerorum) nescio quâ ratione præterierunt. Unde iudicio magistrorum ecclesiæ, editio eorum repudiata est et Theodotionis vulgo legitur." But he elsewhere says, "Danielem prophetam juxta LXX interpretes ecclesiæ non legunt, utentes Theodotionis editione, ET HOC CUR ACCIDERIT, NESCIÖ." Pref. ad Daniëlem.

connexion with the other books, it fell into disuse, and was finally considered and lamented as lost. With it were supposed to be lost all the critical aids and means of restoring and correcting the Hebrew text, which were found particularly needful in Daniel, and which a translation of an age before Christ, would of course supply. At length, to the joy of the learned world,* the long lost treasure was recovered from the library of the cardinal Chigi at Rome. The Septuagint translation of Daniel was printed in 1772 from a manuscript† found in this library, and such readings of this most important passage have been drawn from it, as will preclude all future controversy about it among Christians. For these readings, and their application to the text, the reader is referred to the dissertation of Dr. Blayney, upon the seventy weeks

* Michaelis, with his characteristick enthusiasm, at the time that the learned world was anxiously awaiting the publication of this precious relic, says, "Though this translation be as poor as Jerome represents it, in his preface to Daniel, still it will be, for many reasons, a present of preeminent value for the criticism, illustration, and defence of religion." "For," adds he, "the bare inspection of the margin of the Hebrew Bible, and the Keri and Chetib it contains, will show to any one, that no book has more various readings than Daniel, and in no book can they be more important than in this, where so much depends on numerals." "Be the translation as poor as it will, it is with me, in respect to its readings, of more value than Theodotion, the Vulgate, and Syriack together, i. e. (in the want of manuscripts,) than a full half of our critical apparatus upon Daniel." *Mich. Orient. und Exeg. Bib.* I. 190.

† This is the only manuscript of the LXX version of Daniel, which is known to be extant. *Nichhorn's Einleit. ins A. T.* i. 372.

of Daniel. It would be highly gratifying to give an abstract of that dissertation, but the limits of this work will not admit it. I only observe, that though Mr. English* refers his readers to Blayney, he does not adduce a single objection, which touches his exposition, and that Michaelis† expresses his approbation of it, though it contradicts, and in some measure refutes a former one of his own. I shall content myself with giving Dr. Blayney's translation of the passage, and again referring to his dissertation for the *plain and solid reasonings*, the *newly discovered readings*, and the *historical facts*, on which it rests. "Weeks sufficient have been terminated upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to check the revolt, and to put an end to sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring again the righteousness of ancient times, and to seal the divine oracle, and prophet, and to anoint the most holy things. And thou shalt know and understand, that from the going forth of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem unto Messiah the prince, shall be seventy and seven weeks, and three score and two years. It shall be rebuilt, still enlarging itself, and becoming more and more considerable, even amidst times of distress. And after the times, seventy-seven and three score and two, Messiah shall cut off from belonging to him, both the city and the sanctuary. The prince that shall come shall

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 57.

† Orient. und Exeg. Bib. x. 28.

destroy the people, and the cutting off thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of a war, carried on with rapidity, shall be desolations. And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the meat offering to cease, and the abomination of desolation shall be upon the border, and an utter end, even a speedy one, shall be poured upon the desolated."

Before closing the consideration of this part of the subject, it remains to speak briefly of one or two other points, which are stated by Mr. English in objection to the Messiahship of Jesus. 1. He says that "the true Messiah was, IT SEEMS, to be called David, and was to reign at Jerusalem, on the throne of David; and Christians have assigned him a spiritual kingdom, and a throne in heaven."* Again, "this prince was to be of the line of David, and, AS IT SHOULD SEEM, called by that name, and was to reign on his throne in Jerusalem."† Again, IT SHOULD SEEM PRETTY CERTAIN from the same prophecies, that the name of the Messiah was to be David: is the name Jesus the same with David?‡ Now it may be thought to be a work of supererogation, while Mr. English makes so many positive assertions against Christianity, to spend time in arguing against what, in his view, does seem or should seem. But as the language of

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 21. † Ibid. p. 18

‡ Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 44.

prophecy, from which he *thinks* his conclusion follows, will afford an illustration of another question in controversy, we have reserved this for a distinct examination. The passages of the prophets to be considered are such as these: “Therefore I will save my flock, and it shall be no more a prey, and I will judge between cattle and cattle, and I will set up one shepherd over them, even *my servant David*; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and *my servant David* a prince among them.”* “David my servant shall be king over them, and there shall be one shepherd,”—“my servant David shall be their prince forever.”† After giving these texts and their contexts, Mr. English adds, “The natural construction of this *seems to be* this, that a descendant of David, called by that name, should reign over the Israelites forever.”† I have already had occasion to notice some of these texts, and to express an opinion that they may have had a reference to Zerubbabel. But whatever may be thought of the correctness of this, I doubt not the reader will have remarked, that it is *not* said in these texts that this prince or this shepherd shall be called or named David; and I venture to assert, that no passage can be produced from the Old Testament in which this is said. On the contrary, God says ‘his servant David shall be the shepherd, the prince

* Ezekiel xxxiv. 22.

† Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 25.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 15.

forever over Israel ;” and if you understand the words in their literal signification, it would follow from them, that David himself was to return to life, and to his kingdom over the Jews. For we must consider, that this is not the first time that we meet the name of David in scripture. It is a well known name, and belongs to a notorious personage ; and when it is said simply that ‘God’s servant David’ shall be a shepherd and prince over Israel—the literal force of the words suggests no one but the actual son of Jesse. Who is God’s servant David, but the successor of Saul the father of Solomon? But since no one can believe that David himself is to come to life,* and reign again in Israel, it is natural to ask in what sense the promised ruler is called David? Here Mr. English answers, that it is because he is to be named David ; but as has been said, the passages quoted give no authority to the supposition. They do not say that a servant of God shall reign in Israel, by the name of David, but God’s servant David shall be the shepherd or the prince. And God’s servant David is a personage already known in scripture ; and it cannot be supposed that any future servant of God would be

* “Aliqui credidere Messiam futurum esse eundem regem Davidum redivivum, qui si idem foret immortalis futurus esset, et in regno perpetuus. Sed cum hæc opinio probabilis non sit, sed quod ex semine Davidis Messias erit oriundus, certum est quod primo hæc mortali vitâ privato, non minus sancta regnum posteritas insequetur, quæ successive sedeat in throno Davidis, &c. Orobic. Ami. Col. p. 73.

called absolutely God's servant David, merely because he bore that name. I could almost venture to hope, that the force of considerations like these had been felt by Mr. English, and produced the indecision and hesitation with which he every where speaks of the subject. Some other account then must be sought of the cause of applying this appellation to the Messiah. I conceive it to be done for two reasons, first, that the Messiah was to be the lineal descendant of David, (which is the interpretation given by Orbio of the passages in question,*) or as he is frequently called, both by Jews and Christians, the son of David. This name was therefore given to him, as in the families of princes and nobles, the name of the common ancestor is given to the descendants. In this sense, the Chaldee paraphrast understood the application of the name of David to the promised prince. The passage in Hosea, which is quoted by Mr. English in this connexion, "they shall seek the Lord their God and David their king," is thus rendered in the Targum of Jonathan, "they shall obey Messiah their king, *the son of David.*" The Talmuds and Midrash Tehillim apply this name to the Messiah, for the same reason.† And when we consider how universal has been the custom of giving the name of a prince to his posterity and successors, we shall be ready to allow that this is

* See the last note

† Huetii Demonst. Evang. p. 374

one cause why the Messiah is designated in prophecy by this name. But when we add the opposite reflection, that neither Solomon, nor the other successors of David appear to have been called by his name, it may be necessary to inquire further for the reason, why it should be bestowed upon the Messiah. And this I cannot but think to be because, in some striking respects, there was an analogy between these two distinguished servants of God. David, from a low and humble estate, was raised to be the founder of the temporal glories of his kingdom; and Christ, not less humble and low in his origin, was the author of the spiritual distinctions of Israel. David was the most illustrious political, and Christ the most distinguished moral instrument of the Lord. David was commanded to intrust to his successor the erection of that famous temple, which was the centre of the Jewish worship; and Christ has founded, through the agency of the apostles, that church, by which his religion has been preserved and diffused in the world. I forbear to pursue analogies like these, which, though they abound in the writings of the Old Testament, and are familiar to all the nations of the east, have been long succeeded among us by a stricter style of reasoning. Suffice it to say, that they were not less admired than understood among the Jews, and that very many detached passages of some of the Psalms, as well as the whole of others, in which David speaks in his own

person, and apparently of himself, are applied, by the most intelligent rabbies of all ages, to the Messiah. It needs only to be added, that a name is a thing so much within the power of an impostor to alter or assume, and so little connected with all the moral qualities which make up character, that it is strange so much reliance *should seem* to be placed on it by Mr. English, as a prophetic characteristick. Though the name of David had been foretold as an essential attribute of the Messiah, it would ever be in the power of any impostor to assume that name; and when the true Messiah came, if men refused to call him by that name, they would thereby falsify the truth of his pretensions.

The ideas suggested above will throw light upon another prophecy, from which Mr. English has raised an objection, viz. the appearance of the prophet Elias as the forerunner of the Lord. This evangelical herald is mentioned by Isaiah, as ‘he that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.’* In the third chapter of Malachi, God says, “behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me;” while in the fourth chapter it is said, (and on this text the objection rests,) “behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Now it is well known that the fearful war, which ended in the desolation of Jerusalem, is represented in scripture as this great day of the

* Isaiah xl. 3.

Lord. This war began to threaten soon after the crucifixion of our Lord, and as John the Baptist preceded that event by the short period only of our Saviour's ministry, and was his professed forerunner and herald, the prophecy was strikingly fulfilled in him. We learn also from the evangelical history, that the only conceivable design of appointing a herald like this, that of turning the attention of men to the character of the approaching Messiah, was completely answered by the ministry of John the Baptist: and to any one who believes that Christ is the Messiah, no doubt can exist that it was of his ministry the prophets spake. And even those who deny the truth of the gospel must allow, that it is a singular coincidence, that our Lord, whose religion has prevailed throughout the civilized world, and who is believed in by an incalculable majority of all its civilized inhabitants, should have been preceded by a herald so precisely conforming to the prophecy. Now the question is, whether the circumstance that this herald is called *Elijah*, in one only of the three passages where he is predicted, is sufficient to vitiate all the other parts of the accomplishment in John Baptist. If what was remarked in the preceding paragraph,* of the use of

* To what was there remarked we may add, that as in the oriental, and probably all primitive languages, the proper names are verbal, the application of the name of one distinguished personage might more naturally be made to others resembling him. Scaliger thus observes: "*Cyrum quidem a sole dictum, vult Plutarchus, in Artaxerxe, quod a Ctesia accepit. Ita enim*

proper names, be duly considered and applied to this case, I apprehend little doubt upon the subject will remain. John the Baptist, in his intrepidity, austerity, and principally by his residence in the desert, was a striking resemblance of the prophet Elijah; and it is no more to be supposed that the real Elijah was to return to life to precede the Messiah, than that the real David should also return to resume his kingdom. The Jews do not scruple to allow that the Messiah is figuratively named David, and it is equally reasonable that John Baptist should be figuratively named Elias; and though it is true that the Jews supposed* and suppose, that Elias would actually come in person before the Messiah, they also suppose, that Elias is present at the circumcision of every Jewish child;† and one tradition is as valuable as the other. This will show us the incorrectness, I had almost said unfairness, of the representation given by Mr. English of our Lord's answer to the question of the disciples, 'how say the scribes that Elias must

scribit Ctesias de uxore Darii Nothi, *τιχτει δε αυτω ετερον βασιλευσσα, και τιθεται το ονομα αυτη, απο Ηλιε Κυρον.* Sed sæpe imponunt nobis Græci, vel prudentes vel imprudentes. Cyrus enim scribitur כרשׁ: at *Sol* persicè est כרשׁ. כרשׁ vero persicè scimus esse τροφην, εδωδην, cibum, alimoniam; ET OMNIA NOMINA [sc. Persica] AD ILLUD EXEMPLUM SUNT QUE GRAMMATICI VOCANT VERBALIA." Emendat. Temp. p. 281.

* They even took the liberty to render the Hebrew of Malachi by "Elijah the *Tishbite*," in their Septuagint version: an addition wholly unauthorized.

† Buxtorf's Syn. Jud. p. 96

first come?"* Our Lord answered to this question, 'Elias truly cometh first, and consummateth† all things; but I say unto you, Elias has come already, and they have done unto him what they would.'" The evangelist adds, "That the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist."‡ In a preceding place our Lord had said of John to the multitudes, "*If ye will receive it, he is Elias which was to come.*"§ To this Mr. English opposes first the fact that Elias was to come before the great and terrible day of the Lord, "which has not yet, says he, *taken place.*" But, as we have already hinted, and shall hereafter have occasion to show, this day did take place, at the destruction of Jerusalem. "But," adds Mr. English, "that he was not Elias, was *confirmed by John himself*, who (John i. 21.) to the question of the scribes, asking him if he was Elias, answers, *I am not.*" And here lies the unfairness. Mr. English could not be ignorant that John answered the question in the sense in which it was put to him, as the laws of truth obliged him to do.¶ The scribes, in conformity to their national errors, intended to ask of John, whether he was the actual prophet Elijah, and to this he truly answered, No,—but almost in the same breath, *a fact which Mr. English suppresses*, he de-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 68, 69.

† Vid. Campbell in loc. Gospels, vol. iv. p. 118.

‡ Matthew xvii. 10, 11, 12.

§ Matthew xi. 14

¶ Vid. Campbell iv. p. 396

clares, "I AM the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." Now Mr. English will not deny, that these words of Isaiah refer to the Elijah of Malachi, and when John answered that he was not Elijah, but "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," it is plain he meant, "I am not the actual Elijah the prophet, whom you erroneously expect, but I am that herald foretold under his name by Malachi, and called in Isaiah, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." So when our Lord told the Jews, 'that if they would receive it, [or understand it,] this was the Elias which was to come;' his words imply, that if ye understood the true meaning of prophecy, you would acknowledge that John was the Elias who was to come. For our Saviour does not say simply that John was Elias. This would not have been true, in an address to the Jewish multitude, who expected the actual appearance of that personage. But he tells them, 'this is Elias which was to come.' This, though not the actual prophet, is the Elias who, according to the prediction, was to come. The whole matter is made extremely clear by the words of the angel, Luke i. 17. 'He shall go before him in the *spirit* and *power* of Elijah.' As it is a well known tradition of the Jews, that the actual Elijah himself in the days of Ahaz, came in the spirit of Phinehas.* It is thought

* Grotius in Matt. xi. 14.

by Maimonides, the most judicious rabbi, that the person foretold in Mal. iv. 3. under the name of **Elijah**, will be some other person, and not the prophet. He says, "That from the letter of the prophets, in the beginning of the days of the Messiah it appears, there should be a war of Gog and Magog, and that before the battle of Gog, *Magog* shall stand up as a prince in Israel, to prepare their hearts, AS IT IS WRITTEN, behold I will send you **Elijah** the prophet. *Some* of the wise men do affirm, that before the coming of the king Messiah, **Elijah** shall arise; but all these matters, and such like, no man knows what they will be, till they come to pass." And the **Tanchuma**, another famous Jewish authority, sets forth, in a note upon Malachi, "Doubtless here is a promise of the manifestation of a *prophet* in Israel, a little before the appearance of the Messiah, whom *some* of the learned would have to be **Elias**, the **Tishbite**. But *others*, AND AMONG THEM THE GREAT DOCTOR **MAIMONIDES**, think this prophet shall be of equal degree with **Elias**, for the knowledge of God and reverence of his holy name, and is THEREFORE called *Elias*. Finally, we have the authority of the **Talmud**, that **Elias** himself is not foretold in this prophecy of Malachi, but another, who should resemble him in his character and actions.*

* Maimonides in Kidder's demonstration of the Messiah II. 493. and Tanchuma in Chandler's defence, p. 238. Talm. Ber. f. 61, c. 2. quoted by Surenhusius, in La Roche Mem. Mod. Lit. vi. 190.

The only remaining objection, is that which is raised with respect to the descent of our Saviour from David. Mr. English gives it from the work of R. Isaac, "whose principal reasons," says he, "I will here set down." I will state the objection, both in Mr. English's translation from the Latin version of Isaac, which he marks with inverted commas, and a literal translation of my own, of the same version; not because there is any difference which materially affects the argument, but to show Mr. English's style of quoting.

ISAAC.

As to the genealogy; this is against the Christians, that Jesus was not the son of David because he was not born of Joseph, as their own gospel proves. For it is written, in the first chapter of Matthew, that Jesus was born of Mary, when she was yet a virgin whom Joseph knew not, till she had brought forth Jesus. If this is true, the genealogy of Joseph is of no consequence to Jesus. The genealogy of Mary is entirely un-

ENGLISH.

As to what concerns his genealogy, it does not prove this necessary thing, that Jesus was the son of David. Because he was not begotten by Joseph, as the gospel of Matthew testifies. For in the first chapter of it, it is written, that Jesus was born of Mary when she was yet a virgin, and not been known by Joseph; which things being so, the genealogy of Joseph has nothing to do with Jesus. The descent and origin of

ISAAC.

known. Neither is the genealogy of Joseph rightly deduced from David, but labors with great difficulties. Matthew and Luke, who record it, do by no means agree in their testimony, as it is plain from the New Testament, from the first chapter of Matthew and the end of the third in Luke. But it cannot be that the TESTIMONIES of witnesses, who do not agree, but differ from each other, should be true. But the prophets, of blessed memory, have taught us that the true and expected Messiah would not arise but from the seed of David.*

ENGLISH.

Mary is still less known, *but it seems from Luke's calling Elizabeth, who was of Levi, her cousin, that Mary was of the tribe of Levi, and not of Judah, and consequently not of David; and if she were, still Jesus is not the more the son of David, descents being reckoned from males only.* Neither is the genealogy of Joseph rightly deduced from David, but labors under great difficulties. Matthew and Luke *also not only disagree, BUT IRRECONCILABLY AND FLATLY CONTRADICT EACH OTHER, in their genealogies of Joseph.* Now it cannot be that the TESTIMONY of two witnesses, who directly contradict each other, in the matter to be proved by

* R. Isaac Chissuk Emuna p. 42—3. Apud Wagenseil's *tela ignea*.

ENGLISH.

them, can be received as true. But the prophets have directed us to expect no Messiah but one born of the seed of David.*

The reader will observe, that the passages distinguished in the printing are added by Mr. English, in such a way as to call to mind his own quaint expression about ‘orts and ends of verses, disjointed from their connexion, and even the words quoted some of them changed, and some transposed.’ The interpolation of such small adjuncts as ‘irreconcilable’ difference, and ‘flat’ contradiction, however important they may be as ornaments of style, add little to the argument.† But Mr. English has obtruded two things upon R. Isaac, which I doubt not that ingenious and candid rabbi would be ashamed to own. First, he has foisted upon him an objection to Mary’s being descended of David, and of course of the tribe of Judah, from the circumstance that

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 58—9.

† Ibid. page 42. It is fresh in the remembrance of many, that when Mr. English circulated the *manuscript* of his work, he was careful to excuse any asperities of reproach it might contain against Christianity, by attributing them to the Jewish writers whom he had quoted; and added that he had been at pains to soften their expressions, and give them an air of moderation and decency. Here we see how this was done, for R. Isaac simply says, that Matthew and Luke ‘do not agree in their testimony.’ אֵינָם כְּסִיכִימִים בְּעֵרֻתָן—which Mr. English has *softened* into “not only disagree but irreconcilably and flatly contradict each other.”

Elizabeth her cousin was of the tribe of Levi. Now Isaac expressly says, in the passage pretended to be quoted, and afterwards repeats,* that *nothing* is known of the genealogy of Mary. Moreover, he was too well versed in the customs of his own nation to broach such a notion, as that Mary could not be of the tribe of Judah, because her cousin was of Levi. This came not from Isaac's Bulwark of Faith, but from a Bulwark more recently erected by Edward Evanson. However, Evanson himself allows, that it was only Jewish *heiresses*, who were forbidden to marry out of their tribe, and contents himself with saying merely, that it is 'in the highest degree improbable' that the descendants of the family of Aaron, who were consecrated to the service of religion, and of whom Elizabeth was one, should marry out of their tribe.† It were enough to accept this concession; but we find from the Old Testament that Barzillai, a priest, had not only married out of his family, but married into the tribe of Manasseh,‡ certainly a greater disparagement than to have married into the royal tribe of Judah: and Jehoida, THE HIGH PRIEST, married the daughter of king Jehoram, of the tribe of Judah. And both of these facts are recorded in scripture, without censure.§ Moreover, when we con-

* Chissuk Emuna, P. II. § 1.

† Evanson's dissonance, p. 59.

‡ Nehemiah ii. 61.

§ 2 Chron. xxii. 11. Vid. Grotium in Luc. i. 5.

sider how long a time had elapsed since the days of Aaron or of Levi, how remote from each other the collateral branches must have become, and how numerous all the branches, also what confusion must have crept in, in the various disastrous seasons through which the Jewish nation had passed,* and the attendant relaxation of the ancient discipline, it will be not only not improbable, that the ancestors of Mary and Elizabeth should have so inter-married as to make them cousins, but to the last degree probable.

Secondly, Mr. English makes Isaac say, "It cannot be that the *testimony* of two witnesses, who directly contradict each other in the matter to be proved by them, can be received as true." Why they should *both* be false, because contradictory, does not appear, and would be hard to tell. Isaac said correctly, that the TESTIMONIES of witnesses differing from each other could not [both] be true. But so far from holding that this contradiction would invalidate *both*, he particularly says in another place, "It is impossible that two contradictory accounts should both hold, *for if one is true*, it is necessary that the other be false."† I have pointed out this misquotation of Mr. English, not so much for its own sake, for it is but another instance of

* I am aware that this has been contradicted upon the authority of Josephus, but it is, I apprehend, a fact that establishes itself.

† Chissuk Emuna P. ii. § 32.

habitual carelessness; but to introduce the remark, that if it were true that the genealogies of the two evangelists were thus contradictory, it would but confirm the supposition, which is not otherwise without authority, that the two first chapters of Matthew are added to the gospel by a later hand. I might say, with a venerable and orthodox prelate of the English church, that “some of great learning and *judgment* have been of opinion, that the two first chapters of St. Matthew were not in the Nazarene gospel, to which St. Matthew’s Hebrew copy is supposed to have been conformable.”* But I also am inclined to think with the learned bishop,† that this opinion is “an ingenious, rather than a true solution,” and I doubt not, that all the difficulties which Mr. English has raised, may be rationally and easily accounted for, upon the surest principles of criticism.

First, it is objected that, though this gene-

* The reader will find the authenticity of these chapters treated in Toland’s *Nazarenus* c. vi. Williams’ *free inquiry* passim. Michaelis’ review of Williams. *Orient. und Exeg. Bib. Th. I. s.* 50. And a note in Magee on atonement and sacrifice, p. 492 et seq. Ed. Amer.—As Dr. Magee, in his note, which is written with equal ability and bitterness, repeatedly mentions the fact, that all the manuscripts retain the part in question, it is but fair to state that Theodoret affirms, that he had removed from the churches *above two hundred manuscripts, from which the genealogy in Matthew had been omitted upon the authority of Titian*, a learned father of the second century, whose work is unhappily lost. It is perfectly fair then to say, that the omission of the genealogy is authorized by TWO HUNDRED MANUSCRIPTS of the age, to say the least, of Theodoret, and that is far older than the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament extant. Vid. Toland’s *Naza.* p. 19

† Chandler’s defence of Christianity, p. 220.

alogy of Joseph be traced to David, this will not prove Jesus to be descended from the royal prophet, because Joseph was not the father of Jesus. But Jesus was the son of Mary, and Mary, according to common tradition, sanctioned even by the Koran,* a sufficiently unsuspecting authority, was of the line of David. Jesus was therefore actually and naturally a descendant of David. Now if Mr. English reply, as he does, that descent was not reckoned through the females, and that Jesus though the son of Mary could not therefore be accounted the Son of David, because he was not the son of Joseph, I answer, that he was actually *accounted* the son of Joseph, and being born of his wife, was *by law* his son and heir. If then the requisite descent from David was to be natural descent and consanguinity, then Jesus was thus descended, and the blood of David derived to him through his mother. But if the requisite descent was only a legal descent, even this too he had, because he was considered in law to be the son of his mother's husband; and by the very same custom that excluded females from the line of natural descent, he was admitted into the line of legal descent. Mr. English may, if he please, demand that Christ should be shown to be the son of David, in actual descent through Joseph. But the demand is not only unauthorized, but absurd. It is in the power of civil

* Calmet art. Joachim

law to control the order of legal descent, but not of natural. In the eye of nature, as much of the ancestor's blood flows in the maternal as in the paternal line. And Jesus was as actually of the stock of David through Mary his mother, as if he had been the son of Joseph. And though he was not *legally* descended from David through his mother, he was thus *legally* descended, through her husband, because the wife's children were *in law* the husband's.

This proves that Jesus was actually the son of David ; though I cannot but think it a very narrow and illiberal view of the design of prophecy, to suppose it was meant to point out a natural, in opposition to a legal sense. One would suppose the object of foretelling such a characteristic of the Messiah, as his being of the family of David, would be to furnish one, among other indications of him, by which he might be identified at his advent. There was no mystical preference of a descendant of David over any other personage, that could make the descent itself an essential quality in the Messiah. If then the object of these predictions was a public object, if they were designed to assist men in ascertaining the validity of the Messiah's claims, every purpose would be answered by a legal, as well as by a natural descent from David. Hence the evangelists have given us the genealogy of Joseph, the reputed and legal father of Jesus. That this was considered by the Jews,

in the time of our Saviour, as sufficient to show the fulfilment of the prophecies, which foretold the descent of the Messiah from David, ought not to be doubted by Mr. English, who thinks these accounts were fabricated. If they were fabrications, they would certainly have been made to conform to the popular views upon this subject.

But here a new difficulty is started, viz. that the genealogies, which Matthew and Luke have given of Joseph, are mutually contradictory. One would not suppose that this could be maintained by the same persons, who think that the four gospels were a concerted imposition on the credulity of the world.

As Mr. English has not pointed out these irreconcilable contradictions, it were sufficient to deny that they exist. But as I would satisfy the reader, as well as reply to Mr. English, I will state the principal difficulties, on which he founded this charge, and show how easily they may be accounted for. They are two: 1. that Matthew traces the descent of Joseph from David, through the line of Solomon, whereas it is traced by Luke through the line of Nathan, another of the sons of David; and, 2. that Joseph is called by Matthew the son of Jacob, but by Luke the son of Levi.

Both of these apparent inconsistencies will vanish upon considering, that Matthew gives the line of the civil inheritance, and Luke of

the natural descent of Joseph.* This appears from the following facts, that Matthew admits none but princes into his genealogy, who succeeded to the throne of David, till after the captivity, whereas we find in Luke the names of private men. Moreover, Matthew tells us that Jechoniah begat Salathiel. But Jechoniah in a passage of Jeremiah, to which I shall soon ask the reader's attention again, was doomed to be childless. Now by Luke we are told, that Salathiel was the son of Neri; from whence we conclude, that Salathiel was the son of Neri, and the heir of Jechoniah.† And this is confirmed by the author of the book of Chronicles in the Old Testament, who, though he must have been acquainted with the doom of childlessness pronounced on Jechoniah, yet makes Salathiel to be his son, or his grandson, for the original is ambiguous,

* This interpretation is abstracted from Grotius, upon Luke iii. 23. I am aware of other solutions which have been given by learned men, particularly of what Calmet has proposed, vol. iii. p. 431 and 440, Ed. Amer.—But I think that the illustration of Grotius will better bear the test of examination than any thing else which has been advanced; and most of the principles and authorities contained in Calmet may be equally well applied to its support.

† The authentick history of the Jews failing here, we do not positively know that Salathiel succeeded Jechoniah, when the throne passed out of the line of Solomon by the death of Zedekiah, who, though the uncle, was the immediate successor of Jechoniah. Since the Jews however maintain, that Salathiel did succeed as prince of the captivity, this part of the argument may be thought to stand upon concession. The circumstance also that Zerubbabel was the son, or the grandson, of Salathiel, for the Old Testament writers differ, confirms the probability that Salathiel succeeded to the throne, and transmitted his rank and title to his illustrious descendant.

but probably in accordance with St. Matthew, his son.* So that we learn from the whole, that while Luke gives the line of natural descent, Matthew gives that of civil succession, and that when the line of Solomon was extinct in the person of Jechoniah, and his uncle Zedekiah, Salathiel, the representative of Nathan, the next brother of Solomon, succeeded. And this removes the first difficulty, that the genealogy of Matthew is traced through the line of Solomon, and that of Luke through the line of Nathan; since it shows us that the two lines coincided in the person of Salathiel, the legal heir of one, and the natural descendant of the other. Nor should any one think, that it is attributing a violence of language to Matthew to suppose he would say, Jechoniah begat Salathiel, if Salathiel only succeeded him. The book of Chronicles calls Zedekiah, (the immediate successor of Jechoniah,) his son,† though it is certain from the history that he was his uncle. In the Roman law too the adoptive father was called genitor, and Ovid salutes Augustus as *Natum Cæsaris*. Also as Matthew records only the line of civil succession, and Luke that of natural descent, we attain an easy solution of the second difficulty, that according to the latter Joseph was the son of Eli, but according to the former the son of Jacob. Jacob and Eli were brothers, and Joseph the son of Eli by birth, and the nephew and heir of Jacob.

* 1 Chron. iii. 17.

† 1 Chron. iii. 10.

For a more detailed and complete illustration of this subject, I would refer the reader to the comment of Grotius upon the place, from whose note the above is entirely abstracted. I would only add, that this explanation removes the argument which is so ominously brought forward in a note to the letter to Mr. Cary, and which rests upon the history of Jechoniah.* In Jeremiah xxii. 24. we read, that Jechoniah shall be "childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." "Of course," says Mr. English, "no one of the posterity of this accursed Jechoniah could be the Messiah, who was to rule in Israel, since God cuts off the descendants of that man from sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. Now Joseph was a descendant of this man; Jesus, if he was his son, was his descendant also, and therefore could not have been the Messiah of the Hebrew prophets." But we have already seen that Joseph was not the natural descendant of Jechoniah, and that Salathiel was his heir, and not his son. If, however, Mr. English will not admit this explanation, he, or his Hebrew correspondent,† may tell us how it is, that we read in the Chronicles of the children

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 43, n.

† The reader will recollect that Mr. English acknowledges himself indebted, for this argument, to a correspondent of the Hebrew nation.

of this childless Jechoniah, and that the illustrious Zerubbabel himself, who fills so high a station in the declining history of Israel, the object of such exalted praise in the latter prophets, is declared by Haggai* to be the son, and by the author of the book of Chronicles the grandson, of course the immediate descendant “of this accursed” Jechoniah.

With these observations it might be permitted to leave the subject. But of Mr. English, the professed champion of the Jews and of their mythology, I would ask, how, if Jesus Christ be not the predicted descendant of David, it can ever be proved of any future pretender to the character of the Messiah, that he is this descendant? Mr. English ‘feels almost superstitious,’ he says, ‘when he reflects how the prophets seem to have cut down beforehand every accidental prop or hook which might be used to support the claims of Jesus of Nazareth.’ And the Christian, I assure Mr. English, feels a sentiment of veneration as solemn, and quite as rational, as his superstition, for that providence which, in the first age after the advent of our Lord, was pleased to scatter the Jewish nation, to confound their tribes, † subvert their literary monuments,

* The name in our version is spelled Shealtiel in Haggai i. 1, &c. and Salathiel in I Chron. iii. 17, &c. But the Hebrew is precisely the same שאלתיאל.

† I find it confessed by Maimonides, that the families are confounded; “hinc familiæ inter nos confusæ sunt, ITA UT DIGNOSCI NEQUEAT INTER SE, nec e locis ipsarum cognosci.” Maimon. Ad Talm. tract. Jadim, c. xv. § 3. Surenhusii Mishna, vi. 490.

and erase their traditions from the pages of history. Where now are the books of the genealogies, where are the continued tables of the kings of Israel, where is the authentick memorial of the line of David? They are not pretended to be extant.* The Mishna, the digest of the oral law, which not even the blind admiration of the Jews has carried higher than the end of the third century, contains them not. They are no where in the twenty-four folios of the Talmud, though it is a tissue of national frauds. They cannot be produced: they do not exist. How then is it to be proved of any future personage, that he is a descendant of David, and the Messiah predicted by the prophets. And though it might be argued, that a descendant of David might nevertheless remain, yet as this descent is to be an external characteristick of the Messiah, if it could not be proved, it would be to all intents as if it did not exist.

In the eighth chapter of Mr. English's work, from which the objection last considered was taken, there remains one more, which requires notice. It professes to be given in the words of R. Isaac, and is marked as such with inverted commas.† As this style of quotation has not hitherto been used by *correct* writers, I will again give Mr. English's translation of

* The Tzemah David, or 'branch of David,' a work by R. David Gantz of the sixteenth century, is of course too recent, and too entirely unauthorized by any historical document, to be an exception to this remark.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 58 and 60.

the Latin version of Isaac, by the side of a literal one of the same version.

ISAAC.

The same is the meaning [that the Messiah should come in the latter days] of that, which is written in the second chapter of Daniel: "God hath made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what shall come to pass in the latter days," which refers to what follows, viz. to this, "In the days of those kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, &c." Thus you see, that the prophets foretold that the coming of the true king Messiah would be in the latter days, and not before.*

ENGLISH.

Also Daniel ch. 2d, where it is written, "God hath made known unto king Nebuchadnezzar what shall come to pass in the latter days, [or in the end of days;]" and this pertains to what follows, viz. to this, "In the days of those kings [*i. e. of the kingdoms that arose out of the Roman empire,*] the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. Thus you see, that the prophets predicted that the kingdom of the Messiah *should be after the destruction of the Roman empire, not while it was in its vigour, when Jesus came; 'in the latter days,'* and not before.†

* Chissuk Emuna, P. I. § 1.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 60.

The passages in italicks are absolute interpolations, of which not a hint is to be found in the original, which Mr. English professes to quote. Nay, the fact advanced in them, that the days of those kings refer to the days of the kings, who should rise from the ruins of the Roman empire, is contradictory to the express explanation, in another place, of the author upon whom it is foisted. For Isaac, in his explanation of Daniel vii. understands "the days of those kings" to be the days of the four kings previously mentioned in the second chapter,* and not, as Mr. English pretends, the days of those which sprung from the ruins of the fourth kingdom. As for the Roman empire, *I do not find that he says a word about it*; and it is plain he could not have thought it to be represented, as Mr. English would intimate, by the fourth monarchy. For he expressly calls the Messiah's kingdom the fifth, and says, it was *immediately* to succeed the fourth:† and though if this were true it would prove that Christ, who came *during* the fourth, was not the Messiah, it would fix the advent of the Messiah at the destruction of the Roman or fourth, an event which Isaac had seen pass, without bringing their expected prince. The notion, which Mr. English has quoted from him, could not therefore have entered his imagination.

* Chissuk Emuna, P. I. § 41.

† "Ecce enim post interitum quatuor regnorum, STATIM traditum iri regnum perpetuum sanctis excelsorum." Ibid.

Mr. English calls his reader's particular attention to the reasoning in the paragraph, which we have considered. He tells us that the four empires, mentioned in the second chapter, are commonly supposed to be the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman. "This last," he adds, "it is foretold, (according to this interpretation,) should *be divided into many kingdoms*, and that in the latter days of these kingdoms, God would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed. Of course, according to this interpretation, the kingdom of the Messiah was *not to be not only not* till after the destruction of the Roman empire, but *not till* the latter days of the kingdoms, which grew up out of its ruins; whereas Jesus Christ was born in the time of Cæsar Augustus, i. e. precisely when the Roman empire itself was in the highest of its splendour and vigour. This is a remarkable and very striking repugnance to the claims of the New Testament, and *if substantiated must upset them entirely.*"*

It is generous in Mr. English to have taken no pains to substantiate an interpretation, which would settle the controversy in his favour; *not even to produce the text, to which the interpretation belongs.* Let us, however, examine its foundation. The four kingdoms had been represented to Nebuchadnezzar in a vision of a great and splendid image. "This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 60, n.

his arms of silver, and his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part clay and part iron;* thou sawest, [O king,] till that a stone was cut out, without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”† Daniel proceeds then to point out the different kingdoms represented by the different parts of the image. The Babylonian by the head, the Persian by the breast of silver, the Grecian by the belly and thighs of brass, and the fourth, or Roman, by the legs of iron.‡ He then adds, “that whereas thou sawest that the feet and toes *were part of potter’s clay, and part of iron*, the kingdom shall be divided; and as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be *partly strong, and partly broken*.”§ This precisely corresponds with the nature and state of the Roman power, which possessed in its vast military resources, at once the means of domination, represented by the iron, and the seeds of dissolution, by the clay. That the “division” spoken of relates to this discordance among the institutions and energies of the Roman state, is therefore apparent in itself; and though Mr. English talks of its being foretold that the Roman empire “should be divided into many kingdoms,” the reader will see that the words, *into many kingdoms*,

* Dan ii. 31. † Ib. 32—35. ‡ Ib. 38—40. § Ib. 41, 42.

are an addition of his own, and that the division spoken of was a division of the state into iron and clay, into *parts* that were strong, and *parts* that were broken; into powerful and ruinous institutions. The iron and the clay together made up but one portion of the image, and that portion was the emblem of the Roman state. Daniel then proceeds to say, that “in the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.”* As no kings have been spoken of but those of the four great empires, it is plain that the date of the Messiah’s reign was fixed in the reign of these: and accordingly we find, that he appeared while the Roman empire was in its vigour. That the prophecy was therefore fulfilled in him is very obvious; but the reader will recollect that it is but a few verses back that the prophet tells the king, “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were iron and clay, and break them; and the *stone* which smote the image *became a mountain and filled the earth.*” That this stone is the kingdom which God will set up is expressly said: “the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever: forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay,

* Dan. ii. 44.

the silver, and the gold." It is also conceded by the Jewish doctors, that this stone is the Messiah's kingdom,* and since it was this which smote and brake that part of the image ["it smote the image upon his feet,"] which represented the Roman empire, it could not be that it should arise in the latter days of the kings, which sprung up from the ruins of the empire. Mr. English, who believes, to use his own words, that "the Christian religion, as is evident from Gibbon's history, was the *principal*, though by no means the only cause of the decline and fall of the Roman empire,"† will readily see in this fact an illustrious fulfilment of the prophecy, that the stone which was cut out without hands should smite the image upon his feet, and destroy it. Thus I think it appears, that the attempt to 'substantiate this interpretation' was prudently declined on the part of Mr. English. But I cannot quit this prophecy, to which he has called our attention, without suggesting to the reader one or two remarkable points contained in it. I have already said, that the stone which was cut out without hands is understood by the Jews themselves to be the kingdom of the Messiah; an assertion sanctioned by the authorities of the Talmud, the Rabba on Genesis, the Commentary on the Psalms,‡ Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Saadias Gaon, Gerson, and Jac-

* Chandler's defence, p. 100, 101. Ben Mordecai's apology, i. 514.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 163.

‡ Usually called Beresith Rabba and Midrash Tehillim.

hiades, a modern paraphrast of this prophet.* R. Isaac too is full and explicit to the same effect.† The reader will therefore remark, what an illustration it affords to the ideas suggested in chapter ii. of the nature and gradual progress of the Messiah's kingdom, that it is compared to a stone hurled against the feet of image, which increased to a mountain, that filled the earth. Could the imagination have supplied an emblem to represent more forcibly the contrast between the condition of the Messiah's kingdom, at its commencement, and at its consummation, or bring so plainly to the mind its gradual and progressive diffusion? Secondly, this stone is said to be cut out without hands. The original literally means a stone cut out 'which is not in hands,' רִלָא בְרִינָא. The import of this phrase we learn from Col. ii. 11. "In Christ ye are circumcised, with the circumcision *made without hands*, ἀχειροποιήτω, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." The Syriack translator here uses the same words רִלָא בְרִינָא, 'which is not in hands,' to express the circumcision made without hands, and it means a *moral* and *spiritual* circumcision: so the kingdom which is represented by a stone, 'which is not in hands,' is a spiritual and moral kingdom.‡ This is almost confessed by R. Isaac himself. "The sense of the words," says he, "is, that this

* Huetius's demonstratio Evang. p. 377.

† Chissuk Emuna, ubi supra.

‡ Sykes' Essay upon the truth of the Christian religion, p. 19.

stone is cut out, without human hands or strength, by the energy and order of God. Wherefore it is farther said, ‘in the times of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall not be destroyed;’ the subject is the establishment of the Messiah; and this fifth kingdom shall be set up by the God of heaven, by his especial providence and supernatural aid,” &c.*

I have thus gone through with all that needs an answer in the first eight chapters of Mr. English’s book, except that part which relates to what are called the Quotations, and which, as hinted above, page 82, I reserve to another part of this essay.—In the eighth chapter, which contains some summary reasons from R. Isaac, for not embracing Christianity, there is nothing to which I have not attempted to reply, or which will not admit an easy solution upon the principles, which I have endeavoured to establish. Let us examine the latter.

Besides the objections which have already been separately called to the reader’s notice, are these, 1. that in the times of the Messiah there was to be but one kingdom and one king; 2. one religion; 3. no idols; 4. no sins; 5. peace between man and beast; 6. no

* Quorum sensus lapidem illum, non humanis manibus aut robore, sed Dei virtute ac jussu excisum esse. Hinc in interpretatione dicitur: ‘In temporibus regum istorum, suscitabit Deus cæli regnum, quod in secula non destruetur, &c.’ Sermo est de stabiliendo rege Messia. Atque hoc regnum per singularem ejus providentiam, et naturæ immutationem, orietur; non ut priora quatuor regna fuere constituta, quæ ex terrâ prodierant, hoc est, ex solis naturæ viribus. Chissik Emuna, P. I. § 41.

calamities, afflictions, and lamentations, and the return of the prophetic spirit to Israel. Mr. English tells the Christian reader, with all imaginable urgency, that not one of these prophecies have been fulfilled, either in the days of Jesus or ever since.* But surely this is such an outrage on the sense of men and the testimony of history as cannot, when expressed in such dogmatical terms, but excite disgust. The kingdom of the Messiah was, as we have already shown before, and just seen from Daniel, to be a spiritual kingdom; and does not its prevalence from a little province in Judea throughout the civilized world, afford no fulfilment of the prediction, that the stone which is not in hands, should spread till it filled the earth, and give no encouragement that the time is not far distant, when it will be the only religion? Mr. English says, it is the sense of all the prophets, that all nations shall obey the Mosaic law, to come at stated seasons to worship Jehovah at Jerusalem. The reader needs not to be reminded, that these stated seasons are thrice in a year; and Mr. English seriously thinks that in that state of the human race, in which God's most gracious purposes will be consummated, ALL nations will be bound to go THrice in a year to a city in Asia to worship! and a proposition like this, which outrages every principle of religion, of reason, or of possibility, is called

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 62.

the literal interpretation of a book assumed to be divinely inspired.* Has there also been no completion of the prophecy, 'that idols were to be cut off in the days of the Messiah?' Does Mr. English say that this has not been fulfilled? Porphyry, who valued Christianity as little as Mr. English, would have taught him that "since Christ began to be honoured, no one had enjoyed the open assistance of the gods." Again, if the time be ever to come on earth, when there will be no more sins, calamities, afflictions, and lamentations, it can only be by the diffusion of the principles of morality which the Gospel contains. As to what happy effect these have already had, and may be expected to continue to have, we have spoken above. One thing is certain, that the advent of the Jewish Messiah could do nothing to accelerate so desirable a consummation. There is nothing in "temporal princes or conquering pacificators," to correct the vices, or heal the woes of men; and if there is any one state of society, which more than another leads directly to the corruption and misery of mankind, it is that of a *world* empire, such as the Jews attribute to their Messiah. Finally, if it is taught in prophecy, that the Jews were again to be restored to Jerusalem, and enjoy the peculiar presence and favour of God; it

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 65, n.

† *Ἰησοῦ τιμωμένους, ἕδεσθαι τις θεῶν δημοτίας κτθετο.*—
 Apud Eusebii prep. Evang. l. v. c. i. Grotius de veritat. l. ii. § 5
 Huetii demonstr. Evang. p. 499.

is equally manifest from the prophetick writings, and the nature of the thing, that this can only be after such a reformation in their character and manners, as in the natural course of improvement, is yet far distant. It is a favourite maxim with them, that the appointed time of the advent of the Messiah had arrived, but that he was delayed on account of their sins.* I submit it to the reason and piety of the reader, whether it be not more probable that the Messiah came at the time appointed by God, and that if the sins of the Jews occasioned any delay, it was in their own enjoyment of the promised blessings of his kingdom. I say therefore, that every prophecy of the Messiah in Jesus Christ is either notoriously fulfilled, or plainly fulfilling. If there be any which from its nature is to have future completion, we are authorized to trust it will have it, from the experience of the past. Mr. English asks, ‘if the Jew could receive Christ as the Messiah, without setting at nought what he conceived to be the word of God?’ It is not for one man to judge another’s conscience, or to say in what mould his mind is cast, that prevents him from seeing the truth. I doubt not that a pious and virtuous Jew will find mercy at the hands of a righteous God; and that it will not be his least title to that mercy, that he erred, through mistaken adherence to what he thought the divine word. It is true that

* Limborchii Amic. Col. p. 284.

to me their unbelief seems all but miraculous, and if it were not always arrogant to disclaim the power of prejudice, I would say, I think, without partiality, that the faith of a Jew is irrational and unfounded. But it may repress our zeal against them, and teach us a lesson of humility to reflect, that had we been born of Jewish parents, we should have thought of Christians as they of Jews, and considered the gospel, to which we now give our confidence, on which we repose our hopes, as a wicked imposture. I envy not that man, who can accuse of a corrupt heart, or doom to divine vengeance, such men as Maimonides, Orobio, and Mendelssohn, whose lives were spent in acquiring useful knowledge, explaining holy scripture, and illustrating in their actions the best principles and affections of Christianity. I consider too and lament, in how dark an aspect Christianity has been shown to the children of Israel; how unwearyed and unrelenting the persecutions with which its ministers have followed them, and with what severity of justice, the dark and fatal malice with which their fathers crucified the Lord of life, has been retaliated upon them, at the hands of ferocious priests. Bowed down with universal scorn, they have been called secret and sullen; cut off from pity and charity, they have been thought selfish and un-

* Wolfii Bibliotheca, vol. iii. p. 987. Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. vii. c. 32. § 21 et seq. and Adam's history of the Jews, vol. ii. p.

feeling, and are summoned to believe on the prince of peace by ministers clothed with terror and death. I thank God, that the days of this tyranny are passing by. The zeal, which Mr. English professes in their cause*—his conscience must bear him witness whether he has espoused it with a pure heart, and defended it with an honest hand—is as unnecessary, at least, as generous. I would not lightly pass from a solemn subject, but it is a piece of moral quixotism to affect at this day, and above all in this land, to think the sufferings of the Jews required a vindication like his. As for his assertion, that “the Jews had certainly good reason from their prophecies, to expect no Messiah, but one *who should sit on the throne of David*, and confer liberty and happiness on them, and spread peace and happiness throughout the earth, and communicate the knowledge of God and virtue, and the love of their fellow men to every people,” there is more truth in it than error. Excepting the passage marked in the print, it is a tolerable exposition of the nature of the Messiah’s reign, and one which Christians habitually give. He adds, that “whether this—carnal or not—would have been better than a spiritual kingdom, a throne in heaven, together with the ample list of councils, dogmas, excommunications, proscriptions, theological quarrels and frauds, and an endless detail of blood and murder, I leave to the judgment of

* Preface to *Grounds of Christianity examined*, pp. xv. et seq.

those capable of deciding for themselves." But I know not where the Jews are to go to avoid these evils. They prevail among themselves; and as bitter a spirit of persecution rages among them against each other, as they ever experienced from the hands of the Christians. "Let his bones be crushed who presumes to calculate the advent of the Messiah," is a maxim that stands in their Talmud;* and this little anecdote, from Buxtorf, will speak volumes in reply to the declamation of Mr. English: "R. Chanina was thus questioned by the public accusers,—upon what ground have you acted in respect to the law? He answered, I acted as my God (יהוה) commanded me. Upon hearing which, *they condemned him to be burnt*, his wife was put to death, and his daughter thrust into a brothel; because he had pronounced the sacred name."† It is a principle which they hold, and on which they practise, to assassinate those who make innovations in the Jewish faith, and especially who embrace Christianity.‡ No period, or country, can furnish a parallel of that ferocious and brutal rage, with which the distracted factions in Jerusalem pursued each other, in the Roman war. Toward the Christians they have not, indeed, had frequent opportunities of exercising their rage; but when, under

* Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. iv. c. 27. § 15.

† Talmud. Tract. Abod. Sara. c. 1. and 18. Buxtorfii Manualę Art. יהוה.

‡ Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. vii. c. 32. § 17.

that arrogant and haughty impostor, self-styled the son of the morning star,* they gained a little power, its first energy was put forth in the persecution of the disciples of Christ. "He dragged," says Justin, "the Christians to cruel punishments, unless they would abjure and blaspheme Jesus Christ."† I do not mean, that the spirit of persecution is exclusively or peculiarly cherished among the Jews; but this, and every evil which flows from it, is common to them, with every other race of men, in every age, and under all institutions. The affectation of confounding the gospel with the weaknesses and vices of its professors, is one of the most ordinary arts of sophistry; an art which will not succeed with an honest mind, and hardly with a bitter heart. I shall leave the subject of prophecy, with such a sketch of the expectation of the Messiah, which prevailed at the time that Jesus Christ appeared, as will confirm much of what has been advanced.

* Usually called from the Greek, Barchochebas. בַּר כּוֹכַב is son of the star. Euxtori's Synag. Jud. p. 719.

† Βαρχοχεβας, ὁ τῆς Ἰσθαιου αποστατειας αρχηγετης, Χριστιανος ΜΟΝΟΥΣ εις τιμωριας δεινας, ει μη ανομιλο Ιησυν του Χριστου και βλασφημοιεν, εκειλευεν απαγεσθαι. Justinii Apol. prim. p. 49. Ed. Thirl.

CHAPTER IV. 7

THE view we have taken of the two prophecies of Gen. xlix. 10. and Dan. ix. 24—27. will naturally lead to the conclusion, that about the time of the Christian era, the Jews must have looked for their Messiah; and if we can prove, that at that time there was a powerful and general expectation of him, I think we shall create a strong presumption, that the interpretation given of these prophecies is correct.

In an event of such antiquity we must not hope for that abundance of circumstance, which modern history details, and in displaying the opinions of the Jews, it must be remembered that we labour under all the disadvantages which their fraud, interest, and ignorance, for two thousand years, have accumulated. We attempt the display of opinions which fell into oblivion for want of literary monuments, which were suppressed in the shame of disappointment, and denied in the dishonesty of controversy. Notwithstanding these difficulties, there is a diversity and amount of testimony to the fact, that the ancient Jews fixed the era of the Messiah to

about the time of Christ, which is very satisfactory.

I. It is a well known tradition among the Jews, which is recognized by the most judicious rabbins, and traced by them to Elijah,* that the world is to continue six thousand years. Of these six thousand years they make three periods; one of two thousand before the law, a second of two thousand under the law, and the last of two thousand under the Messiah. This tradition may be found in the Talmud and in almost all the rabbinical books,† but the most complete and curious display of it is in the chain of traditions, by R. Gedalia.‡ A copious extract from this book is given, with a translation by Wagenseil, and abridged by Basnage.§ In this, among other calculations of the time of the advent of the Messiah, (all of which have expired,) and which Maimonides professed to have received

* Such is the understanding of this matter by the best Hebrew scholars. But Simon [excerpta adv. J. Vossium, p. 58.] maintains, that this tradition is not ascribed to the *prophet* Elijah, but to a rabbin of that name: and Huetius remarks the same. [demonst. evang. p. 430.] It is a point of no consequence to the reasoning in the text: but Simon and Huet appear to have fallen into an error. There is indeed a Talmudical doctor of the name of Elias, whom we shall hereafter quote, but that this tradition is referred to the *prophet* Elias, appears from this, it is said to have been taught by the house of Elias, (תנא רבי אליהו) and that it was spoken by the Son of the woman of Sarepta, to whom Elijah gave the spirit of prophecy. Nicol. de Lyra. prob. advent. Christi, p. 205.

† Tractat. Saned. c. 11. Avoda Sara. Vid. Simon opusc. Judicium de responsione Vossii, p. 3. de Lyra, p. 205.

‡ Simon Histoire Critique du Vieux Test. p. 539.

§ Wagenseil's teils ignea, p. 614. Basnage Hist. des Juifs, l. v. c. xxvii. § 14, 15.

by direct transmission from a prophet, is the following passage, "Since you are interested in the subject of the end of our captivity, I will consider it more at large, that you may receive several facts from me. R. Jochanan is reported in the Talmud to have said, "*let their bones be broken*, who compute the period of our captivity: for many, when they find these periods elapse, without the event coming to pass, conclude that it never will.* But we must trust to God,—‘though he tarry, wait for him.’ It is declared in the Talmud, Saneh xi. ‘that Elijah had pronounced that the world would last six thousand years. For two thousand years an *emptiness* will reign, [that is, the world will be without the law, as it was till the fifty-second year of Abraham.] For two thousand years the law will prevail, *a period which expired, one hundred and seventy years after the destruction of the second temple.* For two thousand years the Messiah shall reign; that is, it was fit that he should then come, but he is delayed for our sins.”† I cannot but think that this wretched tradition is of great importance to the present argument. It is a well known fact that our Saviour was born, within four years of the year of the world 4000; and here we have a tradition ascribed to Elijah, recognized by the doctors of the Talmud, the great lights

* Munsteri disput. cum Jud. p. 131.

† Wagenseil, p. 617, 618. Etiam Buxtorfi Synagog. Judaic. 717. And Munsteri disput. cum Jud. 145.

of the Jews,* and above all held forth by the learned and prudent Maimonides, which fixes the advent of the Messiah to that period. It is a proof that the traditionary opinion of the Jewish nation, which opinion was of course derived from the scripture prophecies, fixed the advent of the Messiah at the date of the Christian era. And to satisfy this tradition, and yet provide a refuge from its necessary conclusion, the Jews have been obliged to falsify the annals of the world, by fixing the year 4000,† one hundred and seventy years too late,‡ and to maintain the unscriptural idea,§ that the advent of the Messiah is delayed on account of their sins.

II. A second confirmation from history is found in the false prophets, which thronged in Judea, in the age in which Christ appeared. Had not this been the time, which the national expectation and the traditionary sense of prophecy pointed out as the era of the expected deliverer, we should not find this character so perpetually assumed. It is a notorious fact, that for one generation before the Roman war, and during the whole duration of that terrible judgment, the solicitude of this unhappy peo-

* This tradition is defended and illustrated by Jarchi, apud Imbonati Bib. Rab. p. 80.

† Pref. ad Lectorem, Usseri Annales.

‡ Basnage, in mentioning this, doubts whether it may not have been a mere blunder of the Jewish chronologers, who are full, he says, of errors of this sort. Hist. des Juifs. l. iii. c. 3. § 14.

§ Limborchii Amic. Col. 284.

ple was continually exercised by some new pretender to the name and office of that long expected deliverer, for whom they looked. "There was a multitude," says Josephus, "of *false prophets*, suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who commanded them to wait for DELIVERANCE FROM GOD."* Whether the Herodians, who are mentioned in the New Testament, maintained that Herod was the Christ, does not certainly appear. That they did is expressly said by Epiphanius,† in relating the history of the sect. This has been called in question by modern learned men,‡ not because it is opposed by any thing different in history, but from probable and presumptive arguments against the notion that Herod, an Idumæan, should ever have been thought to be the Messiah. But if we remember that Josephus himself applies the oracle, as he termed it, which foretold this personage, to Vespasian the Roman emperor,§ it will be less incongruous to suppose, that

* Joseph. Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. v. § 3. † Epiphanius heræ xx.

‡ Jerome also denied it, and even says that he never read nor heard any body that said it; whereas, and it is a singular fact, he affirms it in express words himself, in another part of his works, viz. in his comment. in Matt. xxii. See Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. xii. c. xiv. § 14.

§ Besides the famous passage to this purpose, which we shall hereafter adduce, there is this, from the same historian, "Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings, sent by God to thee. Thou, O Vespasian, art Cæsar and emperor, thou and this thy son; thou art Lord, not only over me, *but over the land, and sea, and all mankind.*" This was before the death of Nero, and the advancement of Vespasian to the empire. De Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. viii. § 9.

others might find the same personage in the character of an Idumæan. There seems, therefore, less reason than should be required, to contradict the express historical testimony of Epiphanius, because the fact he relates is in every respect, but this of the country of Herod, very likely to be true.* But whatever may be said of the Herodians, there has been little doubt expressed of the other factions, which with their leaders infested the country. They began to appear with the birth of our Saviour, and were perpetually exciting their countymen to revolt. Josephus tells us, that in the interregnum that succeeded the death of Herod, there were ten thousand disorders in Judea, and that the country was filled with robberies.† The nature of their pretensions is clearly betrayed by his saying, that as the ‘several companies of the seditious light upon any one to head them, he was *created a king* immediately.’‡ This sufficiently shows that it was not merely that the country was infested with lawless and

* Grotius de veritate, l. v § 14. quotes Tertullian; but the chapter which passes under his name, in which this is contained, is thought spurious. Basnage l. ii. c. xiv. § 14. Michaelis discusses the question, and decides against Epiphanius, (whose testimony he particularly examines,) that the Herodians could not have believed Herod to be the Messiah. (Orient. und Exeg. Bibliothek. ix. 218.) The merits of the question appear in Basnage, and more concisely in Lardner’s Credibility, b. i. c. iv. § 4.

† Joseph. Antiq. l. xxvii. c. x. § 4 et 8.

‡ Josephi Antiq. Ibid. § 8. This was what the worldly Jews would have done with our Saviour, for “when Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force, and *make him a king*, he departed again into a mountain alone.” John vi. 15.

licentious adventurers, who made a profit of the unsettled state of affairs, but that they respectively gave themselves out to be the royal prince whom the Jews expected. Of this too we may be convinced by observing, that Josephus commonly calls them *impostors*, an appellation inapplicable to simple insurgents.* He tells us, that in the time of Felix, the affairs of the Jews grew continually worse, for the country was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deluded the multitude. Of these ten thousand impostors, as he called them before, a few are mentioned in Josephus by name, and the history of St. Luke will assist us to supply the defects of his record. When the apostles were brought before the Jewish council, and accused and threatened for preaching the Messiahship of Jesus, Gamaliel refers his brethren to the similar pretensions of others, and advises them to take counsel from their event.† “Before these days,” says he, “rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain.”‡ The date of this Theudas is placed by learned men just after the death of Herod,§ at the time when Josephus says, that ten thousand tumults prevail-

* Antiq. l. xxviii. c. v. § 6 et 10. Bello. Jud. l. ii. c. xiii. § 4. l. vi. c. v. § 2 et 3.

† Acts v. 34.

‡ Ib. 36.

§ Beza and Usher. The ancients in general, it is observed by Whitby, placed him before our Saviour's birth. Lardner's Credibility, p. 937. Edit. 3d

ed; and it is not therefore remarkable that he is not particularly mentioned by him. "After him," says Gamaliel, "rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed."* Josephus repeatedly mentions him, and relates, that he excited his countrymen to revolt by telling them, "they were cowards, if they could endure to pay tribute to the Romans, and acknowledge mortal men for their lords; after God had been their king."† "This man," adds Josephus, "was the *teacher* of a *peculiar sect* of his own."‡ Nearly contemporary with him was a second impostor of the name of Theudas.§ He appeared while Fadus, the predecessor of Tiberius Alexander, was procurator of Judea, and professed to be a prophet. He was, according to Josephus, a *magician*, and having led his followers to the river Jordan, assured them he could divide it by a single word. He deluded many to enlist in his cause, but was immediately crushed by Fadus. There is one more of these impostors of whom we have a particular mention, both in St. Luke and Josephus. "Art thou not," said the chief captain to Paul, "that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out

* Acts v. 37.

† The Jews thought that they were to be exempted from all taxes in the days of the Messiah. This explains the conduct of Judas in reproaching the Jews with the indignity of paying tribute to the Romans. Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. ii. ch. xxv. § 1.

‡ Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. 8. § 1.

§ Antiq. l. xx. c. v. § 1.

into the wilderness four thousand men, that were murderers.”* Josephus mentions him, both in his antiquities, and the Jewish war.† He speaks of him also as pretending to be a prophet, and there is one consideration which confirms this. When Paul had been seized by the Jews in the temple, and denounced as teaching the religion of Christ, the chief captain asks him if he was not the Egyptian: from which it is obvious to collect, that there must have been some similarity in the claims of this impostor, to those of the disciples. And when we see Gamaliel so prompt in drawing a precedent from the cases of Theudas and Judas to apply to the apostles, who declared the Messiahship of Christ, we cannot doubt the nature of the pretensions of the impostors. R. Gedaliah places the Egyptian among the false Messiahs.‡ The list of these impostors might be much further swelled. Josephus tells us, that Felix caught some of them every day, and that it was their wickedness which provoked God to cast off the city of

* Acts xxi. 38.

† Bello Jud. l. ii. c. 13. § 5. Antiq. l. xx. c. 7. § 6. Josephus leads us to collect, that the number of his followers received great addition after he had marched the four thousand from Jerusalem. For whereas he speaks of him as having carried out, only a *good number* from Jerusalem, he mentions him, in the Jewish war, as engaging the troops of Felix with the vast multitude of *thirty thousand men*. The supposition of his force having been thus augmented in his circuit through the desert, is necessary to reconcile his two accounts with himself, and the former of them with St. Luke. See Lardner upon these points, *Credibility*, p. 941, *et seq.*

‡ Shalsh. Hakab. Apud Wagenseil, T. I. p. 237.

Jerusalem.* We will dismiss the point with two observations. 1. Nothing but a most fixed and prevalent expectation of the predicted deliverer could have led the Jews to throng, in such multitudes, to these successive deceivers.† The hopelessness of the effort to make any effectual resistance against the Romans, or any extensive combination of the Jews, would in common circumstances have stricken the dullest sight. And the perpetual and unvarying disasters which attended these wretched efforts would have deterred, one would think, even the blindest from the second attempt. But one sedition was hardly quelled before another was excited, and impostors followed upon impostors, till it was impossible to record their names: a satisfactory indication, that this age was marked in the public expectation, as that which should produce their expected deliverer. 2. It is a highly noticeable fact, and one which affords a reply to some objections which Mr. English has repeated from Collins,‡ that though those im-

* Antiq. l. xx. c. viii. § 6.

† Josephus says, "thus were the miserable people persuaded by these deceivers, even such as believed God himself." *Bel. Jud.* vi. c. v. § 3. How admirably does this illustrate the words of our Saviour, *Matthew xxiv. 24.* "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, inasmuch that they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect."

‡ *Grounds of Christianity examined*, p. 67. Mr. English says here, that "it is remarkable that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah till encouraged to assume that character by Peter's declaration." This, however, is directly contradictory to the account in the fourth chapter of *Luke* of his preaching in Nazareth, and applying *Isaiah lxi.* to himself—and also does not agree with the fact that his Messiahship was suggested to Peter himself

postors pretended to be *prophets and kings*, to show signs, and work miracles, and to fulfil all else that was expected of the Messiah, they did not, that appears, assume that name. The reason of this doubtless was, that though this was the peculiar title of the expected personage, yet being given him but once in scripture, it had not acquired that familiarity, with which it is now used. And this was the reason that our Saviour had entered his ministry for some time before he was much known by this designation.

III. That this was the era which publick expectation had assigned to the Messiah appears from the incidental passages of the New Testament, which imply the fact. Had it been officiously declared in the records of the life and mission of Jesus, that the time had arrived when the promised Messiah should come, such declaration might have been thought suspicious. But since we find in its place an assumption of the fact, as one perfectly notorious, and undesigned and incidental mention made of it, we cannot but own that the consequence is fairly drawn, that a general expectation of the Messiah prevailed. To illustrate the kind of allusion to the advent of the Messiah, which is forever made, we may notice such passages as these :
 “And behold there was a man in Jerusalem

by Andrew his brother, who had seen Jesus. “Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messias.” John i. 41.

named Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the *consolation* of Israel,* and the holy Spirit was upon him, and it was revealed unto him, by the holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."† Here the evangelist is so far from officiously pronouncing that this was the era of the promised Messiah, that he makes the belief in the fact to be the result of a special revelation. He adds, in v. 38, of the same chapter, of Anna, that "she, coming in at that instant, gave thanks also to the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for *redemption* in Jerusalem. See also Luke xix. 41. Mark xv. 43. Matt. ii. 3. 45. John ii. 19, 20, 21. vi. 14, 15.‡ That the Samaritans encouraged the same expectation of the Messiah is also testified by the same incidental evidence. While passing through Sichar our Lord met, at the well of Jacob, a woman of Samaria, and in the conversation which was held between them, the woman said, "I know that Messiah cometh, [ἐρχεται, præs.] who is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things."§ What stamps an air of authenticity upon this passage is more particularly this, that it involves an allusion to one of the most notorious Jewish traditions, that all the obscurities of scripture

* The doctors of the Talmud give to their Messiah, among other titles, that of Menahem, Consolator. Vid. Hieron. de S. F. p. 27. and Huet dem. evang. p. 430.

† Luke ii. 25, 26.

‡ Vid. Grotium in Matt. ii. 3, 4, 5.

§ John iv. 25.

shall be explained in the times of the Messiah.* Indeed it was neither to Judea nor Syria that this expectation was confined. There are the same traces in the literature of the age, of an expectation of some great personage among the profane writers of the heathen nations, which we have pointed out among the Jews and Samaritans in the New Testament. Not to insist upon some passages of Cicero, which might require too much space to elucidate them, the fourth eclogue of Virgil may be adduced as a specimen and record of the notions that prevailed.† To any one, who will compare that poem with the prophetick writings, and note the correspondence, it will be unnecessary to multiply considerations. One, however, I cannot repress. Those who have denied the connexion of this eclogue with the Jewish expectation of a Messiah, and Heyne, the late learned editor of Virgil among the first,‡ have supposed it to be merely a poetical expression of those wishes of future and approaching prosperity, to which the national spirit of a people is continually looking forward. Now, in the first place, it is only of oppressed and unhappy nations, as Heyne himself has hinted,§ that this is true, though he seems not to have felt that it might

* Hieronym. p. 9. Basnage quotes Joseph Albo, a skeptical Jew, as also maintaining this tradition. Hist. l. iv. c. xxvi. § 2.

† Vid. Grotium in Matt. ii. 3, 4, 5. and Chandler's defence, p. 9, 10. and Vindication, p. 477. and Huet Demonstratio evang. p. 390, E.

‡ Argumentum Ec. quartæ.

§ Ibid.

be urged, that Virgil was the citizen of the empire which ruled the earth, and at a period of undisputed sway. The prediction which Virgil would make, would be the permanence of the present prosperity, and the perpetuity of the present order of things; nor would he, one would think, if left to the natural impulse of the mind on such an occasion have foretold a new order of manners, institutions, and men. But in the second place it is to be remarked, that all which will reasonably be contended for is this, that the language, and train of thought in Virgil's eclogue coincides with the prophets,* and the traditions derived from them, to a degree, which cannot be referred to accident; and that this is a proof, that the Jewish expectations of some great character had acquired notoriety abroad. How Virgil should have become particularly acquainted with them is therefore no question; but if a particular source must be named, it is on record that Pollio, to whom this eclogue is inscribed, entertained the two sons of Herod at his house,† and here the Jewish prince may have been met by the poet, and a knowledge of the traditions of his nation acquired. That there are passages in the fourth eclogue, which

* Virgili idylum quartum novi cujusdam regni pollicitationem continens, et quidem fere verbis iisdem quæ prophetæ Hebræi usurpant. Grot. ad Matt. ii. 1.

† Joseph. Antiq. l. xv. c. x. § 1. Heyne is incorrect in intimating that this passage had not been adduced by those whose opinion he opposed. It is quoted expressly by bishop Chandler, defence, p. 12.

some how or other came from the Jews and the Jewish scriptures, I cannot doubt; and it is unfortunate that learned Christians, by claiming more than this, have thrown a suspicious air upon the whole business. Had less been demanded by them, more might have been granted by their opponents. Heyne seems willing to allow,* that of the oracles, which Augustus collected from all quarters, many from Syria and Judea must have reached Rome. From a source so direct they might have come to Virgil, who passes a compliment upon the respectability of them, by interweaving them in his poem. Were there no corroborating testimony, less reliance could be placed on this; but when it is proved, that these expectations were prevalent among the Jews, that a diligent search for oracles must have extended to the Septuagint, where the foundations of that expectation might be seen, and that a poem, appearing at this time at Rome, is filled with similar expectations, clothed in almost the language of the prophets, we may deny that the coincidence is accidental.†

To this head of incidental testimony to the

* Ubi sup.

† The truth of this matter has been perplexed by connecting it with the Sybilline oracles, the value of which may be concisely expressed in the words of Scaliger. *Quid pseudo-Sybillina Oracula, quæ Christiani gentibus objiciebant, quum tamen e Christianorum officina prodiissent, in Gentium autem Bibliothecis non reperirentur? Adeo verbum Dei inefficax esse censuerunt, ut regnum Christi sine Mendaciis promoveri posse diffiderent? Atque utinam illi primi mentiri cœpissent.* Jos. Scaliger *Ep.* 115 ad J. Casaub.—apud La Roche *Mem. Lit.* vii. 231.

era of the Messiah, may be referred a multitude of Jewish traditions found in the Talmud and rabbinical works. These traditions, as almost every thing else from these sources, are so miserably insipid, and sometimes so gross, that one is almost ashamed to quote them. But one or two, for examples, will show the difficulty to which their inventors were reduced, to evade the prophetic and historical testimony to the era of the Messiah. We have already quoted the maxim, “that the advent of the Messiah is deferred on account of sin,”* and it betrays the conviction that the appointed time has past. A different sect, or rather an earlier age of the Jews, while they could not, in the face of their ancient traditions, deny that the prophetic era was full, resorted to a most grovelling fiction, that the Messiah was indeed born, the day the temple was destroyed, but that he was hidden on account of the impenitence of the Jews, and is yet waiting to be revealed.† R. Solomon Jarchi, one of the most judicious rabbies, confesses this fact: “our ancestors,” says he, “thought that the Messiah was born the day the temple was destroyed.” Where he is concealed, is the subject of much and miserable disputation in various passages of the Talmud, to which references may be found in almost all who treat the subject.‡ I

* Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. 720. † Chandler’s defence, p. 83.

‡ Munsteri disput. cum Jud. p. 35. Hieronymus de S. F. gives us a specimen of this which is worth consulting. An

quote but one more of these traditions: "A Jew was ploughing in the field, and his ox lowed. An Arab passing by, said, Jew, Jew, unyoke thy ox, and leave thy plough, your temple falls. Again the ox lowed, and the Arab said, Jew, Jew, yoke thy ox, and prepare thy plough, your Messiah is born."* Who does not see in these poor traditions, the resorts of men urged by unanswerable facts, and escaping from established opinions.

IV. Finally, the general expectation in the age of our Lord, of the appearance of the Messiah is proved, by distinct and express authorities. Had these been found in the books of the New Testament, we have granted that they could be less insisted on; but no objection can be made to the heathens and Jews, the haters and the despisers of Christianity. Philo, having spoken of the predicted prosperity of the Jews, adds, "For as the oracle saith, (Num. xxiv. 7.) a man shall go forth, and warring against great and populous nations, shall overcome them, God sending all suitable aid to the godly; this man shall ex-

act, which he gives from the book Beresith rabba, concludes thus: "while she (the mother of the Messiah) was yet speaking, the wind arose from the four corners of the earth, and cast her child into the great sea. Then Elias tore his garment and the hair of his head, and cried, alas, the salvation of Israel is lost. But there went out a voice, saying, not so, Elias, but he will stay four hundred years in the great sea, and eighty years where the smoke ascends before the sons of Chore, and eighty years at the gate of Rome, and the rest of the years in all the great cities till the end." Hier. de S. F. 39.

* Hier. de S. F. 41.

tend his conquest, for the good of the conquered, so as to be the strength of the empire, and the head of the human race.* Hitherto these things have been simple wishes, but as I believe, will be real facts, God affording a plentiful harvest of virtue; of which things, not yet attained, we cherish the desire almost from infancy."† Yet more clearly and distinctly the countryman and contemporary of Philo, the historian Josephus.‡ This historian, in his narrative of the Jewish war, after relating the account of the destruction of Antonia, adds, "But that which principally encouraged them to war was an ambiguous oracle, found also in the sacred writings, that about this time some one from their country should gain possession of the world. This they understood to belong to themselves, and many of the wise men were mistaken in their judgment of it. For it intended Vespasian's government, who was proclaimed emperor in Judea."§ Josephus' testimony to the fact that this expectation prevailed, and that it was founded on an oracle of the sacred writings,|| is all we want. As for his interpreta-

* Philo de præm et pæn.

† De præm et pæn. Vid. Chandler's defence, § 6.

‡ Philo is supposed to have preceded Josephus about thirty years; though the date of his birth is not fixed. Josephus was born A. D. 37. Lardner's Credib. Advertis. p. xii and xiii.

§ Bell. Jud. l. vi. c. v. § 4.

|| There is a diversity of reading here which a little affects the sense. One reading is as follows, εδηλθ δ' αμα περι την 'Ουεσπασιαδ: and the other εδηλθ δ' ΑΡΑ περι την, &c. The difference in the sense is, that if the former be read, Josephus

tion of this oracle of the heathen emperor Vespasian, it is only a testimony to the weakness and insincerity of its author. That the same expectation, founded upon the same authority, prevailed at a little earlier period, we also learn from the same historian, in a passage, which gives an admirable confirmation of some texts of St. Matthew. This evangelist relates, that Herod was *troubled* when he heard of the birth of Christ, and that he took fatal measures to destroy him among the infants of Bethlehem, the place where the chief priests and the scribes declared he was to be born.* Now Josephus at once explains the secret of Herod's trouble, and acquaints us with the prevalent expectation. "The pharisees," says he, "(for they were supposed, by their great intimacy with God, to have attained the gift of foreknowledge,) foretold that God, having decreed to put an end to the government of Herod and his race, the kingdom should be transferred to his brother's family." And he adds afterwards, that "Bagoas had flattered himself that he was the ex-

would intimate, that the oracle applied to Vespasian (*απερ*) with others; if the latter, that it was fulfilled exclusively in him. Basnage followed the former reading and formed an observation upon it, hist. l. ii. xiv. 15; and Huet takes the occasion to charge Josephus with duplicity for using so ambiguous an expression: "quasi dixisset alix quidem sunt vaticinii hujus significationes, sed simul (*απερ*) cum iis, inest ibi quoque imperii Vespasiani significatio. Ita nobilissimum vaticinium homo *versipellis et alterplex* affluis tenebris opacavit. Demonst. Evang. p. 392.

* Matt. ii. 3.

pected person, because they had called him *father, benefactor, the king, who was to be appointed, who should have all things in his power.*"* One knows not whether these passages more confirm the point of history we would establish, than justify our Saviour for denouncing them as hypocrites, who could flatter a court parasite and eunuch, that he was the Lord's anointed. To these Jewish testimonies, we add that of Seutonius, the biographer of the Cæsars. "There had prevailed, through the whole east, an ancient and fixed opinion, that it was fated that, at that time, some should rise from Judea, and obtain the government of the world."† This well known authority of Seutonius is illustrated, confirmed, and enforced by the equally notorious passage from Tacitus. "A persuasion was cherished by most, that it was contained in *the ancient books of the priests*, that the East should gain the ascendancy, and that some from Judea should obtain the government of the world."‡

Thus we have shown, at length, that the publick expectation pointed to the age in which our Saviour appeared, as the era of some great character. If there were any doubt of what could have been the source of such expectation, it is resolved by the authority of Josephus, and of Tacitus, who seems to

* Joseph. Antiq. l. xviii. c. iii. § 2. Lardner's Credibility, p. 129, 630. Ed. 3d.

† Vespasian, c. iv.

‡ Hist. l. v. c. 13.

have followed him, that it was THE ANCIENT BOOKS OF THE PRIESTS, AND THE SACRED WRITINGS. How clear and powerful a light this expectation throws upon our interpretation of the prophecies, which limit the time of the advent, need not be said. It is nothing less than showing that this was the interpretation of the Jews, at the very age of their fulfilment. Nor do I know whether the Jews bear a stronger testimony to our Lord, in what they thought rightly, or in what they erred. As to the period of his appearance, they were correct, and as time is a mere matter of fact, a thing not dependent on the temper, the traces of it ought to have been, as indeed they were, so clear, that they could not be mistaken. Could any other period of history be pointed out, in which the expectation of the immediate appearance of the Messiah *began* and became universal, it would be a strong argument against Christianity.* It is well known that none such can, that the period of our Saviour's life was *the first* in which impostors rose, and that the publick expectation pointed to it, as the age of the predicted deliverer. But the Jews went no farther, than to understand the time in which their Messiah was to appear. What his character was to be, was a moral question, and all the passions and prejudices which influence the heart, and all the peculiar circum-

* That impostors have appeared in all the subsequent ages, is no objection to this reason, for truth ever begets its counterfeit.

stances in which the Jews were placed,* would have their operation in perverting the publick notion of the Messiah. What thought he was promised as a religious teacher, they were wicked and corrupt, and such a character had no attraction in their eyes! They were also subjected and oppressed, and in the bitterness of their hearts, they thought they wanted a warrior to deliver them, a prince to marshall and avenge them. Hence what was plainly revealed, they perverted; and whereas much of prophecy is obscure, and (according to one of their own fundamental traditions,) not to be fully understood till the event, they placed upon it the interpretation, which the pressing emergency suggested; and formed by degrees the imagination of a Messiah, for whom they could mistake such wretches as the Gaulonite and the Egyptian. The last were by all confession, impostors; and they took the course which impostors naturally take. They availed themselves of the publick expectation, which was fixed on the predicted personage, and thought by seizing this tide of opinion and passion to move forward with a momentum, which might afterwards make them independent alike of popular favour and aid. Why did not Jesus of Nazareth, if an impostor, take the same course, and

* The remark of Tacitus loses none of its force in applying it to this occasion. “Sed vulgus, more humanæ cupidinis, sibi tantam fatorum magnitudinem interpretati, ne adversis quidem AD VERA *m. tabantur.*” Hist. v. § 13.

meet the same fortune? Where could he have gained even the idea of a character like his own, if it was not that the scriptures suggested such an one to those who searched them with a mind unbiassed by the publick prejudices? This departure from the prevailing notion is therefore a strong testimony to the sincerity of our Saviour's pretensions.* But the most important inference to be collected from the facts which this chapter contains, is the following: that at the age of Christ a firm opinion, and of old standing, prevailed among the Jews, and had by them become notorious throughout the world, that the long expected personage promised in the sacred oracles, was to appear.—This is therefore the interpretation given by the Jews, to the prophecies which regard the time of the Messiah's advent, while they were yet unprejudiced. It is their interpretation of their own oracles, at the only age, in which they will pretend themselves that they could have been free from the operation of antichristian principles, and at which they were left to collect the natural sense of the scripture. Is there not then, must it not be allowed that there is, a violent presumption, that this interpretation is true, and that this was really the period, at which the Messiah was to appear? And does not this presumption rise into certainty when it is

* This argument is most forcibly stated in the eloquent and excellent Sermons on Infidelity by Rev. Mr. Channing, p. 16, et seq.

added, that at this very time a personage did appear, of high and uncommon pretensions, alleging himself to be this expected Messiah, and establishing a religion, which has spread from nation to nation, and from shore to shore, till it is professed by all that is learned, and civilized, and refined, in the world. I do not say, that this single correspondence of the success of our Saviour with the expectations built on prophecy, is enough to prove the divinity of the religion; but I do say, that combined with other evidences of Christianity, it ought to satisfy the mind, and especially that it ought to put to rest all doubt on the subject of evidence from prophecy, and to convince the Christian, that he has “found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.”

CHAPTER VI.

HAVING thus treated the argument from prophecy, and vindicated the predictions fulfilled in our Saviour, from the objections of Mr. English, I proceed to consider a subject alluded to already,* that of Quotations.— This is the name given to certain passages, quoted from the Old Testament, and applied to events and occasions in the New, to which they had not original reference; and upon these were founded all that was important, in Collins' Grounds and Reasons,† and which Mr. English has transcribed from that work. This writer maintained, that the evangelists rested the proof of Christianity on the alleged fulfilment of these passages, which they quoted as prophetic from the Old Testament, but which are found upon examining the context in which they there stand, to refer to different events; sometimes to be merely historical, and to have no reference to the future. Now, we should stop here to correct a fundamental

* Page 83.

† Of Collins' work nearly a fifth is occupied in a preface, maintaining the right of free discussion, and containing a vindication, half ironical, of Whiston. Nearly two thirds of the remainder of the work is taken up with an examination of Whiston's system.

error, to which I have before had occasion to allude. The evangelists do not *rest the proof* of Christianity upon these fulfilled prophecies, nor upon any thing else. Their writings were not meant to contain what we mean by a defence of the religion, or an examination of its evidences. And it is a great want of taste and judgment to regard them in this light.

In a short paragraph, which Mr. English adds to his transcript from Collins, he says, "One of two things must be allowed, either, (which is most probable,) the authors of the New Testament conceived their citations to be indeed prophecies concerning Jesus, and then they were ignorant and blundered; and therefore were not inspired: or they knowingly used them as means to deceive the simple and credulous, into a belief of their being testimonies, sufficient to prove what they themselves knew they had no relation to; and then they were deceivers. There is no other alternative, and each horn of the dilemma is as fatal as the other."* This is hard language and bad reasoning. By what law does Mr. English pronounce, that it is of no consequence whether the writings of the evangelists discover a rhetorical incorrectness, or a wilful fraud; and that the Christian religion is as unworthy of belief, if connected with a logical mistake, as if founded in historical falsehood? It is not a point to be so hastily as-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 53

sumed, that because the evangelists, incorrectly applied a passage of the Old Testament, to an event of the New, they were not inspired. I am not concerned to defend the errors of former ages, and I doubt not that it is speaking the opinion of enlightened Christians to say, that the evangelists were not inspired as authors, critics, or grammarians; and they might fall into errors in all these capacities, without disparagement to their proper character as religious teachers. What was it, they were inspired to teach? Surely it was not the real meaning and proper import of the Old Testament; it was not the object of their mission to reform the style of the prevailing paraphrasts, nor to introduce a superior criticism into the rabbinical schools. But they were inspired to bear witness of the *facts* of our Lord's life, and the *doctrines* which he taught; and when they had done this, and proceeded farther to *reason* upon them, it would be absurd to think that they would depart from the prevalent style. Every country and age has its taste in literature. The Jews had theirs; a peculiar one, it must be owned. But shall it be demanded of the apostles, upon the alternative of denying their inspiration, that they should divest themselves of this national style? Moses was inspired; but does he not every where yield to the notions of his age, and speak of the Deity under those attributes of humanity, which were familiar to

it.* That the apostles, after the communication on the day of Pentecost, retained none of the perverse and irrational notions of the character of the Messiah, and the nature of the dispensation he was to introduce, which prevailed among their countrymen, is very plain from their history; nor will it be denied. But it does not appear, nor should it be expected that they should impart the superior knowledge of these subjects in purer language, or prove it by a better system of dialectics. They every where reasoned upon the prevailing principles, and in the prevailing style: and not to have done this would have been an unexampled absurdity. The defence of Christianity therefore does not call upon us, in this age of abstraction, to show that the grammarian or logician can find no flaw in the New Testament; and it may be that it contains what may save our souls, though it do little to improve our style in writing, or regulate our critical skill. Indeed, at this enlightened age, it were becoming alike to the friends and the enemies of Christianity, to approach the volume, and the subject of religion, with more elevated views of the design of one, and the contents of the other.

* “ Nos Theologiens demeurent d'accord, que tout le Pentateuque a été inspiré; cependant les plus savant d'entre eux ne font aucune difficulté de reconnoitre que ce que Moïse a écrit de la creation du monde, des genealogies, des premiers patriarches, et des autre choses qui l'ont précédé, a pu être tiré des memoires que ces Patriarches avoient laisses.” Simon lettre à Mons. P. D. touchant l'inspiration des livres Sacrés, p. 20.

The time indeed has past when the publick taste would receive a treatise to prove that all the branches of science are contained in the Bible;* still it may be feared that it is a perplexity to the friends, and an advantage to the assailants of Christianity, that they both search the scriptures, for what they were never meant to afford. “Search the scriptures,” said our Saviour, and for what? not indeed for a model in reasoning or style, but “because in them ye think ye have the words of eternal life.” The Bible is a record of facts, of rules, and of promises; but especially of *facts*: not formally systematized, according to the modes and figures of logick, but connected with popular opinions, expressed in the language of the country, and drawn forth by the occasion of the day.† Particularly it ought to be remem-

* I have a work by John Henry Alsted, a famous Theologian, published in 1625, with this title: “Triumphus Bibliorum sacerorum, seu encyclopedia biblica, exhibens triumphum philosophiæ jurisprudentiæ et medicinæ sacræ itemque sacrosanctæ theologiæ, quatenus illarum fundamenta ex scriptura Veteris et Novi Testamenti colliguntur. 8vo. pp. 619.

† “On ne peut à la vérité douter du temoignage que St. Paul leur [les livres sacres] a rendu dans son epistre à Timothée, ou il assure que toute l’Ecriture a este inspirée de Dieu. C’est aussi le sentiment commun des Juifs et des Chrestiens. Mais il ne faut pas sous pretexte de cette inspiration, combattre le raison et l’experience. Ce sont des hommes, qui ont esté les instrumens de Dieu, et qui pour estre Prophetes, *n’ont pas cessé d’estre hommes*. Le St. Esprit les a conduits d’une maniere, qu’ils in se sont jamais trompés, dans ce qu’ils ont escrit; mais on ne doit pas croire pour cela, qu’il n’y ait rien dans leurs expressions que de divin et de surnaturel. Au moins n’est ce pas la pensée des Peres, ni de nos plus savans Theologiens, qui sont bien éloignés de l’imagination de quelques Docteurs Mahometans, qui veulent que leur Alçoran ait été compose dans le ciel, et que Dieu

bered, if I may be pardoned the repetition, that not one of the books of the New Testament, nor all of them together, were intended to be a forensick defence of Christianity. On the contrary, the historical books are brief and *imperfect* memoirs, which were not designed, nor supposed to contain all the facts,* and which do not set forth, nor profess to set forth, the evidences of the religion. The epistolary parts are the counsels, instructions, and affectionate sentiments, which the occasions of the infant churches drew from their founders. Now from these we expect to collect the whole of Christianity; of its doctrines, its precepts, and its sanctions; but we are to translate them from a language long since ceased to be spoken into the vernacular tongues, to apply them to a state of the church totally different from the primitive, to illustrate them by a philosophy both of nature and the mind, which has undergone incalculable improvements since the era of Christianity, and to prove them according to principles of reasoning and of interpretation, such as now prevail. The books of the New Testament, as we find them, were never intended to do that for Christianity which Tatian did in his diatessaron, Eusebius in his

l'ait envoyé à leur faux prophete, par le ministere de l'ange Gabriel." Simon. Lettre touchant l'Inspiration des livres sacrés, p. 1.

* "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John xxi. 25.

preparation, Huet in his demonstration, Lardner in his credibility, Butler in his analogy, Michaelis in his introduction, or Paley in his evidences. Let us not then approach the writings of the evangelists, as we would a system of sacred criticks, or the work of a keen controversialist. At least, if we will not read them with a generous, let us read them with a rational mind. If it be necessary to deny them the imperfections of humanity, we may allow them its natural and innocent habits.

I cannot but hope that these ideas are not only important and honourable to Christianity, but applicable to the present question. Mr. English says, that there is no alternative, but that the sacred writers, in making the citations in question, were deceived and blundered, and so were not inspired, or that they intentionally made them, with a knowledge that they were inapplicable, and then were impostors. But I remember well that about a year and a half ago, I had the pleasure of translating for Mr. English, from the German of the 'universal biblical library' of Eichhorn, a letter of a correspondent of this celebrated critick, in which another theory is proposed; and one which Mr. English passes in deep silence. To this theory I shall presently ask the reader's attention. In the mean time, let us see if we can get any light upon the subject from common sense. In the prophet Hosea, at the eleventh chapter and first verse, we read,

“When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of *Egypt* :” and this, as Collins and Mr. English have well observed, is no prophecy at all.* It is clearly no prophecy. In the second chapter of Matthew, at the fourteenth and fifteenth verses, we read, “When Joseph arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into *Egypt*—that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *out of Egypt I have called my son.*” Now, says Mr. English, Matthew was either a blunderer, and then not inspired, or he intended to pass this upon men as a prophecy fulfilled, and then he was an impostor. But I ask, is either of these probable? Is it probable that Matthew thought this *historical* passage was literally a prophecy fulfilled? Is it probable that writing, as he did to the Jews, he should attempt so shallow, so hopeless, so useless a fraud as the second part of Mr. English’s alternative supposes? Could we ever rise above prejudice, one might think that these questions would be answered in the negative, by all who are acquainted with the common principles of feeling and action. But this we cannot do, and Mr. English is able to quote many enemies of Christianity, who have seriously made this, and similar quotations, an objection to its truth : and I am sorry to add also, many defenders of Christianity, who

* Collins’ Grounds and Reasons, p. 47. The Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 25.

have submitted themselves so implicitly to the cruel tyranny of systems, as to maintain that the prophecy in Hosea, was an actual prophecy faithfully fulfilled in our Lord.

But if the evangelist did not thus quote it in a 'blundering' or 'fraudulent' way, how did he quote it? I might say that it was an accommodation of a passage in the Old Testament to a similar event in the evangelical history. This illustration of sentiments and events, by the adducing of descriptions and expressions from former authors, is a practice common to all writers, of all ages. When we consider too, that the Old Testament was the only vernacular book, and almost the only book, which the Jews possessed, we shall not wonder to see it alluded to, and quoted on all occasions, by Jewish writers, which the evangelists were. The most judicious interpreters have adopted this principle, and I must directly differ from Mr. English, in his assertion, that "most of the European biblical criticks of the present day, and Dr. Marsh among the rest, acknowledge it to be untenable."* The

* This was too positive an assertion, as it relates to Dr. Marsh, and though Mr. English repeats it, in his letter to Mr. Cary, he does not justify it. The truth is, that Dr. Marsh in the space of ten lines, gives a different colouring to his own opinion, on this point. But yet *nothing* which he says will authorize the assertion, that he "FRANKLY allowed" the doctrine of accommodation, as far as it relates to the phrase, "this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," to be untenable. His words which most favour Mr. English are, "an impartial reader of the New Testament must surely be persuaded, that those passages had in some sense a reference to the events which they recorded; and that the application is not

precise contrary, if we may trust to Eichhorn, is the fact, who, in a review of a work of Dr. Eckerman, says, that “the principle of accommodation, *which the BETTER interpreters had already applied to MANY quotations in the New Testament, is by this author extended to all.** Though the opinion of Dr. Eckerman must be allowed to savour a little of the extravagance of theory, Eichhorn adopts it. As the work alluded to, the “Theological Contributions,” has become a classical book with one class of the German divines, who are thought to excel in critical learning, there is no doubt that this doctrine is generally received among them. Michaelis, we all know, admits it; and Marsh is the only famous critick, I believe, of the present day who does not embrace it; and his opinion, as the reader has just seen in the note, amounts only to a hesitation whether it will hold in the case of what has been thought the most formal mode of adducing the quota-

grounded on a parity of circumstances alone.” But his words, just above were, “IT SEEMS, AT LEAST, A MATTER OF DOUBT, whether the principle of accommodation can be admitted where the strong expressions are used, “this was done that it might be fulfilled,” &c. Marsh’s Michaelis, i. p. 477. Uniting these passages, it must be allowed, that Mr. English did not do well to assert, that Dr. Marsh *FRANKLY acknowledged* that the principle was untenable, and that he did ill to repeat the assertion, as he does, Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 108. With the exception of Dr. Marsh, Mr. English does not attempt a vindication of his assertion with respect to ‘most of the European biblical criticks of the present day.’

* “Die accommodations-lehre welche die bessern Ausleger bei vielen allegationen des A. T. angenommen haben, dehnt der Verfasser [Eckerman] auf alle aus.” Eichhorn’s Alleg. Bib. Th. iii. s. 64.

tions. Besides the incorrect assertion that this principle of accommodation is frankly acknowledged to be untenable, Mr. English asserts, that it can be proved so by the New Testament itself. But his proof consists of a quotation, without acknowledgment, from Collins.* This quotation contains an inquiry whether, when John represents Jesus as saying, ‘I thirst that the scripture might be fulfilled,’ it be not unsuitable to suppose, that John meant to represent him as saying things, whereby he only gave occasion to observe, “that he fulfilled, that is, accommodated a phrase, not a prophecy?” Here certainly is no proof, no presumption. On the contrary, if the principles, already proposed, are correct, it is entirely conformable to the style of the evangelist’s country and age, to point out such accommodations, and to show that to the smallest parts of our Saviour’s life and sufferings, there were applicable passages in the sacred writings.

But though I see no force in Mr. English’s proof, and no correctness in his assertion, and though there is such high authority for what is called the doctrine of Accommodation, I confess that term does not express, what seems to me the use, which the writers of the New Testament make of these passages from the Old. It is true that the Old Testament was the classical book of the Jews, and as such

* Collins’ scheme of literal prophecy, p. 347.

likely to be quoted by them on all occasions. Had it been *merely* the classical book, the use, which was made of it in the way of applying its passages to events, to which they do not refer, might be called, as it is the case of a profane author, accommodation. But it should be borne in mind, that the Old Testament was not only regarded by the Jews as a classical book, but as a *sacred* one; and that they prized it, not only as the composition of their ancestors, but of inspired prophets. They looked upon it with awe and veneration; they were willing to lay down their lives in its defence,* and held it a maxim, that mountains hung upon every word.† They gloried in it as a monument of antiquity, compared with which the books of the heathens were the works of yesterday,‡ and as built on assurances as far above human testimony, as heaven above earth. In the glorious days of the Jews, and while they were an independent people, animated by an unbroken national spirit, and successful in the cultivation of a national literature, we may suppose that they read these precious writings with enlightened minds, and perceived and enjoyed their proper import and application. As the nation declined,§ its religious institutions began to be cor-

* Joseph. contr. Apion. lib. i. § 8.

† Buxtorfii lexicon Chald. et Syr. præf.

‡ This topick is treated with eloquence in the first sections of Josephus against Apion.

§ For an account, almost pathetick, of the gradual decline of the Jewish institutions, see Talm. tract. Sota. c. ix. § 11—15; Surenhergii Mishna, iii. 297 et seq.

rupted and abused, and its sacred writings misunderstood.* A great step was the loss of the language in which they were written, and the consequent necessity of their being interpreted, on the Sabbath, from the Hebrew into the Chaldee.† From interpretation, the next step was exposition, and when the paraphrases at last were committed to writing, if we may judge from the specimen of those now extant, which are, however, of a far subsequent age,‡ it was not without an intermixture of much that was imaginary, and doubtless not a little that was absurd.

In the time of our Saviour, the spirit of allegory was at its height, and we see in the writings of Philo, who lived at this time, a specimen of its extravagance. The sublime and generous spirit of the prophets was lost. The nation was oppressed by the Romans, and despised by the world;§ they resorted, with a kind of self-deceiving desperation, to their promised Messiah, and absurdly fancied him a temporal prince.|| Measuring the sense of prophecy, not by the character of God who gave it, or philosophical conceptions of human improvement and happiness, but by their own present and local wants, they found in every passage which struck their disordered fancies, an intimation of some attribute or action of

* Semleri institutio ad doct. liberal. dicend. p. 143.

† Simon histoire critique du V. T. p. 296, 298.

‡ Eichhorn's Einleit. Th. I. s. 401.

§ "Despectissima pars servientium." Tacit

|| Semleri Institut. ad doct. liberal dicend. p. 159.

their expected deliverer till ; if we may trust their own tradition, every text of scripture had seventy-two faces,* and each regarded the Messiah.† It was under the influence of opinions like these, with respect to the interpretation of the scriptures, that the evangelists were reared. And though, when unerringly instructed, as they were by their master, in the nature of his kingdom, they would naturally correct the errors with respect to *the character* of the Messiah, and their system of interpretation, *as far as it was connected with that*, yet it no more follows that they should resign the practice of applying such passages *as were descriptive of his true character*, as they now understood it, than that they should have immediately employed a new language. They had contracted a habit, which it was not necessary to break, a partiality which it was not pleasing to oppose, and so pursued the custom to which they had been trained. In relating the facts upon which that dispensation was founded, in which the gracious system commenced in the Old Testament was completed, it was obvious to adduce the passages from the record

* Buxtorfi (filii) de punct. Orig. p. 51. This fancy is there expressed in the words of Eben Ezra.

† Basnage hist. des Juifs, l. vi. c. xxvi. § 2. It is another of these judicious principles, that there is not a chapter of scripture, in which mention is not made of the resurrection of the dead, though we may not be able to discern it. Biblia Crit. vol. iii. p. 819.

of the old covenant, in any application to the facts and events of the new, which was conformable to the customs of their countrymen, and which did not interfere with the nature of the religion they taught. The occasions upon which they adduce these passages, and the events to which they are applied, plainly show that they were not cited as forensick proofs. As in the case of the citation already noted from Hosea, they are small events, which generally do not at all concern the sum of Christianity, and which are only valuable as incidental marks of authenticity, in which respect they are indeed of great importance. And yet the forms with which the passages are adduced, when taken along with the prevalent notions of inspiration, are inconsistent, as I think, with the supposition of a mere classical accommodation. The examination of the occasions upon which the citations are made, the import of the citations, and the verbal variations found between them and the Old Testament text, may lead us to conclude, that they are such as casually suggested themselves to the memory of the evangelists, in writing; that they were introduced according to the principles stated above, and *not always* with such actual reference to the original text, as was necessary to verbal accuracy. The use made of the passages may therefore be considered a peculiar use, growing out of the situation of the Jews, and their views of the interpretation of scripture, which is not pre-

cisely designated by any term as yet employed. That of accommodation is doubtless the best.

In illustrating this subject I shall first attempt to show that the different forms, with which passages are quoted from the Old Testament into the New, do *not*, as has been hitherto thought,* indicate a different degree and kind of application:† but that we are to judge from the nature of the case, in what sense the citation was made. It is commonly thought that though the evangelists in merely saying, “as it is written,” might be understood to accommodate an applicable passage, yet when they use the more formal introduction, “this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,” they denote the actual completion of a prophecy. But this opinion seems to be inconsistent, in the first place, with the fact, that some of the passages which are adduced in the most formal manner, appear to have as little relation to the event, as those which are cited in the simplest forms. The abovementioned passage from Hosea is thus introduced: “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet:” and yet, as we have noted, the passage in its original context is purely historical. If what is called accommodation apply at all, it would surely be in a case like this. On the

* Michaelis and Marsh, as cited above.

† This was the doctrine of Surenhusius. La Roche Mem. of mod. literat. vol. vi. p. 119. Acta eruditorum, Anno 1713, p. 106. See also Paley’s evidences, p. 274. First Boston Ed.

other hand in the following passage, "There shall come out of Zion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob,"* an undoubted prophecy is quoted by St. Paul in the simplest form 'as it is written.' But besides these facts, there is another which has also escaped observation, and which seems decisive of this part of the question. The *same* passage of the Old Testament, in the *same* application, is quoted by different writers of the New Testament, and in different places by the same writer, with the different forms of citation. We cannot but suppose, therefore, that these forms are mere modes, in themselves equivalent, of introducing passages from the sacred writings. Thus Matthew relates simply, "and they parted his garments casting lots," without any form of quotation however.† But John writes, "the soldiers took his garments, and made four parts, and also his coat, and cast lots for it whose it should be, that the scripture might be fulfilled

* In our translation of Isaiah we read, "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression, saith the Lord." The apostle quoted the Septuagint; though there is not a perfect coincidence between his text and that of the Vatican edition. I have not the Alexandrian at hand.

Vat. lxx. Is. lix. 20.

Rom. xi. 26.

Και ηξει ενθεν Σιων ο ρυομενος	Ηξει εκ Σιων ο ρυομενος, και
και αποστρεψει ασεβειας απο	αποστρεψει ασεβειας απο Ια-
Ιακωβ.	κωβ.

† Matthew xxvii. 35. See Griesbach's edition, in which all that follows of the 35th verse in the received text, and in our version, is removed.

which saith, &c.* Isaiah liii. 1. is quoted by John† thus, “that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake;” but by St. Paul it is simply cited, “For Isaiah saith.”‡ Isaiah xl. 3. is quoted by Matthew, with this form; “he it is, who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, the voice of one crying, &c. :” by Mark, with this form, “as it is written, in Isaiah the prophet :” by Luke, with this, “as it is written, in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet :” by John with this, “as Isaiah the prophet said.”§ Finally, Isaiah ii. 10. is quoted six times in the New Testament; viz. 1. by Matthew, with this form, “and in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith :” 2. by Mark, without any form of introduction: 3. by Luke, also without any form of introduction: 4. by John, with this form, “for again Isaiah saith :” 5. by Luke again with this form, “for well did the Holy Spirit speak by Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying :” 6. by Paul with this form, “as it is written.”|| Upon this example we may remark, that the citation is made, (in two instances,) without

* John xix. 23, 24. † Ib. xii. 38. ‡ Rom. x. 16.

§ Matt. iii. 3. Mark i. 2. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23.

|| Matt. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. If the quotations are to be considered as made by the sacred historian, and not by the person to whom he ascribes them, the 3d and 5th will be by Luke. But if they are considered as recorded with the forms, in which they were originally quoted, by the person, to whom the sacred writer ascribes them, the 5th and 6th will be by Paul. In any case therefore we have a different mode of introduction by the same person.

any form of introduction—it is made with the simple form, ‘as it is written’—more expressly by “Isaiah saith,” and, “the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled,” and with the remarkably solemn form, “well spake the Holy Ghost by the prophet to your fathers, saying:”* and that the same person, St. Luke, who records this last form of St. Paul, ascribes it to our Saviour without any, while Paul, who uses it so solemnly here, quotes it elsewhere simply ‘as it is written.’ Examples might be multiplied, but these, I apprehend, are sufficient to prove the common supposition, that the different forms, with which passages are quoted, indicate a different kind or degree of application, is incorrect. We must therefore judge of the design of the writer in making the citation, from the nature and circumstances of the case. This also appears to be the usage of the rabbins. The usual form of quotation in the Mishna is, שְׁנֵאמַר, “which is said,” or “as it is said,” and this is used alike in quoting a proof text from the law, or adducing an applicable passage from the prophets, proverbs, or psalms. Thus we are told, “The following shall not be removed from their places, He who has built and dedicated a house, he who has planted a vine, and with due rites has begun to use it, and he who has brought a wife home, *as it is*

‡ That Paul applied this to the Jews of all ages, though spoken to their fathers in the days of Isaiah, must be allowed, both from the occasion of his making the citation, and his words, ‘well spake,’ &c.

said, he shall be free at home one year.”* And again we learn, “that whoever is versed in the knowledge of scripture, of the Mishna, and of the world, shall never deeply sin, *as it is said*, a threefold cord is not easily broken.† Any number of these examples might be produced, but these will serve as an illustration.

If I mistake not, it is of no small importance to this question to show, that the different forms used in the New Testament do not indicate a different kind or degree of application. If, as I hope, I have succeeded in making this probable, there will be no objection in extending the principle of accommodation to the most express forms of citation, if it be allowed of any; and at all events it will leave us to judge of the design of the sacred writers in making the quotation, by the principles of criticism and the nature of the case.

But since we maintain that the apostles quoted passages from the Old Testament in a reference other than their original and true one, and that this was done in compliance with the custom of their country and age, it is necessary to support this proposition by reason and testimony. In the way of reason, I would only ask whether any set of men, enthusiasts, or impostors, who used such deliberative measures as writing books, and

* Deut. xxiv. 5. Talm. tract. Sota c. viii. § 4. Mishna Surenhusii iii. 279.

† Eccles. iv. 12. tract. Kidduschin, c. i. § 10. Mishna Surenhusii iii. 367.

quoting passages from other books held sacred, would think of doing this, in any other than the prevailing way? They might give an interpretation of the passages different from the popular one, and this we know the apostles did, but would their *mode* of applying scripture be different? Certainly not.

It has often been said, that the evangelists quoted scripture upon the same principles that the Jews did, and that this appears from the Jewish books, which are now extant. Dr. Sykes says, "It is evident from numberless examples, that the Jewish mode of writing is exactly agreeable to that of the evangelists; and the masters of the synagogue applied passages of the Old Testament, in senses very remote from that of the original author. Every page of every rabbi almost, will furnish us with examples of this kind. And as for the particular term, 'fulfilled,' they very often meant no more by it, than the happening of a similar event, or an exact agreement, in particular circumstances, of latter things with the former."* Upon this Dr. Marsh remarks, "this learned and sensible writer has produced no examples from the Talmud, or from any Jewish commentator, where similar expressions are used, in cases of mere accommodation; and no assertion can be admitted, without authority. This omission is the more inexcusable, on the present occasion, as the very principle, which he in other respects so

* Essay on the truth of the Christian religion, p. 215.

ably defends, rests entirely on the decision of the question, Did the Jewish rabbins, in quoting passages from the Old Testament with a formulè of this kind, 'in this the scripture was fulfilled,' consider these passages as having themselves reference to the events to which they applied them; or did they ground the quotation on mere parity of circumstances? No one has examined this question with more attention than Surenhusius, whose *βιβλος καταλλαγης*, printed at Amsterdam in 1713, and his edition of the text of the Talmud,* present us with the best means of determining this matter."†

I much regret that I have been unable to see the first named book, the *βιβλος καταλλαγης*, a copy of which is not, I presume, to be found in the country. I have, encouraged by the recommendation of Dr. Marsh, gone over the whole of the Mishna, but have been somewhat disappointed, as I do not find, in all that work, a single quotation of scripture with the form of introduction 'in this was fulfilled,' or with any very similar form. In fact the na-

* This edition of the Mishna, already quoted, is beautifully executed in six folio volumes; sometimes bound in three. Besides the text of the Mishna, it contains a Latin version of it by Surenhusius, a Latin version of the perpetual commentaries of Bartenora and Maimonides, and the entire annotations of the most famous critics, who have edited separate tractates, as those of Sheringham on the Joma, Wagenseil on the Sota, l'Empereur on the Bava kama, &c. The copy I use, belonging to the theological library in Boston, and another in the library of the theological institution at Andover are, it is believed, the only copies in this part of America.

† Marsh's *Michaelis*, i. 478.

ture of the work is such as to give little or no occasion for the pointing out of prophecies fulfilled. It is not a narrative, and contains but little anecdote. It is written throughout in a style of extreme and often unintelligible brevity; and consists of the details of the civil, religious, and domestick institutions of the Jews. These are often founded upon quoted texts of scripture, and as often or oftener, not; and the form of adducing passages of scripture, almost without exception, is *שנאמר*, 'as it is said,' or 'which is said.' I have, however, collected the following, among a multitude more examples, which prove that the rabbins applied passages of scripture to events, to which they could not have supposed them to have had an original reference; and that there is no difference between the forms with which they introduce these passages, and those with which they introduced proof texts and prophecies actually fulfilled. Thus we read, "What is lamentation? that *one* should speak, and *the rest* respond: *as it is said*, teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour, lamentation."^{*} This was originally commanded of the disastrous days of the Jews foretold by Jeremiah, but here applied to the ceremony of funeral lamentation. Again, "the wise men began to fast till the end of Nisan. If they did not procure rain, it was a manifest sign of wrath, *as it is said*,

* Jerem. ix. 20. Tract. Moed Katon, c. iii. § 9. Mishna Suren. ii. 41².

is it not wheat harvest to-day, I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great.”* The argument is, that if it did not rain, till after Nisan, it would rain in the harvest, which would be injurious; but the passage quoted from Samuel had its original reference to an event in his day. Again, “whence is it that a ship is pure? *because it is said*, the way of a ship in the sea.”† The argument, according to the rabbinical commentator is, that as the sea is pure, so is every thing, and of course the ship, in it. The text had no such original application. In the same tractate is this example, “A man shall not go out on the Sabbath day, with a sword, or a bow, a shield, a sling, or a spear. If he do, he is guilty of sin. Rabbi Eliezer said, these are ornaments to him. But the doctors say, they are not ornaments, but a disgrace, *for it is said*, they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and shall learn war no more.”‡ Therefore these weapons are not honourable but disgraceful. Here, certainly, the passage is widely diverted from its original signification. I have already remarked, that the usual form of quotation in the Mishna is שְׁנֵאמַר, ‘as it is said.’ I have, however, collected from it a few in-

* 1 Sam. xii. 17. Tract. Taanith c. x. § 7. Mishna Suren. ii. 360.

† Prov. xxx. 19. Tract. Sabbath. c. ix. § 2. Mishna Suren. ii. 35.

‡ Isaiah ii. 4. Tract. Sab. c. vi. § 4. Mishna Suren. iv. 25.

stances of forms a little more express, together with examples, from other rabbinical works, of forms not found in the Mishna. “Rabbi Elieser said, he who does not eat on the night of the first day of the feast, must do it on the night of the last day. But the doctors decide, that there is no compensation for the thing. *Of this it is said,** that which is crooked cannot be made straight, nor that which is wanting be numbered.”† Again, “Then Simon sent to him and said, if thou wert not Choni, I should decree thy execution. But what shall I do with thee, who dost delight thyself before the face of the God, who also doth to you as you wish; thou art like a son, which delights himself before his father, who does to him the desire of his heart. OF THEE *the scripture saith,‡* Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.§ Again, “If there be a city, which has not obtained rain, *as it is written,||* I have caused it to rain upon one city and not upon another.”¶ The following extract from the Tanchuma, though long, will exemplify the subject in more points than one. It is a comment upon Psalm cxxi. 1. “A psalm of degrees: I will lift up mine eyes to the moun-

* על זה נאמר.

† Eccl. i. 15. tract. Succah. c. ii. § 6. Mishna Suren. ii. 267.

‡ עליך הכתיב אומר.

§ Prov. xxiii. 25. tract. Taanith. c. iii. § 8. Mishna Surenhusii ii. 375.

|| דכתיב.

¶ Amos iv. 7. tract. Taanith c. iii. § 2. Mishna Suren. ii. 371.

tains, from whence cometh my help. **THIS IS THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN,*** ‘Who art thou, oh great mountain; before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain!’† This is the Messiah, the son of David. But why is he called a great mountain? Because he is greater than the patriarchs, as *Isaiah saith*, ‘Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled very high.’‡ The king Messiah is intended, who shall be more exalted than Abraham, more extolled than Moses, and higher than the ministering angels. Wherefore it is said, Who art thou, oh *great mountain*. From whence is he descended? From David, as it is said, and Solomon’s son was Rehoboam,§ (&c. to v. 24.) and the sons of Eliænai were Hodaiah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani; seven. And who is Anani? The Messiah, as it is written, I saw in the visions of night, and lo! Anani|| is his name; and what is meant by seven? That which is written of the king Messiah, Who hath despised the day of small things—these seven are the eyes of the Lord.¶” The following example is from the Zohar

* The original probably is זֶה דְּכַתִּיב : but Schötgen, from whom I have this, does not give it.

† Zech. iv. 7.

‡ The reader will remark here that Is. lii. 10. is applied to the Messiah.

§ 1 Chron. iii. 10.

|| Dan. vii. 13. A play upon the words of the original.

¶ Zech. iv. 10. This is from the Tanchuma, f. 2. 1. 2. et Beresith Rabba, ad Gen. xvii. 10. Apud Schötgen. Hor. Heb. et Talm. ii. 72, 73.

upon Gen. ii. 6. "But there went up a mist from the earth. The targum of Onkelos saith, 'and a cloud went up.' *This is the cloud of which it is written, And the cloud of the Lord is on the tabernacle.*"* The following example is from a very ancient commentary. "Israel shall be consoled by a virgin, *as it is written, The Lord hath created a new thing on the earth, a woman shall compass a man.*" This, says R. Huna, is the king Messiah, AND THIS IS WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAITH, the Lord chooseth *new things*.† In the tractate Joma, four persons are recorded who did worthy things, and four who did evil things. "Of the former it is said, the memory of the just is blessed, of the latter it is said, the name of the wicked shall perish."‡ The following is from Maimonides. "The mode of punishment in hell is not revealed in the Talmud. The doctors only say, that the sun shall draw so nigh as to consume them, and their proof of this, is what is said, "For behold the day cometh, that the sun shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the

* Zohar in Gen. f. ii. c. 128. apud Schötgen. Hor. Heb. et Talm. ii. 88.

† Judges v. 8. Our version is, "they chose new gods." The original will bear that in the text, though it is manifestly fictitious. The example is from Beresith Rab. ad Gen. xli. apud Schötgen. Hor. Heb. et. Talm. ii. 94.

‡ Tract. Joma. c. iii. § 11. על הראשונים נאמר זכר צדיק. ולברכה על אלו נאמר ושם רשעים ירקב. Mishna Surenhus. ii. 225.

day that cometh shall burn them up.”* It can hardly be thought that the doctors supposed the prophet intended to teach an actual approximation of the sun to the wicked in hell. I regret that my not being able to consult the βιβλος καταλλαγης of Surenhusius, prevents me from examining his authorities. The Tanchuma and Mechilta, from which two of them are taken, I have been unable to see, and a reference to Talm. Berachot, p. 65. c. 1.—as far as I can find from the Berlin and Frankfort edition, is incorrect.† The following examples, however, which I have been so fortunate as to find, appear decisive of the question, even as to the most formal and positive modes of quotation.

“When Rabbi Abun entered before the king of the Romans, the king turned towards him. Some followed after to kill the Rabbi; but they saw two sparks of fire streaming from his neck, and let him go, *to fulfil that which is said*,‡ and the nations shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and fear thee.”§ This prophecy of the success and glory of the Jewish nation, which was prom-

* Malachi iv. 1. Tract. Saned. xi. Maimon. in loc. מִיָּוֶזֶה עַל זֶה כִּה שְׁנֵאמַר Apud. Saubert. de Vita et damnat. æter. p. 10.

† Marsh's note to Michaelis i. 479. gives one of the references, and the acta Euditorum in a review of the book of Surenhusius, the others.

‡ מִיָּוֶזֶה עַל זֶה כִּה שְׁנֵאמַר לִקְיָהּ. This, as the reviewer in the Acta Euditorum, above quoted, says, corresponds to the Greek σπῶς [or ενα] πληρωθη το ρηθεν.

§ Deut. xxviii. 10. Talm. Hieros. Berac. c. 4. apud Schaff's opus Aramæum, p. 373.

ised to them if they kept the law, is thus applied to an *individual*, in the state of dispersion which followed their disobedience.

Of the future days, it is thus written in the Zohar upon Deuteronomy : “ The Lord shall restore thy captivity. What does this signify? The Lord shall bring back Israel from captivity, and then the righteous shall return, and be joined to his place, AND THEN SHALL BE CONFIRMED WHAT IS WRITTEN, Surely the righteous shall give thanks to thy name, *the upright shall dwell in thy presence.*”* Here a passage is applied to the return of the Jews from captivity, and their dwelling again in Jerusalem, as a prophecy fulfilled, and with the most positive form of citation, which certainly had no reference to that matter; nay which, to use the expression of Collins, is no prophecy at all; and is, as a learned Rabbi himself testifies,† a moral reflection drawn forth by an historical event.‡

In a rabbinical commentary on the prophecy of Balaam upon these words, “ and he shall smite the corners of Moab,” it is said, “ R. Huna teaches that we are to learn from this, that the Israelites shall be assembled in upper Galilee, and Messiah the son of Joseph shall be seen by them in the midst of Galilee, and they shall go up from thence,

* Ps. cxl. 13.

† R. David Kimchi apud Justinian. ad psalmos. Bib. Crit. iii. 734.

‡ This example is from Schötgen. Her. Heb. et. Talm. ii. 22.

and all Israel with him to Jerusalem, THAT IT MAY BE FULFILLED WHICH WAS SAID, And the sons of the robbers of my people shall exalt themselves, to establish the vision, but they shall fall.* Here a prophecy of Daniel, allowed both by Jews and Christians† to have been fulfilled in the time of Antiochus, is applied with the most positive form of citation, to the future history of that secondary Messiah, of whom we spake above.‡

Finally, Rabbi Hoschaia says, "Jerusalem shall be a torch to the Gentiles, and they shall come to its light. How is this proved? Because the scripture saith, And the Gentiles, shall walk in thy light, and the Lord's house shall be established. AND THIS IS THAT WHICH WAS SAID BY THE HOLY GHOST, BY THE HAND OF DAVID, THE KING OF ISRAEL. For with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light we shall see light."§ Here an ascription to the Supreme Being is applied, by the Jewish interpreter, to the church of Israel, and with the most solemn form of citation.||

* Daniel xi. 14.

† For the Jews, see Jacchialis paraph. in Daniel, ad locum; and for the Christians, the Biblia Critica in loc.

‡ Schötgen. Hor. Heb. et Talm. ii. p. 96. § Ps. xxxvi. 9.

| Schötgen [from whom this example also is taken, ii. p. 128.] supposes this passage to be applied to the Messiah, but the supposition is contrary to the context and the tenure of the passage, as is plain from the extract, the object of which is to show that *Jerusalem* shall be a torch to the Gentiles. The supposition, if it were correct, would destroy the value of the example to those, who think the Jews believed the Messiah would be the supreme God. That this was their belief is asserted in Dr. Allix's judgment of the Jewish church against the Unitarians, and denied in

The doctrine which I have attempted to illustrate by these examples, is confirmed* by express authority of the rabbins. In a work written upon the contents, authors, style, and peculiarity of the Talmud, by Joshua Levita, much information is contained on all the questions that have been moved upon this subject. But what is particularly to our present purpose is contained in the following extract from it. "It is the custom of the Mishna and its supplements, to adduce the written scripture [as authority]; though what is treated of be not a matter of written scripture but of oral tradition: still the scripture is applied to it." †

an answer to that work by Stephen Nye; whose performance should be consulted by those who read Allix.

* The New Testament affords an example which will throw light upon the subject. When the band came to seize Jesus, though he yielded up his own person without resistance, he was anxious to save his disciples. "If ye seek me, says he, let these go." And the evangelist adds, "that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, of them which thou gavest me, I have left none." [John xviii. 9.] The saying here referred to is v. 12. of the preceding chapter, where it is plain from its situation and context, it neither had, nor could be supposed to have, a primary reference to the occasion to which it is applied. For the suggestion of this example, I beg leave to express my obligations to a manuscript lecture of the Rev. Professor Ware, of Cambridge, with the perusal of which I have been kindly favoured.

† The following is the passage as it stands in the translation of L'Empereur. Aliquando in Misna et Baraitha, author scripturam producit, quia tamen ipsum quod tractatur non sit legis; sed Doctorum potius, Scriptura autem eo applicatur. In יבמות. 'Dimissam uxorem non ducunt sacerdotes.' Hic non nisi *dimissam* invenio; unde illud de muliere excalceata. Docetur quod respondeas, Lev. xxi. 7. Et *mulierem*; Ideo concludit ibi auctor, illud de Excalceata Doctorum esse. Scripturam vero VULGARI QUADAM RATIONE AC MODO eo applicari; Halicoth Olam. Tract. iii. p. 110. The copy of this work, which I possess, was formerly in the library of Dr. Lightfoot.

It is true the example given, which appears in the note, is one in which a passage of scripture is professedly quoted as the sanction of a *law*, to which it is allowed to have had no reference. Much rather may we infer the same practice of moral, historical, or prophetic passages, where the similarity of event would furnish far stronger reason for the citation.

From what has been offered, it may be safely concluded to be a fact, that the rabbinical writers apply passages of all sorts, historical, prophetic, and preceptive, to occasions, events, and subjects, to which they had no original reference. That they do this with the same form of application with which they quote real prophecies, in the case of actual fulfilment, or any other passages in their original application, has already been shown of the simple and most usual form שנתמר, 'as it is said.' That the same is true of the other forms may sufficiently appear from two examples.

In the Jerusalem paraphrase upon *Exod. xii. 4.* it is said, "Of the four memorable nights, the second is that when the word of the Lord revealed himself to Abraham between the parts of the sacrifice, when Abraham was an hundred years old, and Sarah was ninety, *to fulfil what the scripture saith* :* Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old,

* לקימה מה דאמר כתבא. The same words are used in the next example. They may be found quoted in Buxtorf's *Lex. Chald. Talm. et Rab.* Art. כתבא.

and shall Sarah, that is ninety, bear?" The form of quotation is the same as in the examples, given above. Again, in the same paraphrase, it is soon after added, "the third night is that when the word of the Lord revealed himself against the Egyptians, at midnight, and his right hand slew the first born of the Egyptians, and saved the first born of the Israelites, *to fulfil the scripture which saith, Is Israel my son, even my first born? and I say unto thee, let my son go, that he may serve me, and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first born.**

* Targum Hierosolymitanum. This is a very wretched Targum; though Allix quotes it with high complacence. "'Tis a miserable patchwork," says a critick of the first authority, "pieced together from fragments of the most different kinds. It is more a Collectanea than a translation. The style, as you might expect from such a cento, is perpetually changing; and is uniform only in this, it mixes together throughout, Latin, Greek, and Persian words, and modern geographical names, like Asia, France, Barbary, and the like. Who would not conjecture from these facts, that the Targum of Jerusalem was pieced together, *long after the sixth century*, from other Targums, also of late date? Who can expect to make any use of such a modern patchwork, for criticism or interpretation?" Eichhorn's Einleit. ins A. T. Th. I. p. 425—6. Allix quotes from this paraphrase the following words, ascribed to the מְטָרָא דֵי, ['Word of God:'] "Adam is the only begotten on earth, as I am the only begotten in heaven," from whence he infers that the paraphrast held the 'Word' to be the only begotten, the Messiah. He did not however quote us a passage, which is also overlooked by Nye in his answer to Allix, which follows the two examples given from this paraphrase, in the Text. "The fourth night is that when the measure of the world shall be filled, that it may be destroyed; Moses shall come from the desert, and king Messiah shall come from Rome; each shall march on the top of his cloud, and THE WORD OF THE LORD (מְטָרָא דֵי) SHALL MARCH BETWEEN THEM. See also the note to p. 55. It may be an apology for this digression, that the publick attention has recently been called to this work of Allix, by an author who quotes it, indeed *at second hand*.

We are accordingly authorized in concluding, that the evangelists and apostles, in the quotations they make from the writings of the Old Testament, have followed the custom of their nation ; that in applying passages of these writings to events and occasions, to which they had not an original reference, with the phrase, ‘that it might be fulfilled,’ they are sanctioned by the authority of the rabbinical books ; and that it is accordingly no just objection to them, nor to the gospel which they defended, to show that the passages thus adduced had an original reference to other events, than those to which they applied them. It may be proper, before leaving this question, to answer some objections to the doctrine of accommodation, which Mr. English has adopted from Collins, and which equally apply to the view we have taken of the subject.

The first in importance is, “that if the sacred writers quote prophecies which were actually fulfilled, according to their original import, with the same force of introduction, with which they quote passages merely applied according to the principles above stated, by what rule shall we know when the citation is of the former, and when of the latter kind?”* If there were any danger of mistaking, there would be a weight in this objection which does not now exist. We can surely trust ourselves

but as *proof* of the fact, that the Jews were Trinitarians. Smith’s treatise on the character of Jesus Christ, p. 12.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 32.

with such an exercise of reason, as to tell whether the passage quoted be a prophecy or not, and accordingly, whether it be applied as such or not. Mr. English says, "I would ask them what rule they have to know when the apostles mean a prophecy fulfilled, and when a phrase accommodated, since they are acknowledged to use the strong expression of fulfilling, in the latter case as well as the former." We have this infallible rule: when the passage appears, by the laws of good sense and sound criticism, to be an actual prophecy of the event, it is adduced as such by the apostles; in other cases, it is cited upon the principles defended above. We would put this question in return: There are in Mr. English's book, as in many other writings of keen disputants, several ironical passages, which are set forth in as grave a form, as his most serious and direct arguments; by what rule shall we know when he is ironical, and when serious?

But it is also objected, "that the distinction of different kinds of citations, is the pure invention of those who make it, and not only has no foundation in the New Testament, but is utterly subverted by its express declarations." But Mr. English has stepped beyond his warrant here. The words of Collins are, "This distinction is the pure invention of those who make the objection, and has not only no foundation in the New Testament from whence only it should be

taken, but is utterly subverted by it." Mr. English struck out the words in Italicks, lest he should use an expression, cold as it is, of regard for the New Testament, and absurdly added, "by its express declarations." As if you were to look in a writing like the New Testament, for express declarations about the manner in which it was composed. As to the main assertion, that this distinction is the invention of those who use it, if it mean any thing, it is begging the question. If all they mean by it is, that the *word* accommodation is invented by those, who adopt the principle; this may be very true, but is certainly an idle and trifling remark. But if they mean that the distinction itself is unauthorized by the New Testament, they assume the very point in dispute. As to what Mr. English, after Collins, proceeds to say, that the authors of the books of the New Testament always argue absolutely from the quotations they cite as prophecies, out of the books of the New Testament, it is so far from being correct, that it is highly notorious they do not argue from them at all. Nor can I recollect half a dozen instances in the four gospels, in which any argument is framed from single prophecies. That in general, the sacred writers argue absolutely from prophetic testimony, may be very true; but is quite another proposition.

It is also objected, that as the writings of the evangelists were intended for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, it should seem very

strange that books written to all the world, by men equally concerned to convert Gentiles as well as Jews, and that discourses made expressly to Gentiles as well as Jews, should be designed to be pertinent only to Jews, MUCH LESS TO A VERY FEW JEWS.* Mr. English has made a ludicrous mistake in cutting short, as he does here, his transcript from Collins. For we do not discover why he says, *a very few Jews*. Upon turning to the original, we see that Collins proceeds to argue, that it was only the sect of the Pharisees, which adopted the allegorical mode of interpretation, and to whom, of course, reasonings upon allegorical principles would be acceptable. Without stopping to remark, that the Pharisees, so far from being “a very few of the Jews,” were, according to Josephus, followed by the great body of the people,† it is observable, that Mr. English, by going no farther in his extract, has left the last words without meaning. As it regards the objection itself, that the books were designed as proofs to the Gentiles as well as Jews, it is doubly incorrect. For first, as we have said, the writings of the New Testament are not a statement of the proofs of Christianity, and second, the great majority of the first converts, in all places, were Jews.

“Lastly,” says Mr. English, “in a word,

* Collins’ Grounds and Reasons, p. 81. English’s Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 31.

† Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. xviii. c. i. § 3.

unless it be granted, that the citations were intended by the authors of the New Testament, to be adduced and applied as prophecies fulfilled; if you do suppose them not intended to be adduced and applied as prophecies; then the whole affair of Jesus being foretold as the Messiah, is reduced to an accommodation of phrases." But this only applies to the theory of Eckerman mentioned above, that all the quotations are made in a secondary application. As for the next sentence of Mr. English, it is pleasant to trace the wonderful coincidence of thought, which different writings occasionally exhibit.

HUET. An.1690.

Nam quod impios quosdam homines blatetantes audivi, aliquando vitam ac res gestas Christinon aditer in veteris testamenti libris prædictas reperiri, quam in Homero et Virgilio, ex quorum libris *ομηροκεντρα* et Proba Falconiæ centones consuti sunt, *dignum eorum inscitia est*, quibus Centonum concinnandum ars parum perspecta est.*

ALLIX. 1699.

This were to suppose, that Christ and his apostles went about to prove a thing, by that which had no strength nor authority to prove it, and that the citations out of the Old Testament are like the work of the empress Eudoxia, who wrote the history of Christ, in verses put together, and borrowed out of Homer; or that of Proba Falconia, who did the same in verses and words taken out of Virgil.†

ENGLISH.

The whole affair of Jesus being foretold as the Messiah, is reduced to an accommodation of phrases. And it will assuredly follow, that the citations of Jesus and his apostles from the Old Testament, are like, and *no better*, than the work of the empress *Eudoxia*, who wrote the history of Jesus in verses, put together and borrowed out of—HOMER! or that of *Proba Falconia*, who did the same, in verses and words taken out of—Virgil!‡

* Huettii demonstratio Evang. p. 741.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 32.

‡ Allix's judgment of the Jewish church, preface p.5, is quoted

The reader will observe, that Mr. English has the credit of a word or two inserted, to make this pillaged wit a little keener, and of the typographical circumstance with which it is set forth. He did not, however, borrow the rest from Allix, as the comparison above might intimate, but from Collins,* the source alike of wit and wisdom, who quotes the passage from the preface of the Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians.

It now remains to say something in this connexion of a subject upon which Mr. English makes himself, and perhaps his readers, very merry. About the time when the Jewish controversy was much agitated in Europe, a work was published by William Surenhusius, Hebrew and Greek professor at Amsterdam, with this title : ספר המשנה sive BIBLOS KATAΛΛAΓΗΣ, in quo secundum veterum hebræorum theologorum formulas allegandi et modos interpretandi conciliantur loca ex V. in N. T. al-

by Collins. As I have not Dr. Allix's work by me, I do not know whether he gives Huet the credit of this hint. The doctor had peculiarities of quoting. He sometimes cites the same Jewish Rabbi under different names, and mightily confirms the authority of Rambam by that of Maimonides, [the same person.] This is remarked by Nye, who would have been less surprised with it, had he remembered that Allix's familiarity with the rabbins had doubtless brought him acquainted with Joseph Ben Gorion, a noted impostor, who in trying to copy from the genuine Josephus, that Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, while Caius Antony and M. T. Cicero were consuls, [Josephi Ant. Jud. xiv. c. iv. § 3.] succeeds in saying, that "Jerusalem was taken, Gaius, and Antonius, and Marcus, and Tullus, and Kikerius being present!" Le Clerc's Bibliotheque, tom. xxiii. p. 127.

† Collins' Scheme of Literal Prophecy, p. 356.

legata. As there is not a copy of this work in the country, it were not becoming to speak very positively of its character. It was one part of the object of the writer to reconcile the quotations from the Old Testament into the New, by showing that the authors of the latter quoted them according to principles recognized by the Jews. This is doubtless true, and is now asserted by those who are not rashly to be contradicted in this, or any critical matter of fact.* But Surenhusius would go further; and as, according to his own notion, the passages of the Old Testament were always quoted as formal proofs by the evangelists, so in like circumstances, he would have it, that they are by the rabbins; and this latter fact he urged as a confirmation of the former. From the examples produced we may venture to assert, that his principle, that whenever the rabbins used the phrase, 'that it might be fulfilled,' it was not only in the way of allusion, but also of demonstration, is incorrect. And considering that he is followed in it by scarce a critick of eminence of the present day, Mr. English might have forborne to argue against it, or rather to amuse himself with it, as if it had been the common theory of Christians. The work of Surenhusius, no doubt, sufficiently proved that the evangelists made their quotations from the Old Testament according to the custom of the

* Eichhorn All. Bib. Th. II. s. 948.

synagogue, and thus far, however erroneous and fanciful in other respects, it was a highly important accession to the anti-judaick apologies. As such La Roche regarded it, (whose review is the source of all this familiarity with which Mr. English and I speak of the work,) and who smiles sometimes at the credulity and awkward zeal of the good professor. Collins, with admirable discernment, foresaw the use which might be made of it against the principles he was affecting to defend, and exerts himself, with no small success to be sure, to make it ridiculous. All that part of his notice of it which appears in Mr. English's work, was taken by Collins, as he himself owns, from La Roche, with no other alteration than translating some of the extracts from Latin into English. Mr. English has transcribed what he says of this work from Collins. Though he uses the personal style, and says, "*I shall state this matter from Surenhusius,*" he still copies from the Grounds and Reasons: *Blindly and unworthily* copies, as we shall presently see. Though I feel some reluctance at dwelling thus upon a book which no one among us can read, and notions which no one adopts, the reader will pardon me for pursuing the subject a moment longer.

Let it be observed then, that there are two questions upon the subject of the quotations from the Old Testament into the New, which are quite distinct: the one, in what application on the passages quoted? the other, how to account for the difference

between the *reading* of the passage, as it stands in the Old Testament and its reading as it stands in the New? For it is well known that there are considerable verbal differences between the text, as quoted by the apostles and evangelists, and as it stands in the Old Testament. Besides that the sacred writers, in quoting from memory, may have occasionally varied from the Old Testament text, as they had it, we may reckon the following sources of these differences. 1. Our copies of the New Testament, by the lapse of time, have suffered some literal alterations, which may have fallen occasionally on the quoted texts, and thus made them to differ from the reading of the Old Testament. 2. Our copies of the Old Testament have undergone a similar alteration, and the reading of some texts been affected thereby, so as to make them different from what they were, when quoted by the evangelists, eighteen hundred years ago. But 3. and principally, the evangelists quoted the Septuagint version of the Bible,* which differs in very many points from our present copies, and present versions, as is of course

* The effect of this upon the verbal conformity of the citations of the evangelists with the text of the Old Testament, may be illustrated by examining some of Mr. English's quotations from the New Testament. In his tenth chapter, which is transcribed without acknowledgment, from R. Isaac, there are many quotations from the evangelists. These Mr. English translated from the Latin version of Isaac, that Latin version translated them from Isaac's Hebrew, and Isaac translated them from the Greek. So that when we get them in the fourth degree, in Mr. English's work, we find them not a little degenerated in the descent.

to be expected. There is hardly a passage, among the vast number of those quoted from the Old Testament into the New, in which, whatever difference may exist between the readings of the prophets and evangelists, may not be satisfactorily explained upon the third of these principles. But Surenhusius, in common with others of his age, entertained such notions of the inspiration of scripture, as led them to think, that the apostles and evangelists quoted directly from the Hebrew. He accordingly found, or fancied, some rabbinical rules of quotation, by which every variation from the Hebrew was accounted for, and shown to be deliberately and intentionally made by the writers of the New Testament. All this he fortifies with examples, to which the reader's attention will be presently asked. In the mean time, I beg the reader to remark the error, or the fraud, I know not which, of insinuating that these rules of Surenhusius were designed by him to account for the *application* of the quotations, and not, as is the case, to a thing totally different, the *variation of the reading* of the passages, as they stand in the Old Testament and New. Mr. English, after giving the rules, says, "it is not necessary to make many observations upon these rules; they speak for themselves most significantly. For what is there that cannot be proved from the Old Testament, or any other book, yea, from Euclid's elements, or even an old almanack, by the help of *'altering*

words and sentences,' 'adding, retrenching, and transposing, and cutting words in two,' as is stated above, by a learned and good man, and sincere Christian, who had found out and brought together these, as the best means of getting the authors of the New Testament out of a difficulty, which had long shocked and grieved their best friends." Miserable foolery! There is a time for all things; and I think too honourably of Mr. English's heart and head not to believe, that when he sees these examples, which I shall presently produce, he will feel a sentiment of regret, and even shame, for the above sentence. In the mean time, it was neither manly in feeling, nor correct in fact, thus to insinuate, that these rules were meant to account for the application of passages, instead of the variation of texts.

Collins availed himself of the unguarded and mistaken assertion of writers now little known or consulted,* to give to the ignorant, who might read his work, the impression, that certain rules of quotation, used by the evangelists, were understood by Christians to be lost, and by Surenhusius to have been recovered by himself. This was calculated for the age in which Collins wrote, in which this branch of the Jewish controversy had been less attended to than others. It is out of season, in the present age of theological knowledge; and indeed it is one considerable in-

* Such as Stanhope and Jenkins.

convenience of copying, through thick and thin, from an author who wrote a century ago, that occasional notions will in the mean time have been exploded, occasional errors and frauds detected, and occasional objections answered. That the writers of the New Testament, in respect to quotations as in every other indifferent thing, followed the custom of their country and age, is now a proposition which it were as useless to prove, as vain to deny. Long, indeed, before Surenhusius or Collins, this had been asserted, though the prevailing systems were not liberal enough to admit the opinion. It was however advanced by bishop Kidder,* nearly fifty years before Surenhusius, and by Grotius† still earlier, and has even been ascribed to Clemens Alexandrinus.‡

Though it is impossible to convey to any one who is not familiar with these inquiries, an adequate idea of the futility and absurdity of the laborious theorizing of Surenhusius, yet we will briefly examine his rules, and their examples. The first rule is, “reading the words of the Hebrew Bible, not according

* Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, P. II. p. 215, 216.

† Grotius ad Matt. i. 22.

‡ Clement of Alexandria is mentioned by Marsh as holding the doctrine of accommodation. I do not know whether the reference he gives (Stromat. viii. p. 883, ed Pot.) be originally his. It should be vii. 863. Moreover, the accommodation *συμπεριφορα*, of which Clement speaks, has, as I understand him, no connexion with the subject of quotations; but is the appellation he gives to such an accommodation in indifferent points to the prejudices of the weak, as a perfect Christian ought to exercise.

to the points placed under them, but according to other points, *substituted* in their stead.”

This rule is particularly untimely at this day, at which the best criticks allow, that the Masoretick points did not exist, in the time of the apostles. But let us see what feats this rule achieves. I give in one column the passage as it stands in the Old Testament, and in the other as in the New; marking the word in print to which the rule is supposed to apply.

Deut. xviii. 19.

Acts iii. 23.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he [the prophet] shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

And it shall come to pass, that every soul which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from *among the people*.

As the sense of the two passages is the same, there can surely be no treason in the differences. In reading ‘destroyed,’ (*εξολοθρευθησεται*;) St. Luke has followed neither the present Hebrew, nor the present text of the Septuagint. As the whole passage is rather abridged than quoted, a verbal conformity is not perhaps to be sought. As the same word in Hebrew signifies ‘from his people,’ and ‘of him,’ according as it is differently pronounced, Surenhusius quotes this as an example of that substitution of points, which Mr. English has marked in ominous Italicks.* I said, Mr.

* Eichhorn’s Alleg. Bib. ii. p. 1015. Owen on Quotations, p. 75. I think that the reading of St. Luke can be easily reconciled

English copied Collins *blindly*. This first example is the proof. The text, as it stands above, is Acts iii. 23. And so it stands correctly in La Roche,* from whom Collins copied it. But the latter, by mistake or misprint, gives it Acts iii. 3. And *this misprint* Mr. English has copied. It stands in his work Acts iii. 3. From whence "I crave leave to argue," that he did not trouble himself to examine in the New Testament, the examples which he gave, nor to see whether they really prove the apostle to have been guilty of the fraud he insinuates.

EXAMPLE II.

Amos v. 26—7.

Acts vi. 43.

But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images; the star of your god, which ye made yourselves; therefore I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus.

Ye took up the tabernacle of *Moloch*, and the star of your God Remphan, figures which ye made, to worship them, and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Some difference, † but no fraud I trust,

with that of the Hebrew. The Hebrew stands, אָרַרְשׁ מֵעִמּוֹ, "I will require it of him." וְיִרְשׁ מֵעִמּוֹ means, 'shall be cut off from his people.' The ducts of י are essentially those of א, and this reduces the difference to a single letter. The LXX often render וְיִרְשׁ by ἐξολοθρευω.

* Memoirs of Modern Literature, vi. p. 115.

† For an account of the probable origin of the difference between the readings of the Hebrew and the LXX see Capelli critica Sacra, p. 60, Owen on Quotations, or Eichhorn ubi supra, p. 1011.

here. The same Hebrew word, differently pronounced, means Moloch and king. In the present Hebrew it is pronounced king, though our translators have rendered it Moloch. As the martyr Stephen differed from the present Hebrew in pronouncing it Moloch, Surenhusius makes this an example of change of points. But the Septuagint is followed.

EXAMPLE III.

Isaiah xxv. 8.

1 Cor. xv. 54.

He will swallow up death, in victory. *Death is swallowed up in victory.*

The same word כָּלַף, differently pronounced, is active and passive.*

EXAMPLE IV.

Exod. xvi. 18.

2 Cor. viii. 15.

He that had gathered much, had nothing over, and he that had gathered little, had no lack. *He that had gathered much, had nothing over, and he that had gathered little, had no lack.*

The substitution made by the apostle, if fraudulent, is so artful that it *disappears* on translation. He follows the Septuagint. And the difference between them and the Hebrew is, that in the Hebrew the same words mean, 'much' and 'gathered much,' 'little,' and 'gathered little,' according as they are pronounced. Those, who translated the Septuagint, pronounced them 'much' and 'little,' and left the verbs 'gathered,' to be supplied, as they are done in our Testaments, in Italicks.

* Capelli critic. Sacr. p. 56, 517.

EXAMPLE V.

Ps. xcv. 10. 11.

Heb. iii. 10.

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. **F**orty years long was I grieved with this generation.

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works, forty years. **W**herefore I was grieved with this generation.

This substitution consists in changing a period for a comma, and placing ‘forty years’ at the end of the tenth verse, instead of the beginning of the eleventh. But as the manuscripts, at the time the New Testament was composed, were written without any distinction of sentences, or even words, it is easy to see that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews might place a comma, where the masoretick editors of the Bible saw fit, some centuries after, to place a period—without thereby deserving a charge of fraud.

EXAMPLE VI.

Gen. xlvii. 31.

Heb. xi. 21.

And Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head.

Jacob worshipped, leaning on the *top of his staff*.

The apostle follows the Septuagint. The same Hebrew word מַטֵּה , according as it is pronounced, signifies staff and bed. Another argument that Mr. English has *blindly* copied from Collins, and not examined for himself the texts which he brings as examples of the heavy charge against the sacred writers, is, that he has retained Collins’ mistake of He-

brews ix. 21. instead of xi. 21. That Collins himself *blindly* copied La Roche appears from this, that in La Roche's review, the same error stands. I correct it from the review in the *Acta Eruditorum*.

EXAMPLE VII.

Prov. iii. 12.

Hebrews xii. 6.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, even as a father every son whom he loveth.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, *and scourgeth* every son whom he receiveth.

The same word כִּי when pronounced keav signifies, 'as a father,' when pronounced kiav signifies, 'scourgeth.' But the apostle follows the Septuagint. And these are all the examples of the first rule.

The second rule is, "changing the letters, whether of the same organ or not."

EXAMPLE I.

Isaiah viii. 14. and
xxviii. 16.

And he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, to both houses of Israel. I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation, and he that believeth shall not make haste.

Rom. ix. 33.

Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence, and whosoever believeth, *shall not be ashamed*.

Mr. English shows, that he did not look at these texts before he quoted them, by the fact, that he quotes some of them a second time, in support of the same charge, without noting that he had quoted them before. Thus he observes, in a different place, with quite as much vulgarity as force, of the two texts in Isaiah, that Paul has “*pieced* two passages together here, which are in the original quite disconnected,” and again, that he “*jams* two distant passages together, no ways related.” Whether this be as true as courteous, St. Paul has as clear a right as Mr. English, to decide. The truth is, the passages are not only related, but in sentiment identical: and if Paul thought they would illustrate the subject he treated, he followed the custom of his country in applying them.

The apostle rather abridges than quotes the passage; however, it is given by Surenhusius as an example of letters changed. The apostle gave his reading as he found it in his Septuagint; the difference in the Hebrew is this, לֹא יִבֹּשׁ means, ‘shall not make haste,’ לֹא יִבֹּשׁ , ‘shall not be ashamed;’* a difference of one letter: and certainly the apostle’s reading is the most coherent.

EXAMPLE II.

1 Cor. xi. 9. is given as the next example, in which, however, there is no quotation at all. There must be a mistake in the reference, but the want of the work of Surenhusius, pre-

* Capelli critic. Sacr. p. 61.

vents me from correcting it. This misprint of La Roche is faithfully copied by Collins, and as faithfully by Mr. English.

EXAMPLE III.

Jerem. xxxi. 32.

Heb. viii. 9.

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, though I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord.

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they continued not in my covenant, and *I regarded them not*, saith the Lord.

The change of one letter reconciles the two texts. 'I was a husband to them,' is expressed in Hebrew by בעלתי בם, and 'I disregarded them,' by גבלתי בם.* But this change was not made by the apostle; he followed the Septuagint.

EXAMPLE IV—and one of the most curious.

Ps. xi. 7.

Heb. x. 5.

Sacrifice and an offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened, burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required.

Sacrifice and an offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared for me. In burnt offering and sin offering thou hadst no pleasure.

* Capelli Critica Sacra. p. 61.

Here it is sufficient for us to say, that the apostle follows the Septuagint. But from whence the difference between the Septuagint and the Hebrew arose, is not so easily decided. The present Hebrew is obscure and unmeaning; and the conjecture of Kennicott is probable, that instead of the present reading רמפן , the copies of the Hebrew from which the Septuagint was made, read רמפן , of which the ducts are nearly coincident.* Surenhusius by giving this as an example of change of letters, seems to have had a similar solution.

EXAMPLE V.

This has been already quoted as example 2. of the first rule. The change of letters takes place in the word remfan.† The Hebrew reads, kifan. The New Testament approaches near to the Septuagint, who have raifan. The difference is, to the last degree, unimportant.

The third rule is, “changing both points and letters.”

EXAMPLE I.

Heb. i. 5.

Acts xiii. 41.

Behold, ye among the Behold *ye despisers,*

* For a conjecture, which is only too ingenious, upon this text, see Capelli critica Sacra, p. 318. Kennicott confirms his by a Syriack Psalter, made from the Hebrew, which reads with the Septuagint: dissertatio generalis, 18, § 5.

† We may notice, in passing, an error of Junius, who, calls the word remfan an addition of the apostle, without seeming to notice that it flows from רמפן by the alteration of פ for the not dissimilar מ . Junii sacra. paral. p. 119.

heathen, and regard *and wonder and per-*
and wonder marvel- *ish.*
 lously.

The apostle coincides with the Septuagint. The difference between their Hebrew text and the present masoretick probably was, that they read תמהו והתמו, 'wonder and perish,' instead of והתמהו תמהו, 'wonder marvellously.' They also read בגוים, 'despisers,' instead of בגוים, 'among the heathen,' a change of a letter.*

EXAMPLE II.

2 Cor. viii. 15. has already been given as the fourth example of the first rule. I am apt to think, in each case, there is some mistake in the reference.

These are all the examples, which Collins and Mr. English give us: they are confined to the three first rules. But I will engage to give as good an account of the examples of the other rules, whenever they are produced. And now I appeal to the reader, whether it be more absurd or atrocious to build upon facts like these the insinuation, that the apostles had made use of certain supposed rules to alter and falsify the passages they quoted, and thus adapt them to their purpose. I cheerfully avail myself of the fact, that Mr. English has quoted three misprints from Collins, to believe that he did not examine the texts, in which this charge was pretended to be substantiated. But what name will you give to the utter heedlessness, the unfeeling indiffer-

* Capelli critica Sacra. p. 60. Owen on Quotations, p. 80. Eichhorn's All. Bib. II. 1009.

ence to the characters and opinions of others, which would permit Mr. English to bring forward a charge of corrupting the passages they cite, against those, who are regarded by all around him as objects of veneration, without making the little effort of looking at the passages, by which the charge, if at all, must be substantiated? It were wasting time to urge, how inexpressibly indifferent are nine tenths of the variations above quoted to the sense, and how absurd was the hypothesis of Surenhusius, that they were all intentionally made, and were to be reconciled to the Old Testament by his rules. He seems to have borrowed some of his rules from the *Halicoth Olam*, the rabbinical treatise mentioned above. There are in that treatise about forty-eight such rules; he might have taken the whole, with equal probability and equal absurdity.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAVE thus attempted an answer to that part of Mr. English's work which relates to the subject of prophecy, in which, by his own confession the principal merits of the question are concerned. This part is contained in the seven first chapters, to which may be added a sort of summary contained in the eighth, and a note appended to it; which are styled by Mr. English, in his letter to Mr. Cary, in the way of flourish I suppose, the most important part of his work, in respect to the prophetick argument. There is nothing in them, I trust, to which a satisfactory reply may not be found in the preceding pages. And here it was my original intention to have left the subject; trusting that whoever else might be dissatisfied, it would not be Mr. English, whose repeated written declaration is before the publick, and whose verbal assertion is well known to many, that all that was important in his controversy was the propheticall argument for the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. But as he has apparently changed his opinion upon this subject, and now demands a reply to what he had previously proposed to discard as worth-

less;* and as there are in the subsequent parts of his work many false reasonings which should be corrected, and false statements which should be exposed, I venture to solicit the reader's indulgence to a review of the remaining portions of the *Grounds of Christianity* examined. These I shall examine chiefly in the order in which they stand, though from the haste with which his work was composed, or some other less respectable reason, this order is to a high degree confused and illogical.

The ninth chapter contains Mr. English's statement of a subject, upon which I cannot but think he is far from explicit. He had already told us, in his preface, that there "was not, nor ought not to be, a word of reproach against the moral character of Jesus Christ, and the twelve apostles;" and this assertion, which is repeated in substance more than once in the course of the work, is indignantly reiterated in the letter to Mr. Cary. Mr. English says, that he 'looks upon the character of Christ with that respect, which every man should pay to purity of morals,' and yet tells us, on the next leaf, that though he was mild and merciful to the woman accused of adultery, he liberated her by a "*contrivance* directly calculated to frustrate the ends of justice." And after remarking on one page, that he discovered marks of hallucination of mind, and that "every intelligent physician,* who reads

* Letter to Mr. Cary.

† Boerhaave has been thought by some to be an intelligent

his discourses, will see plainly that he was not always in his right mind," he adds on the next, that he really respects and venerates his character. Now whatever feeling we may cherish toward spotless innocence, I apprehend that when it is witnessed in one whose life was a scene of 'contemplative and melancholy self-delusion,' and who was subject to occasional hallucination of mind, it is not a feeling of veneration and respect. Pity and compassion are the best sentiments we could entertain; and when habitual enthusiasm and occasional derangement are carried, as Mr. English fancies in the present case, into the business of life, it is absurd, if not revolting, to speak of respect and veneration. But Mr. English labours here upon a distinction which he makes between the real life and character of Jesus Christ, and his life and character as represented in the New Testament. He thinks there is not sufficient proof of the authenticity of the New Testament, and therefore candidly allows that the charges he makes upon the intellectual or moral character of the founder and apostles of Christianity, may be, and probably are authorized only by the false view, which the evangelists give of them. The unparalleled composure, with

physician; he says of himself, in an account of his own life, "*Doctrinam sacris literis hebraice et græce traditam solam animæ salutarem agnovit et sensit. Omni oportunitate profitebatur disciplinam, quam Jesus Christus ore et vita expressit, unice tranquillitatem dare menti.*" Johnson's life of Boerhaave. Works, vol. xii. 58.

which he calls in question the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, will afford us matter for future reflection. In the mean time, let us see how this favourite distinction which he makes, will affect his argument. The books of the New Testament, he argues, are spurious productions of an age subsequent to that in which they are pretended to be written, and therefore the charges founded on them, against the character of Christ and the twelve apostles, must be owned to be hypothetical, and according to Mr. English, *probably* incorrect. But why did he not see and confess, that with equal reason he should own that most of the objections stated throughout his whole work, are hypothetical and probably incorrect? Thus he charges the evangelists with fraud in quoting passages of the Old Testament, in application to the events of the New. How can he prove that they made any such quotations, if he deny the authenticity of the books in which they were made? He speaks much of Christ's declaring that he came to bring division and a sword, in opposition, as he alleges, to the Old Testament; he attempts to show at large, that passages cited from the prophets, are corrupted by the evangelists; his tenth chapter is made up of criticisms upon points principally of fact stated in the New Testament, asserted to be either erroneous themselves, or contradictory to the Old Testament; the eleventh chapter ends with charges against the moral and Christian

character of Paul, grounded upon the Acts and the Epistles, which topicks are pursued, for the most part, through the twelfth and thirteenth; the fourteenth considers the gift of tongues, and other miraculous accounts related in the evangelical history; the fifteenth attempts to show, that the doctrine of Jesus, as represented in the gospels, was proved false by the tests established in the Old Testament; the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth, are principally upon the internal evidence and peculiar morality of Christianity, as appearing from the writings of the evangelists and apostles; and the remainder of the book contains some other observations equally dependent upon these writings. Now I say, that Mr. English in consistency must allow, that to deny the authenticity of the New Testament, is to take from all this array of objections their foundation and force. Composing, as they do, three quarters of his book, yet the case is precisely with them as it is with his charges against the characters of Christ and his apostles; not one of them, of course, can have a shadow or pretence of proof, except from the New Testament.

But Mr. English will be ready to ask, whether Christianity could stand a moment without the writings of the evangelists and the apostles, and whether the foundation of the gospel itself would not fail with the foundation of these objections, upon the supposition that the New Testament is a forgery? To this I answer, that I hope, by divine aid,

to prove the authenticity of the New Testament, in the sequel; till when I say, that all the substantial facts, upon which our faith reposes, can be proved without it.* Tacitus and Suetonius,† heathen historians, testify to the origin of our religion in the person of Christ, to his crucifixion, and to the wide extension of the gospel, after the check which they say it received at his death. Pliny,‡ another heathen, and a persecutor of the church, writes a letter to the emperor Trajan, in the beginning of the second century, which is so full a testimony to the existence, extent, and moral nature of Christianity, that I cannot but think a translation of the whole will be acceptable to the reader, which I accordingly place in the margin.§ Celsus, about

* See Paley's Evidences, ch. ii.

† Tacitus, An. lib. xv. Suetonius, Nero, § 16. et Claud. § 25.

‡ Plinii Epis. lib. x. ep. 97. Vid. apud Semleri Select. Cap. t. i. p. 30.

§ "Pliny to the emperor Trajan wisheth health and happiness :
 "It is my constant custom, Sir, to refer myself to you, in all matters concerning which I have any doubt. For who can better direct me where I hesitate, or instruct me where I am ignorant? I have never been present at any trials of the *Christians*, so that I know not well why, or how much they are punished or prosecuted. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made on account of the age, or whether the treatment of the young and tender should be the same as that of the more robust; whether a pardon should be granted to those who recant, or whether to have ever been a Christian is sufficient ground of condemnation: whether the name itself, without criminal actions, is to be punished, or only when attended with crimes. In the mean time this has been my course with those who have been accused before me as *Christians*. I have interrogated them 'whether they were Christians?' If they confessed it, I interrogated them a second and a third time, and threatened them with death. If they persisted, I ordered

fifty years after, whom Mr. English confesses to have been a decided enemy of Christianity, acknowledges the principal facts, even the

them to execution. For I was clear that, whatever it were which they confessed, they ought to suffer for their contumacy and inflexible obstinacy. There were others of the same infatuation, whom, as being Roman citizens, I have noted to be sent home to the city. In the mean time, the charge extending itself even during these proceedings, more cases occurred. An anonymous list was sent me, containing the names of many, who upon examination, denied that they were or had been Christians; while at my direction they invoked the gods, and sacrificed with wine and incense before your image, which I had ordered to be set before them, with the statues of the deities. Besides which they reviled Christ. None of which things, it is said, the genuine Christians can be brought to do. These, therefore, I discharged. Others, named by the informers, owned that they were Christians, and again denied it; alleged that they had been formerly, but had ceased to be, some three years ago, some longer, and a few above twenty years. They all did homage to your image, and the statues of the gods. They too reviled Christ. They maintained that the extent of their fault or their error was, THAT THEY WERE ACCUSTOMED, ON A STATED DAY, TO MEET TOGETHER BEFORE DAWN, AND TO SING, BY RESPONSES, A HYMN TO CHRIST AS TO A GOD; TO BIND THEMSELVES BY AN OATH, NOT TO THE COMMISSION OF SOME CRIME, BUT TO ABSTAIN FROM THEFT, ROBBERY, ADULTERY, UNFAITHFULNESS, AND FRAUD. When this was done, they separated, and again assembled to a meal which they ate in common, and without disorder, and that they had forborne this after my edict, in which, as you commanded, I interdicted these assemblies, (*ετασιπιας*.) In consequence of these discoveries, I judged it the more necessary to extort the truth from two maid servants, called ministræ, even by the torture. *But I discovered nothing besides a perverse and excessive superstition.* Wherefore I have suspended my proceedings to consult you; *as the thing appeared to merit deliberation,* FROM THE NUMBER OF THOSE INVOLVED. FOR MANY OF ALL AGES, OF ALL RANKS, AND OF EITHER SEX, ARE AND WILL BE ACCUSED. *Not confined to the cities, this contagious superstition has spread into THE VILLAGES AND OPEN COUNTRY.* It might, I think, be arrested. At least it is certain that the temples, WHICH HAD BEEN DESERTED, begin to be attended, and the customary rites, LONG INTERRUPTED, to be revived. The victims too are every where bought up, *which but lately could scarce find a purchaser.* From whence we may imagine WHAT NUMBERS (*quæ turba hominum,*) might be redeemed, could an indulgence be

miracles, in the life of Jesus;* and they are also acknowledged in that collection of Jewish traditions, which is found in the Talmud.† After another century and a half, the history of Christianity is the history of the Roman empire, and of the civilized world. Now from this we collect, upon the authority of heathens and Jews, all of them cold, prejudiced, or hostile witnesses, that Christ was crucified in the reign of Tiberius, that his followers were diffused throughout the world, that they regarded their master as an object of veneration and praise, and called, with continually increasing success, upon all nations, to believe in his name. Upon these facts, added to that correspondence with alleged prophecy, of which we have given a summary above, one might rest an intelligent faith upon Jesus Christ; and a faith to which not one of the objections stated above, would apply. This would leave Mr. English's work very lean in point of size, and much weakened of whatever force it might have. And this is a more striking confirmation than he may wish of his original opinion, that nothing in his work, but the bare argument from prophecy, was of any consequence.

granted on recanting." This translation is varied considerably from that given by Lardner, vii. 291—3.

* The whole discourse of Celsus against the Christian religion, as far as it can be retrieved from the eight books, which were written by Origen in reply, has been put in order, and barbarously translated by Glas, the founder of the sect of Sandemanians, in whose works it may be found, vol. iii. p. 195, et seq.

† Grotius de Veritate, l. ii. § 2.

Having told us that Jesus appears to have been a man of *irreproachable* purity,* Mr. English proceeds to remark on the next page, that “the only actions in his life, which betray any marks of character deserving of serious reprehension, are his treatment of the woman taken in adultery, and his application of the prophecy of Malachi concerning Elias, to John the Baptist.” If every one, who is so unfortunate as to make an application of a prophecy, which Mr. English, or those whose cause he defends, do not happen to approve, is a subject of serious reprehension, the sum of publick morals will lamentably decrease. However, this prophecy of Malachi has been previously examined, and needs not another discussion. As to the case of the woman taken in adultery, which is recorded in the eighth chapter of John, Mr. English reprehends our Lord’s conduct in it as subversive of publick justice. He maintains, that our Lord, instead of saying to her accusers, “let him, that is without sin among you, cast the first stone,” *should* have said, “men, who made me a judge or divider over you, carry the accused to the proper tribunal.” Dr. Paley has been thought to have some knowledge of the principles of publick justice and moral law, and in the fourth chapter of the third book of his philosophy,† he gives an elegant

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 67.

† Principles of moral and political philosophy. Boston Ed. p 204.

and irresistible vindication of our Lord's conduct upon this occasion. To that I would refer Mr. English and the reader, just observing, however, that the whole account, as it stands in the eighth chapter of John, is probably a subsequent addition, and marked as such in the edition of Griesbach.

Mr. English charges our Lord with inconsistency, "inasmuch that while he professed to preach the gospel to the poor, he designedly involved his instructions in parables, lest they might understand them, and be converted from their sins, and God should heal or pardon them."* I suppose we must reason with Mr. English, as if he really misapprehended our Saviour's intention. I would say then, that our Lord did not address himself to a philosophical skeptick, who was to live eighteen hundred years after, and would affect to interpret his words by forms of language, never heard of among the Jews; but he addressed himself to those who had been accustomed to the style of the Old Testament from their infancy, and had read therein the following words: "And God said, go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, *lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*"† This occurs in a context,

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 70.

† Is. vi. 9, 10.

nearly the most solemn in the Old Testament. Does Mr. English, who has argued thus far in his work upon the supposition of the inspiration of Isaiah, really think that the prophet taught, that God commanded him to make his hearers senseless and obdurate, lest they should understand his doctrine, and be converted by it? The reader will find that the language in the evangelists, to which Mr. English excepts, is the same as this of Isaiah.

He quotes on the same page, as an instance of inconsistency, these words of our Lord, "Sleep on now, and take your rest—Arise, let us be going." This is something like 'piecing two texts together,' or at least like 'altering' a passage; charges, both of them, of which Mr. English is very liberal against the evangelists. Our Lord, in retiring to the garden to pray, took with him three of his disciples, and while his soul was sorrowful even unto death, he said, "tarry ye here, and watch with me." He knew the extreme agony which he was about to undergo, and requested their attention and care. But when he turned to them after his first act of devotion, he found them asleep, and reproachfully asked "what! could ye not watch with me one hour?" This was repeated twice, and after he had prayed the third time he "cometh to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep now and take your rest; *behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* Rise, let us be going; behold he is at hand

that doth betray me." The words in Italicks Mr. English omits, that he might bring the preceding and following clauses into more apparent contradiction; though the meaning of the whole passage is extremely plain, that whereas Jesus had asked of his disciples to watch with him while he prayed, he reproached them for their neglect, when his devotions were over, by telling them to sleep on now, his prayers were finished, and the hour was at hand when their presence and attention could be of no avail. This was a gentle reproach, and not, as Mr. English would affect to believe, a direct admonition to the disciples to indulge in sleep. But let us hear himself: "The commentators endeavour to get rid of the strange contradictoriness of these words, by turning the command into the future, and rendering the Greek word, translated "*now*," thus: "*for the rest of your time*," or "*for the future*." And that he asked them, "whether they slept for the future?" which appears to be just as rational as to have asked, "how they do to-morrow?!" Some profitable remark might be made on the unhappy perversity of moral feeling, which could permit a man to turn from the perusal of so affecting a relation as that in question, and indulge in such a miserable jest. But Mr. English is too much of a scholar not to know, that no alteration is made in the Greek by *turning*, as he calls it, the imperative into the indicative mood, and that in the manuscript of the evan-

gelist, the passage in both interpretations would be written equally alike. Though he speaks of "the commentators," it is neither the most nor the best who propose this interpretation; though it be a very rational one. The words of Whitby are, "If with the Vulgate, the Glossaries, and our Bois, we here interpret το λοιπον, jam, now, as our translation doth, these words being rendered interrogatively, give the sense thus: *Do you sleep now, and take your rest, when the hour of temptation and the traitor is at hand?* Απεχει, it is enough that you have slept so long; *arise now and let us go hence.*"* Is this any thing like the poor foolery, "how do you do to-morrow?" The fact unluckily is, that Mr. English, in his laudable zeal to introduce this respectable pleasantry, fell into a gross mistake of Whitby. For this commentator told him, that certain criticks translated the word rendered 'now' by 'hereafter,' or 'in future,' and certain *other* criticks rendered the passage interrogatively; and Mr. English, to use a phrase of his own, "jammed these disconnected facts together," and made out of them that the commentators had interpreted the passage, "do you sleep in future." And even this, however irrelevant in its context, seems to me no more absurd, than if I should ask Mr. English, "Do you retain this objection in your future edition of the Grounds of Christianity examined?"

* Whitby in loc.

He next appeals to John viii. 51. “Verily, verily, [said Jesus,] I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, *he shall never see death.*” “Reader, what dost thou think,” asks Mr. English, “of this saying? Has believing in the Christian religion at all prevented men from dying, as in aforetime? And should we be at all astonished, that the Jews said to him, ‘we know thou hast a demon;’ and if in our times, a man *was* to make a similar assertion, should we not say the same?” If Mr. English had not lost his former acquaintance with the New Testament, he would have remembered another passage, that would explain this: “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting life*; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*”* However, in answer to his question, whether we should not say, that a man in our times was mad who made this assertion, I would reply, that we probably should, unless he wrought such miracles as showed he was authorized to make it. And I assure Mr. English, that, so far from agreeing with the Jews, the wisest and best men that ever lived have thought, that if they kept the saying of Jesus, they should never see death; that he himself, for the happiest two years of his life, thought the same; that wise and good men have not only thought this, in the hours of health and strength, when most are apt to think they shall live forever, but that hundreds and thousands, in the

* John vi. 40

agonies of dissolution, have believed that, keeping the saying of Christ, they should never see death.

Having thus established the charge of inconsistency in conduct, Mr. English proceeds to offer a specimen of absurd and inconsequent reasoning of our Saviour. It is this, that in reproaching the pharisees for building and adorning the sepulchres of the prophets, whom their fathers slew, he says, "your fathers slew them, and ye build their sepulchres;" and he adds, "that thus they showed, that they approved the deeds of their fathers." "Surely," continues Mr. English, "this is absurd. Did the Athenians, by setting up a statue to Socrates after his unjust death, show to the world that they approved the deed of them who slew him? Did it not show the direct contrary? And was it not intended as a testimony of their regret and repentance?" Our Saviour did not speak here of the Athenians or Socrates, and we may answer Mr. English's questions with respect to them both, in the affirmative, without allowing that our Saviour's argument was inconsequent or absurd. The reproach of our Saviour was not intended against the building of the sepulchres simply, but against the hypocrisy of the thing; inasmuch as while they built the sepulchres of the prophets, and professed that, had they lived in their fathers' days, they should have washed their hands of the guilt of slaying these servants of God, they showed, by persecuting Christ, who was also

ai prophet, that they had the same cruel and wicked spirt as their fathers. Mr. English quotes Luke, but he might have received this idea, now stated, from the more complete report, given by Matthew, of our Lord's words. "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, HYPOCRITES; *because* ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore, ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye be the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." Now here, I apprehend, is neither inconsequence or absurdity.

Mr. English proceeds to object to these words of our Saviour, "upon you, the Jews, shall come all the righteous blood that has been shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah," &c. He asks us, "how a man sent from God could assert to the Jews, that the blood of Abel and all the righteous, slain upon the earth, should be required of them? Did the Jews kill Abel, or did their fathers kill him?" &c. We answer, 'No,' with Mr. English; and if he had left us room to be astonished at any opinion of his, we should be surprised, that poorly as he thinks of the character of the personage to whom he is objecting, he should have entertained the thought, that this objection could be well founded. There is a breathing of rab-

binism in it, unworthy of a liberal mind. Why did he not quote the whole passage? “Wherefore I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill, and some crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood,” &c. It was for their own murders that the Jews were to be punished; and to such a degree was their guilt and the retribution of it to extend, that they might seem to bear the punishment of all the righteous blood, which had ever been shed.

And these are the foundations of the charge of inconsistency of character, of absurdity and inconsequence of reasoning against him, of whom a fellow unbeliever has said,—Mr. English will pardon the repetition,—“what elevation in his maxims, what profound wisdom in his discourses,”—they are the foundations of the charge which Mr. English had the heart to bring against him who, immediately upon the words last called in question, exclaims, “Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Let us follow Mr. English to his objections to the argument from martyrdom, an important and interesting subject. He observes thus: “It is said that Jesus, by giving himself up to suffer death, proved the truth of his

mission and doctrines, by his readiness to die for them ;” and a page onward he adds, that “the argument of martyrdom has been more particularly applied to the apostles and first Christians.” Now, though it be very common perhaps to say that, connected with other parts of our Saviour’s life and character, his voluntary sacrifice was a powerful proof of the truth of his mission and doctrines, yet I do not recollect to have seen the simple fact of this sacrifice considered as such a proof. Jesus, had he been as Mr. English describes him, a melancholy enthusiast, might in a passion of fanaticism have laid down his life, in testimony of some visionary and groundless notion ; and his death would have been a proof of the weakness of his mind, and not the truth of his pretensions. But if he showed himself, by the whole tenure of his life, by many distinct discourses, by many separate acts, in short, by every possible manifestation of character, to possess a sublime and exalted mind, a rational and practical knowledge of truth, and a sacred sense of obligation ; if he discovered consummate prudence and wisdom, under circumstances of peculiar trial, and thus showed himself a competent evidence, then the fact that he voluntarily laid down his life in defence of his doctrine, rises at once into a strong argument for its truth. Mr. English has overlooked this distinction, which cannot however be denied to be well founded, and which shows that the argument from martyr-

dom requires the previous discussion of the character of our Lord, as a competent witness to facts, in testimony of which he died. Mr. English, after a page or two of small cavilling, assumes that he was not; and proceeds to compare his death with that of enthusiasts and fanatics, the Hindoo widows, the Yoguis, and I know not what poor wretches, who are led by one pretence or other to self-murder. He quotes the case of missionaries sacrificing themselves in attestation of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and asks the Protestants candidly to say, "whether they will rest the issue of their controversy with the Papists, upon the argument of martyrdom?" Here is involved an unfortunate misapprehension of the object, to which the martyrdom is applied as an attestation. It is not the truth of *opinions* but of *facts*, that we prove by martyrdom. A Papist sacrifices himself to the worship of the Virgin Mary; and he proves by it, that he thought this worship to be authorized and required. But, as to this, we think ourselves as well qualified to judge as he. It is a question of interpretation, not of fact; and a man's sacrificing himself to the defence of his interpretation, only proves that he sincerely believes it to be correct. Still more irrelevant is the case quoted of "the worshippers of misshapen idols, prostrating themselves before the enormous wheels of the car of Seeva, and piously suffering themselves to be crushed in pieces by the rolling mass." Can Mr.

English affect to think this a parallel of apostolick martyrdom? Do these poor wretches yield up their lives in attestation to any fact? Is it their deliberate testimony to any practical truth; or is it a melancholy delusion, or an infernal imposition of their priests? If Mr. English had any objection to the Christian argument of martyrdom, he had done better to meet it in the best known and most distinct statement. "If twelve men, of well known probity and good sense, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible they should be deceived; if the governour of the country, hearing a rumour of this account, should call these men into his presence, and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture, or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse, with one voice, to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case; if this threat was communicated to them separately, yet with no different effect; if I myself saw them, one after another, racked, burned, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their accounts, there is not a skeptick in the world who would not believe them."* To all the specifications here made should be added this, that the miracle, as in the case of Christianity, was wrought for a most important practical end, for a purpose worthy of God.

* Paley's Evidences, p. 14.

Now Mr. English will see that in this supposition, omitting the formalities with which it is drawn up, are involved circumstances which remove it from the analogy of any of the cases he mentions. First, the object attested is a *fact*, not an opinion. Therefore the case of the missionaries is irrelevant; and second, the assertion of this fact, so far from being honorable to those who make it, and the sacrifice, so far from being an observance of an ancient superstition, are the provocation and execution of an odious and cruel punishment. And this removes the case from that of the Hindoo widows, and the other wretched devotees, who are called upon by the bloody superstitions of their land to make this sacrifice, which they do, says Mr. English himself, 'from the impulse of vanity, and the fear of disgrace.'

Mr. English speaks of the Roman Catholic missionaries, the Baptists, Quakers, and Methodists, as furnishing the same attestation as the primitive Christians did to their doctrines, and of course entitled to the same assent. But here also he overlooks the circumstance, that it is not facts, but opinions, to which these people testify. Wesley and Whitefield no doubt underwent incredible labours in support of their doctrine, and this proved, in connexion with other considerations, that they sincerely believed it to be true. And this is all we ask of the unbeliever, with respect to the sufferings and labours of

the apostles. Let him allow that these sufferings and labours prove that twelve men, whom we otherwise show to be competent witnesses, sincerely and firmly believed that they saw and touched the person of Christ, after his resurrection, again and again, and we ask no more. No system of infidelity can stand against this concession; and for all Mr. English has said, with respect to the argument for martyrdom, he is bound to make it.

The remainder of this ninth chapter of Mr. English, except some extracts from Celsus at the conclusion, is transcribed *without acknowledgment* from Orobio. We before had occasion to see in what way Mr. English professed to have softened the bitterness of the Jews against Christianity, in those passages which he borrowed from them. A pleasant instance occurs in this extract from Orobio.

OROBIO.

Some of the more sensible men despised Paul, others, as the Athenian philosophers, ridiculed him, not for preaching against the gods, but concerning the resurrection of men; yet they did not kill him because he preached a god unknown to them, and they had no objection

ENGLISH.

Accordingly we see that Paul could make nothing of the philosophers of Athens, who derided him and considered him as telling them a story similar to those of their own mythology, when he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. And in revenge we see Paul railing

OROBIO.

among so many gods
to admit a new one.*

MR. ENGLISH.

against both the stubborn Jews and the incorrigible philosophers, as being unworthy of knowing, the "*hidden wisdom*," which was to the one a stumbling block, and to the other foolishness, and which he thought fit only for "the babes," and devout women, with whom he principally dealt.†

This stands between a page or two, on each side, transcribed from Orobio, and it is therefore I quote it as a specimen of his manner of softening and qualifying the Jewish gall. As he sneers a little at the 'stumbling block' and 'foolishness,' I beg leave to refer him, as I trust I can do many of my readers, to a discourse, which I had the pleasure to hear preached at different times, to some thousands of hearers, upon this text: "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the *foolishness* of preaching to save them that be-

* Limborchii Amic. Col. p. 135.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 75.

lieve." Mr. English may know something of this discourse. As to the opinions advanced in it, we cannot perhaps deny his plea, that he has seen reason to alter them. But as to the facts, solemnly asserted therein and abundantly proved, we beg leave to think, that his change of opinion cannot have extended to them, and accordingly commend them to his serious consideration.

Since he has taken leave to borrow so much, without credit, from Orobio, I may be pardoned for borrowing the reply of Limborch in return. To this I cannot but ask the reader's attention, though for its length I have placed it in the margin. The translation is free, but faithful.*

* Limborch had urged, in a former part of the controversy, "If the apostles were not honest men, and did not declare the truth, but were impostors, what could they expect to gain from this outrageous imposition, what honours or riches? Since on account of this gospel which they preached, they were held in the highest disgrace by all, were poor and bore poverty patiently, sought subsistence with their hands, and willingly endured the most painful martyrdoms. The same did they constantly inculcate to their disciples, as might be expected, since they had themselves the example of their master." To this reasoning the Jew replied, in the passage which Mr. English transcribes, pp. 73, 74, 75, 76. And this is the rejoinder of Limborch. "My learned adversary calls this argument, which appears with the face of demonstration to me, *conjectural*; and says, it is to be answered in turn by conjectures. It is natural that those, who refuse their attention to the true cause of a fact, should fall into error in the rashness of conjecture, and find nothing in which they can securely rest. Since all the conjectures of my learned friend are equally fallacious and improbable, may we not conclude, (what was the case,) that the apostles, in the full persuasion of the truth of their testimony, chose rather to undergo every suffering and death, than fail of giving a plenary attestation to a truth, of which their knowledge was so positive. But

I have already mentioned some mistakes, into which Mr. English has been led, by too implicitly transcribing authors, that wrote ma-

let us hear the conjectures, though I cannot but wish my learned friend had been a little fairer in his quotations from the Acts of the apostles, since if he had fairly examined the accounts which he quotes from them, many of his conjectures would have disappeared. He first says, *that the apostles could lose no reputation, fame, or honour, since being men of the lowest class, they had none to lose.* But men of the lowest class may feel the value of the reputation of an honest name, beyond comparison the most glorious and precious; and that is a miserable religion, which estimates reputation solely from riches or worldly success. My learned friend adds in contempt of Paul, that he was a "sewer of hides." But that he was a man of standing among the Jews, is unquestionable from his history and epistles. But in the warmth of his love of divine truth, he held all the comforts he enjoyed of no esteem, and preferred a state of poverty, in which he subsisted by a servile occupation, to an indolence in the propagation of the word. I need not say, that though Paul, before his conversion, was devoted to some handicraft, he is not on that account the object of reproach or contempt. Since, as the learned have observed, it was the custom among the most learned of the Jews to acquire a trade, and if need were, support themselves by it. They were cobblers, bakers, tanners, as Grotius has proved from Josephus upon Matt. xiii. 55. and Acts xviii. 3. But let it be that they were all men of the lowest rank, so much the less reason had they to hope that their preaching, if false, would be believed. "*The reward of their labours,*" says my learned friend, "*was that all things should be delivered to them as men of divine authority, that wherever they went they should be respectfully received, and have the controul of all spiritual affairs.* But if their accounts had been false, and their doctrine unconfirmed by miracles, upon what ground could they expect to obtain these rewards. They preached, that Jesus Christ, condemned as a blasphemer by the Jewish Sanhedrim, and crucified as a malefactor, was the promised Messiah, was risen from the dead, and seated in heaven at God's right hand. How if all this were a fiction of their own, could they have thought there could be one in the world so weak, as to give any credit to their assertion. What would be their treatment but universal execration, as impostors, or contempt, as fools? And who can suppose that the chief men of the Jews, actuated as they were by the bitterest hatred of the first Christians, would never have detected that fraud, if their miraculous accounts had been false? So that instead

ny years ago, and under a different state of knowledge. The controversy with Orobio took place more than a hundred and twenty

of spiritual controul and universal hospitality, they would have found infamy and contempt, a prison and punishment, and could have expected nothing else. [See above, p. 29, n.] My learned friend proceeds, *Riches they did not acquire, for their intercourse was with the poorest people: nor had they any to lose by preaching the gospel. In the mean time they had their support from the gospels in the contributions collected from the churches, and the estates of the believers which were sold, and the price laid at the feet of the apostles.* But they not only gave up their riches, but all that they had, their homes, their boats, the calling by which they supported their families. The contributions, which Paul calls grace, were not exacted for the apostles, but for the poor of Jerusalem, particularly in time of famine, 2 Cor. viii. And so far was Paul from seeking them for himself, that he declares in many places, that he was a burden to none, but supported himself with his own hands, that the gift of the gospel might be free. Which is so plain, that I wonder at the violence done by my learned friend to his words. See 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15, &c. 2 Cor. xi. 7. xii. 13. 1 Thes. ii. 9. Acts xx. 34. 2 Thes. iii. 8, 9. But if their view were to a livelihood, upon what ground could they expect it, upon what ground could they expect disciples, if their accounts had been false. A few, perhaps, at first might have been deceived by the novelty of the imposition, but it must soon have been detected, and they would then have been detected by all. This has ever been the fate of the Jewish impostors. Barchochebas pretended to be the Messiah, and had a forerunner Akiba, who boasted the working of many miracles, and many at first were deceived through their credulity; but upon the detection and the discovery of the fraud, they were deserted by all. And such has been the end of all impostors, whom the Jews have ever received at first with open arms, for instance, the late ridiculous Messiah Zabbathai Trevi. Who now adheres to him? Not one. Moreover, the support afforded by the faithful, was at all events no compensation for the persecutions, cruelties, and tortures, which the apostles endured and expected. For they were called to suffer tribulation, distress, persecution, nakedness, peril, and the sword. Rom. viii. 15. They hungered, thirsted, were naked, buffeted, had no certain home, and were made as the filth of the world. 1 Cor. iv. 11, 13. And Paul himself was in prison often, five times scourged, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, and harassed with continual labours and cares. 2 Cor. xi. What proportion do these bear to

years ago. Orobio said* at that time, “*Tamen reformati dicunt Petrum nunquam Romæ extitisse,*” and Mr. English follows him in say-

the support yielded them by the churches, and of which they were so often deprived by persecution, as to suffer for food and clothing? If *there was no danger of their lives to be feared but from the Jews, and not from the Greeks and Romans*, as my learned friend asserts; he places the malignity of the Jews in a striking point of view, as treating with greater severity than the Gentiles, who knew not the true God, men who taught an excellent morality, as he himself after owns. But my friend has fallen here into an error, through his ignorance of history. The persecution of the Christians began indeed with the Jews, but the Gentiles soon pursued it with added zeal. Still it was with difficulty the apostles could be brought to leave the Jews, notwithstanding the persecutions, and betake themselves to the heathen. But when the gospel began to spread among the latter, their treatment was yet more severe. This is abundantly testified by the epistles addressed to the Gentile believers, in which the apostles continually exhort them to bear patiently the persecutions they suffered for the gospel, not only from Jews, but their own magistrates, and the populace. Witness 1 Thes. ii. 14. “*For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus, for ye also have suffered like things of YOUR OWN COUNTRYMEN, even as they have of the Jews.*” But if the churches were persecuted, the apostles, their founders, did not escape. See 2 Cor. i. The apostles, James and Peter, too in the epistles, which they address to those scattered throughout Pontus, Gallatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia, and to the dispersed of the twelve tribes, are large in their consolations of the believers, under persecution: which it is plain they could not have experienced from Jews, who had no power beyond Judea, but from the Gentiles under whom they lived in their dispersion, though of course at Jewish instigation. *My friend denies that the apostles publicly preached against the idols of the Gentiles.* Mr. English has abbreviated and modified this part of his transcript.] He might as well deny that they preached the gospel. That they did this however with intrepidity, both in the Jewish synagogues, and before the heathens and magistrates, cannot be gainsaid; and the preaching of the Gospel was preaching against idols, and conversion to the gospel was conversion from idolatry. [I omit a page here, corresponding to what Mr. English omits from Orobio.] There is one thing, which my friend objects with some plausibility to Paul, *that he exclaimed in the Jewish Sanhedrôn,*

* Limborchii Amic. Col. p. 135.

ing, "Most of the learned men of the Protestants assert that Peter never was in Rome."* Now the reply of Limborch is correct, that

that he was judged from the resurrection of the dead, and thereby excited a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees. But is Paul's conduct here deserving of reprehension? Did he deny his Christianity? By no means. He said only he was judged for the resurrection of the dead. Was not this true? Was not the sum of Christianity, which Paul preached, the doctrine that Christ had risen from the dead, and that all who believe and obey him should rise in like manner? He that was judged for Christianity, was therefore judged for the resurrection of the dead. Paul was too well known to the Jews, was too notorious a Christian, to deny his faith, had he wished to do it, or be believed, had he denied it. And he spoke in the Sanhedrim of the resurrection of the dead in general, and not of Christ's in particular, that he might show that the Pharisees had no cause for persecuting the Christian religion, since it strenuously supported that very doctrine which the Pharisees asserted, against the Sadducees. "But before Agrippa and Festus," says my learned friend, "Paul denied that he taught any thing against the circumcision, and the laws of the fathers, though it is plain from the Acts and Epistles, that he turned away the Jews from circumcision and the other rites." It is true that the Jews made this accusation against Paul, though false and unfounded; and one which nothing in the Acts or Epistles can be alleged to prove. Nay, to the contrary of which abundant evidence appears. Paul only taught that man was not justified by deeds of the law, but faith in Christ, and that therefore the ritual was not to be imposed on the Gentiles. Which my learned friend will assent to, as the law was not given to them, but the Israelites alone. Paul did not dissuade the Jews from the ritual. Nay, he himself circumcised Timothy, who was of Jewish birth by his mother, Acts xvi. 3. and purified himself in the temple, Acts xxi. 24. It was with truth therefore he affirmed before Festus that he taught nothing against the circumcision, or the laws of the fathers. At first, before Christianity had prevailed among the Gentiles, it is certain that the accusations of the Jews were little regarded by the heathen magistrates, and the Christian religion was considered as a doctrine of the Jewish, the assertors of which formed a sect among the Jews, with which the heathens had no concern. But afterwards, when by the conversion of many Gentiles it had become more notorious, its professors were treated with far greater severity than the Jews. The prætor solicited the for-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 76.

it is the prevailing opinion of Protestants, that Peter did not live five and twenty years at Rome, as the Papists thought, though some

givenness of Paul, not because he had scourged a Christian, but a Roman citizen; a thing forbidden by the Roman laws, the protection of which had not yet been withdrawn from the Christians. This protection however was not long after denied, and all Christians, without distinction, whether Romans or not, were subject to punishment. My learned friend denies, "*that any greater argument arises for the truth of the evangelical history, from the apostles having suffered death in the preaching of the Gospel, than for the innocence of many who are condemned to death in a state for offences against the laws.*" But their case, and that of the apostles, is totally different. Offenders deny their crime, and if it be proved, or extorted from them by torture, they then confess and condemn it, and to preserve their lives, are ready to own the justice of their sentence. But the Christians never denied the charge of preaching the gospel; they defended it as true and divine; they would not deny it even to preserve their lives, but rejecting the offer with fortitude, and even with joy, sustained the most cruel tortures and death. Now if a man can sustain these in attestation of a thing, which he professes to have seen with his own eyes, and yet do it insincerely and falsely, there is an end of all testimony. Finally, my learned friend doubts the fact of the martyrdom of the apostles, *because after the evangelists the Christians have no canonical history of the death of the apostles, and the history they have, is filled with superstitious fables.* But if this argument hold, then I may deny that there was such a person as Antiochus, who persecuted the Jews, or that there were such persons as the Maccabees, and Herod the great; or finally, that Judea was reduced by Vespasian, and the city and temple levelled by Titus, since the Jews have no canonical history of these things. Many things may be shown to be true, from the consent of subsequent historians, though they be not inspired. The history of the death of the apostles was not essential to our salvation, and was not therefore recorded by inspired men. They only relate in what manner the gospel was transferred to the Gentiles, for the infidelity of the Jews; that we might know that this took place by divine command, and not from private reasons. There they stop. The death of the apostles proves only the sincerity and integrity which they exercised in preaching the gospel. The fables with which their history is corrupted by writers of later ages, may be easily separated from the history itself, if we consult those who wrote the nearest to the apostolick age, who will give it to us in its sim-

Protestants maintained that he was never there. Semler, the highest uncircumcised authority I could quote to Mr. English, indeed says, "that Peter went from Antioch to Rome, was formerly believed without hesitation; and that he lived there in the second year of Claudius, and for twenty-five years, which superstitious opinion had become a general corruption, though unsupported by antiquity."* He plainly distinguished here between the two opinions, and rests the question upon the authority of the ancients. Now it is well known that not a single ancient authority can be adduced for the assertion that Peter never was at Rome, and Semler himself in another work says, "That Peter and Paul died at Rome, we believe, if we trust to Irenæus and Caius, and others SUFFICIENTLY ANCIENT: to confirm this account many additions to it were made in later ages."† I presume, therefore, that Semler thought that Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome. However, the question is, whether "most of the Protestants deny that

plicity and truth. The death of James is related, Acts xii. That Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom under Nero, at Rome, is a matter of such invariable and ancient authority, that I see not upon what ground it is questioned. Protestants indeed deny that Peter lived twenty-five years at Rome; and some, that they may more successfully resist the Papists, deny that he died at Rome, or was there. But the more learned, having more diligently weighed the ancient authorities, by no means question this. But whether Peter died at Rome or elsewhere, all agree that he was crucified in testimony to his master, according to his prediction, John xxi. 18, 19." Limborch. Am. Col. p. 161-167.

* Semleri Instit. ad Doctr. p. 150.

† Semleri Select. Cap. i. p. 19.

he was ever there." Let us hear Lardner :
 "Some learned men have denied that Peter
 ever was at Rome, as Scaliger, Salmasius,
 Frederick Spanheim, and others. Mr. Bower
 is much of the same mind. His words are,
 "from what has been hitherto said, every im-
 partial judge must conclude, that it is at best
 very much to be doubted, whether St. Peter ever
 was at Rome. Nevertheless, there have been
 many learned men among the Protestants, as
 well as the Romanists, whose impartiality
 was never questioned, who have believed and
 argued very well that Peter was at Rome, and
 suffered martyrdom there. I refer to some :
 Cave, Pearson, LeClerc, Basnage, Barratier."*
 After entering into the detail of authorities
 upon the question, he says, "This argument
 may be censured by some as prolix, or even
 needless : but as *some* of our own times, as
 well as formerly, have denied or disputed
 this point, I have thought it expedient to let
 my readers see the evidences of what appears
 to myself, as well as to *many* other protestants,
very certain, that St. Peter was at Rome, and
 suffered martyrdom there."† And when we
 accordingly add the authority of Lardner to
 those he quotes himself, and to that of Senar,
 we shall better judge with what propriety it
 can be said, "*most of the learned men* of the

* Lardner's history of the apostles and evangelists. Watson's
 ed. p. 482.

† *Ib.* p. 482.

Protestants assert, that Peter never was in Rome."

The reader will indulge me now with a comparison of two different assertions of Mr. English. The one taken, in the heat of transcription, from Orobio, the other from I know not whom, perhaps original.

Grounds of Christianity examined.

Page 73.

That the New Testament inculcates an excellent morality cannot be denied; for its best moral precepts were taken from the Old Testament. And if the apostles had not preached good morals, how could they have expected to be considered by the Gentiles as messengers from God. For if they had inculcated any immoralities, such as rebellion, murder, adultery, robbery, revenge, their mission would not only have been disbelieved, but they would have undergone capital punishment, by the sentence of the judge.

Page 155.

Indeed the moral maxims peculiar to Christianity are impracticable, except by one who confines his wealth to the possession of a suit of clothes, and wooden platter, and who lives in a cave or monastery. They bear the stamp of enthusiasm upon their very front, and we have always seen, and ever shall see, that they are not fit for man, that they lift him out of the sphere in which God designed him to move, that they are useless to society, and frequently produce the most dangerous consequences to it.

Luke iv. 17. "They gave to Jesus the book of Isaiah the prophet, and he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, therefore hath he anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; hath he sent me, that I should bind up the broken in heart, proclaim liberty to the captives, and sight to the blind, that I should preach the acceptable year of the Lord.'" Here it is objected, 1. that our Saviour, in quoting this passage, added to it the words, 'and sight to the blind,' "for purposes," says Mr. English, "not very obvious." But he is here misled by the rabbi whom he transcribes, and who, though an ingenious man, was but an ordinary critick. Luke quoted these words from the Septuagint, in which, moreover, they are not added to the text, as it stands in the Hebrew; but they are a different version of what our translation renders, "the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Now as the preceding clause is, 'liberty to the captives;' and 'opening of the prison' would be a tautology, the presumption is in favour of the Septuagint and St. Luke. Moreover, the Hebrew word פק, which is the one in question, occurs no where else in the scriptures,* and there can therefore be no authority for its meaning more decisive than that of the Septuagint. 2. It is objected, that our Saviour omits the next words to the rest of the chapter. But

* Grotius in loc.

I know not that it was usual in ancient, more than in modern times, to take a whole chapter for the theme of discourse. Our Lord certainly chose the most important part of it: and when Mr. English says, that from the rest of the chapter it is plain that this prophecy has no relation to Jesus, but to Isaiah, he takes upon him to contradict the authority of the Jews, Saadias and Kimchi, who understand this passage of the Messiah,* and whose opinion is much to be preferred to the illiterate Isaac's. When Mr. English ascribes the wrath of the inhabitants of Nazareth to these two causes, he plainly forgets the far more rational and probable account of St. Luke; and especially his express declaration, "that all bear him witness, and wondered at his gracious words, which proceeded from his mouth."

The next objection I shall answer from Mr. English's own mouth.

OBJECTION.

The Jews said to Jesus, what sign showest thou to us, that thou doest these things? Jesus said unto them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews answered and said, forty and six

ANSWER.

"Here the angel gave Daniel to understand, that after the seven weeks before mentioned, there would come a time, in which the building would be hindered—till the second year of Darius, who gave leave to finish the

* Huetii demonstr. evang. p. 367.

tians were notorious offenders, and stood charged with the crime of poverty, and even slavery, and worse than all, of being some of them females. This last crime is thought now less heinous than in the days of Celsus, and though Mr. English, in the course of his book, has some sneers at 'silly women,' it is generally understood at present that they are no worse than silly men; and that upon the whole, their interest in this life and the next, and their portion of providential regard, is equal to that of men.

Two remarks only upon these extracts will suffice; 1. that to quote the authority of a bitter enemy for a character of any cause, savours either of unfairness or extreme simplicity; and 2. that if Mr. English loves truth *much better* than his own argument, he will find some quotations in the sequel from Celsus, which will highly gratify him.

Mr. English much regrets the loss of Celsus, and thinks him, though too sarcastick, a man of observation. Will he accept of the following, from the fragments which are preserved of this author, as a motto for the second edition of his work upon the Jewish controversy? "The contention between the Jews and Christians is foolish, and their dispute about Christ is according to the proverb, a quarrel about an ass's shadow. There is no dignity in the inquiry, for both believe it was prophesied by a divine spirit, that a Saviour would come to the human race, but can-

not agree whether the predicted person has come or not.”*

* Ευθεστῶτα ἐρίζουσι πρὸς ἀλλήλους χριστιανοὶ καὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ μὴδὲν διαφέρει αὐτῶν ὁ πρὸς ἀλλήλους διάλογος περὶ Χριστοῦ, τῆς κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν καλεσμένης οὐρασκίας μάχης. Μὴδὲν σέμνον ἐστὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίῳ καὶ χριστιανῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ζήτησει· πιστευόντων μὲν ἀμφοτέρων ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ πνεύματος προφητεύθη τις ἐπιδημήσων σωτῆρ τῶ γενεῖ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἔκετι δὲ οὐκ ὁμολογούντων περὶ τοῦ ἐληλευθῆναι τὸν προφητευόμενον, ἢ μὴ. Origen contr. Cels. l. iii § 1.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE tenth chapter of Mr. English's work is styled "Miscellaneous," in the table of contents. And in his letter to Mr. Cary, he fondly says, in this chapter, "the Old and New Testaments are, I think, irreconcilably entangled in desperate oppugnation."* I would gladly have spared myself the tediousness of examining and refuting such objections as it contains, but as such importance is ascribed to it by its author, I fear he might quote to me his favourite words of bishop Beveridge, should I pass it over in silence. This chapter is copied without acknowledgment from R. Isaac's *Bulwark of Faith*.†

The first objection contained in this chapter is this, "Jesus says, (Matt. v. 43.) ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy." "This," says Mr. English, "is no where said in the law or the prophets, but on the contrary we read directly the reverse."‡ Now Mr. English is aware that it is by no means certain, that when our Lord

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 15.

† Viz. according to the pages of Wagenseil, from pp. 362, 364, 423, 428, 434, 564, 365, 430.

‡ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 79.

uses the expression, 'ye have heard it hath been said,' he means always, 'it is written in the law and the prophets.' On the contrary, it is to me unquestionable, that in this case at least, he refers to the prevalent interpretations of the Jewish doctors. To prove that these interpretations justified the assertion of our Lord, Mr. English will be satisfied with the authority of a Rabbi, whom he has himself quoted, that 'he who lived in idolatry was the common enemy of all, and as such might be slain by any one ;' or of Tacitus, an unsuspecting witness in the Christian cause, who tells us, that "the Jews hated all others as enemies."* I doubt not myself, that it was to this prevailing temper of the Jews that our Lord referred, though they might have been in the habit of justifying it by the quotation of passages from the law. At any rate, the quotations Mr. English makes from the Proverbs have no relation to the point, since the Proverbs were no part of the written or oral law. Whether we are capable of exercising any love to enemies beyond that of forbearance and common charity, is a question which Mr. English decides in the negative. It is not a question to be reasoned upon, and I can conceive from the tone of each of Mr. English's books, that a command to regard an enemy with genuine affection, must be to him,

* The Rabbi is Joseph Albo. The words of Tacitus are, "adversus alios omnes hostile odium." Vid. Grotium ad Matt. v. 43.

as it was to his clients of old, a stumbling block.

“In Mark ii. 25. Jesus says to the Pharisees, Have ye not read what David did when he hungered, and those who were with him? How that he entered into the house of the Lord, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat shew bread? See the same also in Matt. ch. xii. 3. and Luke vi. 3. Now here is a great blunder, for this thing happened in the time of Ahimelech, and not in the time of Abiathar, his son.”* When a man charges another with a blunder, it is fit he beware of his own correctness. Mr. English says, “See THE SAME also in Matt. xii. 3. and Luke vi. 3.” Whereas both Matthew and Luke *omit the very thing*, the name of the high priest, in which the blunder is alleged to consist. I might tell Mr. English also, that beside several ancient Latin manuscripts of the New Testament, the Cambridge manuscript, which Michaelis thinks may be the oldest Greek manuscript extant, † omits the words, ‘in the time of Abiathar the high priest. ‡ Considering this fact, and that they are not found in the parallel passages of the other evangelists, as also that the clause itself is such a note of designation as might well have crept from the margin into the text, I think it not unlikely that it was thus introduced. However, grant that Mark thus wrote, is it

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 50.

† Marsh’s Michaelis ii. 229.

‡ Griesbach in loc.

not unmanly to call it by so vulgar a name as *blunder*, and absurd to adduce it as an objection to Christianity? This is becoming enough in the Jew, from which it is taken, but altogether unworthy of a cultivated mind. What possible consequence to the argument is it, whether this was done when Ahimelech or Abiathar was high priest? If Mark really wrote the latter, I have no doubt he would have as cheerfully corrected it, in a transcript of his gospel, as I trust Mr. English, in his second edition, will his own blunder of saying, "See *the same* also in Matthew and Luke."

The next passage quoted by Mr. English, Luke i. 26. containing the relation of the appearance of the angel to Mary, gives occasion to several objections. Most of these have been already considered; and two have not. First, it is objected, that if the angel had announced to Mary, as St. Luke relates, that her offspring 'should be called the Son of the Highest, and that the Lord God should give unto him the throne of his father David, and he should reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there should be no end'—if the angel had announced this, we should not have discovered, in the mother and brethren of Jesus, that surprise and incredulity which they manifested at his teachings, to such a degree as to say, 'he is beside himself.' But this objection is so far from being well grounded, that the annunciation of the angel would, more than any thing else, produce this sur-

prise and incredulity. Under the influence of the prevailing prejudices, they thought that the angel announced to the mother of Jesus, that he would be that great and glorious prince whom they fancied for the Messiah; and when they saw him, instead of vindicating his predicted honours and making preparations for war and conquests, employing his time in the humble duties of a moral teacher, and permitting himself to be thronged with such a multitude as prevented him even from taking bread, they naturally thought he was beside himself. The other objection is, that the angel announced, "that to his kingdom there should be no end," which Paul, says Mr. English, directly contradicts by saying, 1 Cor. xv. that Jesus shall deliver up his kingdom to God, even the Father, and be himself subject to him. "Here," adds he, "you see that the kingdom of Jesus *is* to have an end." But need Mr. English be informed, that in the Hebrew style, that is said to have no end, which lasts as long as its nature and objects require or admit, which, without coming to a violent period, attains its final destination. But we need not go up to the Hebrew; we can find a case nearer home. Mr. English himself says, "*There is NO END to your misrepresentations, Mr. Cary.*"* Did Mr. English really mean that there was no end to the misrepresentations contained in a volume of one hundred and thirty-six duodecimo pages?

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 113.

The next objection is drawn from these words of our Lord, "And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." "How," says Mr. English, "does this agree with Moses, who says, Did ever people hear the voice of God, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard?" Also Deut. v. 24. Having observed in the commencement of this chapter that Mr. English had copied his tenth chapter from R. Isaac, I ought in justice to remark, that this paragraph, like one other of a few lines on page 80, are original, if I have not overlooked them in reading the "Bulwark of Faith." However, the credit of this last objection is not worth much, to whomever it belongs. If Mr. English had read but one verse more, he would have found an answer to it. The whole passage is ; "The Father himself, which hath sent me, hath born witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you ; for whom he hath sent, him *ye believe not.*"* Here we see that the address was to the Jews of our Saviour's time ; and whatever Moses said of his own contemporaries, those to whom Jesus was sent, and who 'did not believe him,' had certainly never seen the shape, nor heard the voice of God.

The next objections are made to the passage,

* John v. 37, 38

Page 76.

which it was their business to avoid. Mahomet throughout the Koran, inculcates all the virtues, and pointedly reprobates vice of all kinds. His morality is merely the precepts of the Old AND New Testaments, modified a little, and expressed in Arabick. They are good precepts, and always to be listened to with respect, wherever and by whomsoever inculcated.

Page 164, &c.

One of the fathers ventures to insinuate to the Christians the expediency of deserting from the army, to rid themselves of their carnal employment. If we examine, in detail, the principles of this religion, we shall see that it interdicts every thing that makes a nation flourishing.

Mr. English may attempt to explain this contradiction by urging his distinction between the morality peculiar to the New Testament, and that which it borrows from the Old. But it will not avail him, for two reasons; first, if, as he says, "the New Testament inculcates an excellent morality," and contains excellent precepts from the Old Testament, and teaches no immoralities, the reality of such a distinction as this is highly incredible; and if it be true, that the peculiar morality of the New Testament is pernicious to individual happiness, and to society, it can with no propriety be said, that "the New Testament

‘teaches an excellent morality.’ But, secondly, Mr. English speaks not only of the morality borrowed from the Old Testament, but that of the New also: “The morality of Mahomet is nothing but the precepts of the Old AND New Testaments :” “they are good precepts.” The solution of the contradiction is the blind and indecorous haste, with which Mr. English copied every thing which he thought was an objection to Christianity, not only without seeing whether it had not been refuted by others, but whether he had not or might not refute it himself. The way of contrast is pleasant, and the reader will indulge me in pointing out one more, though not connected with the immediate subject.

Page 1.

Christianity is founded on *Judaism*, and the New Testament upon the *Old*.

Page 110.

It is a singular and demonstrable fact, that *the fundamental scheme of Christianity* was borrowed from *the religion of the ancient Persians*.

The source of this contradiction is the same as of the last. The passage on the first page was transcribed from Collins, and passed so slightly through the mind of the copyist, as to leave no impression there.

Mr. English closes the chapter which we have been considering, with some extracts from Celsus, from which it appears, that in the view of this heathen, the primitive Chris-

years was this temple in building and wilt thou build it in three days? The Jews could never have spoken these words here related; for the temple THEN STANDING was built by Herod, who reigned but thirty-seven years, and built it in eight. This, therefore, must be a blunder of the evangelist's.*

building; WHICH CONTINUED TILL THE DESTRUCTION BY THE ROMANS, sixty-two weeks, besides the last week, [that is, four hundred and forty-one years,] at the beginning of which the Romans came and warred against them, and at length entirely destroyed the cities of Judah, Jerusalem, and the temple.†

But if, as Mr. English asserts in the 'answer,' the temple, built by the permission of Cyrus, continued till the end of the Jewish war, when it was destroyed by the Romans, it is not quite easy to see how the temple, standing in the time of our Saviour, forty years before this destruction, could have been built by Herod. This, therefore, must be a blunder, though not of the evangelist.

"Jesus says to his disciples, John xiii. 34. 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.' This is not true, for the love of man towards his neighbour was *not* a new precept, but at least as ancient as Moses, who gives it, Levit. xix. 18. as the command of God, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 82. † Ibid. p. 55.

self.”* But Mr. English does not here give the commandment as our Lord himself explains it. “This is my commandment,” says Jesus, “That ye love one another, *as I have loved you*; greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “I think Mr. English will not say, that the Mosaick law enjoined this love. However, I presume he has entirely mistaken the meaning of our Saviour, when he says, ‘a *new* commandment give I unto you.’ The reference of *new* is not to the ancient law, but to the former precepts of our Lord himself. “I have heretofore given you various laws, a new [another] commandment I now give unto you, that ye love one another.” That this is the correct interpretation is confirmed, I think, by the fact, that this is the first occasion upon which Christ *formally* gives this command; and also, (which Mr. English might have had the fairness to notice,) that he expressly called the love of our neighbours, the second chief commandment of the law.† He could not, therefore, have meant by a ‘*new* commandment’ one not taught in the law.

Acts vii. 4. “When Abraham went out of the land of the Chaldees, he dwelt in Haran; from thence, *after his father was dead*, God led him into this land, in which ye dwell.” “This,” says Mr. English, “directly contradicts the chapter in Genesis, where the story

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 83.

† John xv. 12, 13.

‡ Matt. xxii. 39.

of Abraham's leaving Haran is related ; for it is certain from thence, that Abraham left his father Terah in Haran alive when he departed, and that he did not die till many years afterwards. This chronological contradiction has given much trouble to Christian commentators, as may be seen in Whitby, Hammond, &c.* *I do not find that Whitby says a word upon the subject.* The difficulty is this, that Terah is said in Gen. xi. to have been seventy years old when Abraham was born, and to have lived two hundred and five years. But Abraham is also said to have left Haran when he was seventy-five ; at which time of course his father was one hundred and forty-five years old ; and therefore must have lived sixty years after his son Abraham left Haran. But Stephen, in the passage in question says, that Abraham left Haran *after his father was dead.* Now this direct contradiction is quite cleared up by the Samaritan copies of the Pentateuch, which give the whole age of Terah exactly 145 years ; and confirm the account of Stephen, that Abraham waited till the decease of his father, and then immediately left Haran. † Had Mr. English had no light upon this sub-

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 83.

† Kennicott's dissertatio generalis, § 18. 2. Dr. Priestley mistook in saying, that the Samaritan Pentateuch gives the age of Terah at 140 years. Had he stated it correctly, 145, he would not have been obliged to resort to the supposition, that Abraham was not the oldest of Terah's children : a supposition discountenanced by the order in which they are repeatedly named ; as Gen. xi. 26, 27. Priestley's notes iii. 582.

ject, but what he derived from his unlettered Rabbi, or even from the commentators whose 'troubles' he finds or feigns, one could not blame him for passing over this fact in silence. But I remember well the time, when Mr. English collated the text of the Samaritan copy as it stands in Kennicott's Bible, for the express purpose of ascertaining the diversity of the Hebrew and Samaritan texts. To suppress now a reading from this copy, which entirely removes his objection, argues a deplorable forgetfulness, or a wilful fraud; and it were a piece of affectation to speak of it in milder terms.

Mr. English next charges Stephen with a blunder, in having confounded the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham, with the purchase of a field of the children of Hamor by Jacob. Such a blunder and confusion as this, must be a high scandal to Mr. English, especially after he shall have taken into consideration the hints of his own mistakes, which we have given in sundry places in this essay. I know not that Christianity, however, is the less true, or Jesus Christ the less the Messiah, for Stephen's having said Abraham instead of Jacob. Especially, as the error after all was probably in St. Luke, the historian, who as a Gentile, might be less familiar with the Old Testament. Should an error of like nature be found in some speech ascribed by Tacitus to an officer of Vespasian, it would cast no suspicion on the credit of the historian,

much less upon the character and conduct of Vespasian. In short, Mr. English well knows, that errors like these have no connexion with the truth of Christianity, and only affect the question of the verbal inspiration of the sacred writers. If any apology were wanting to Stephen for this heinous blunder, I would hint that the situation of a peaceful man, surrounded by a furious and bloody populace, clamouring about him, and pressing onward to tear him to pieces, is by no means the most favourable for minute and punctilious recollection. Mr. English wrote his book in the seclusion of a college, surrounded with all that a scholar can ask, and with all that can assist or certify inquiry. Nourished at the bosom of the best library in the land, he becomes at once heedless for himself, and unfeeling for others. He fills his own pages with every species of error; and rails, from the calm abodes of learned ease, against the blunders of men, who laboured and bled beneath the ferocious persecution of those, whose cause he espouses. I doubt not but this railing may be considered by the author as ‘that fair and liberal argument which no honest man will decline to face.’* And as little do I doubt, that by every honest man, it will be felt to be unmanly and illiberal abuse. But let us not wander from our purpose, which is less to touch Mr. English’s conscience, than to answer his objections.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, preface, p. xvii.

“In Acts vii. 43.” says he, “there is another disagreement between Stephen’s quotations from Amos and the original, which see.” It is well Mr. English did not himself quote this disagreement. It might have excited the indignation of his readers. The passage in the New Testament is this, “Ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them, and I will carry you away beyond *Babylon*.” The only disagreement between this and Amos v. 25. as it stands in the Septuagint version, which is that quoted, is this, that Stephen says ‘*Babylon*,’ and Amos ‘*Damascus*.’* And this is an objection against Christianity!

I had occasion formerly to say, that Mr. English quoted blindly and unworthily, from Collins, the texts in which Surenhusius’ pretended rules were alleged to be exemplified. This is confirmed by his having here again quoted this Acts vii. 43. without being aware that he had previously adduced it for the same purpose. The cause of this repetition is, that in the first case he borrowed the quotation from Collins, and in the second from Isaac, and probably in both, without looking at it in the New Testament.

Again, “There is in the speech of James, Acts xv. a quotation from Amos, in which, to make it fit the subject, (which after all it does

* Eichhorn’s All. Bib. ii. 1011.

not fit,) is the substitution of the words, ‘the remnant of *men*,’ for ‘the remnant of *Edom*,’ as it is in the original.” There are few of my readers to whom I need say, that the same Hebrew word means ‘men’ and ‘Edom,’ according as it is pronounced; and St. James has as fair a right to pronounce it ‘men,’ as Mr. English has to pronounce it Edom. However, this passage is quoted literally by St. James from the Septuagint Bible.

And thus ends this important chapter, in which the Old and New Testaments are, as Mr. English neatly phrases it, “irreconcilably entangled in desperate oppugnation.” But that mine may end with argument of a higher topick, let us proceed to the perpetuity of the Mosaick law.

Mr. English’s eleventh chapter, in which this subject is treated, which is a pretty long one, consisting of eleven pages, is transcribed, *without acknowledgment*, from the Theological Repository of Dr. Priestley. Nay, more than this, on page 87 he marks *one paragraph* with inverted commas, and inserts, “says Dr. Priestley.” And this he does notwithstanding the context for pages, each side of that paragraph, is transcribed from the same Dr. Priestley. Let us compare a passage or two, to see in what way this transcription was made.

PRIESTLEY.

ENGLISH.

It seems to be a very general opinion among Christians, that the	A very great part of dogmatical theology among Christians is
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PRIESTLEY.

peculiar rites of the Jewish religion were intended to be nothing more than temporary prohibitions, and that they were all abrogated by the gospel; so that when the Jews shall be converted to Christianity, all distinction between them and other nations shall cease, that their temple and the service of it will never be restored, and even that circumcision itself will be discontinued.

On the contrary, the Jews are fully persuaded that the law is, in every particular, of perpetual obligation; and the doctrine of the trinity itself is hardly more offensive to them, than the idea of the abrogation of it, and of their being confounded with the rest of the world. After considering the sub-

ENGLISH.

founded upon the notion, that the Jewish law was a temporary dispensation, only to exist to the coming of Jesus, when it was to be superseded by a more perfect dispensation.

On the contrary, the Jews are persuaded that their law is of perpetual obligation, and the doctrine of the trinity itself is hardly more offensive to them, and as they think, more contradictory to the scriptures, than the notion of the abrogation of it. Now that the Jews are on the right side of the question,

PRIESTLEY.

ject with as much attention as I can give it, I cannot help being of the same opinion with the Jews with respect to it, and I wish to submit my reasons to the consideration of your learned readers. They are all comprised in these positions, that the Jewish institutions are most solemnly and repeatedly declared to be perpetual, and we have no account of their being abrogated: they are perfectly consistent with the profession of Christianity, as the history of our Saviour and his apostles shows. No authorized teacher of Christianity says, that he was commissioned to declare that they were, or were to be abrogated. Nor does any thing in their writings, when fairly in-

ENGLISH.

i. e. arguing from the Old Testament, I SHALL ENDEAVOUR TO PROVE, by some arguments. They are all comprised in these propositions: 1. That the Mosaick Institutions are most solemnly declared to be perpetual; and we have no account of their being abrogated, or to be abrogated, in the Old Testament. 2. They are declared to be perpetual by Jesus himself, and were adhered to by the twelve apostles.†

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 84.

PRIESTLEY.

terpreted, imply that they consider them as abrogated.*

One more example shall suffice.

PRIESTLEY.

It has been objected, that the term forever is not always to be understood in its greatest extent, but is to be interpreted according to the circumstances in which it is used. **THIS I READILY ACKNOWLEDGE**; but the circumstances in which this phrase is used in the passages quoted above, clearly indicate that it is to be understood of a period as long as the duration of the Israelitish nation, which is elsewhere said to continue to the end of the world.†

ENGLISH.

It has been objected that the term forever is not always to be understood in its greatest extent, but is to be interpreted according to circumstances. *This* FOR THE SAKE OF SAVING TIME, *I will acknowledge.* But the circumstances in which this phrase is used in the passages already adduced and in a number of others of similar import, which might be adduced, clearly indicate that it is to be understood in those passages to mean, a period as long as the duration of the Israelitish nation, which elsewhere is said to continue, to the end of the world.‡

* Theologic. Repos. v. 403. † Theologic. Repos. v. 411.
 § Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 87.

Was it in sooth for the sake of saving time, that Mr. English waved this point, or because the author he was copying frankly conceded it, and left him without facts and arguments to prove it? For the sake of saving time! It cost Mr. English about as much time to write off his whole eleventh chapter from the Theological Repository, as it did me to turn to the Nazarenus, the Nizzachon, the Bulwark of Faith, and Orobio, to ascertain from which, or if from either, he was transcribing. For the sake of saving time! It must be a raging avarice indeed of time to expect to write a book in less time than is necessary to transcribe it mechanically from other works.

The only part of this chapter which is not taken from Dr. Priestley is the assault on the character of St. Paul at its close. For the suggestion of this Mr. English is indebted to various writers, but from whom he *directly* borrows it I have not found. Let us now proceed to the argument.

Mr. English alleges against the Christians, that the Mosaick law was not a temporary, but a perpetual institution. He endeavours to prove his point by several arguments, all comprised in these propositions: 1. That the Mosaick institutions are most solemnly and repeatedly declared to be perpetual; and we have no account of their being abrogated, or being to be abrogated, in the Old Testament. 2. They are declared to be perpetual, by Je-

sus Christ himself, and were adhered to by the twelve apostles.”

It is necessary before proceeding to discuss these propositions, to make one distinction. The law of Moses was strictly a ritual law, a law of ceremonial institutions. The ultimate design of course was practical, or moral, or propaetical: and moral precepts are interwoven with the designation and injunction of the rites to be observed. But these *moral precepts* were binding on all other nations, as well as on the Jews; and being founded in that natural law which is of common obligation to all human beings, are of perpetual obligation. It is the ritual portion of the law, and that only, which Christians maintain to be temporary. Now, therefore, I shall endeavour to reply to all the arguments comprised under the above stated propositions, and to produce some other considerations against the perpetuity of the Mosaick law; and this I shall do under two propositions: 1. That there is no foundation in reason or the scriptures of the Old Testament, for the doctrine of the perpetuity of the Mosaick institutions; and 2. They were superseded by the Christian dispensation, and authoritatively abrogated by its founders.

First, then, from the reason of the thing. It is apparent from the very nature of the Mosaick institutions, that they were a temporary dispensation, inasmuch as they are every where accommodated to the character and

wants of an early and ignorant age. The constant provision against idolatry which they make, supposes a period of the world at which idolatry prevailed, and a nation surrounded by pagan neighbours. The injunction to come thrice in the year to the temple, limits the obligation of the law to one nation, and that a small one; while the laborious train of ceremonial observances, the ceaseless recurrence of sacrifices, the endless succession of forms, are all calculated to secure the faith of a people in the infancy of knowledge, and to occupy the attention of an unreflecting and simple people. How incongruous is it to think, that an institution, which was calculated for a people that flourished three thousand years ago, should be calculated for us! How unfounded the thought, that ceremonies and rites like those of the Mosaick law, which must owe all their value to the correspondence with the condition and character of those on whom they are enjoined, should be meant to last after that condition and that character were radically and universally changed! “The law,” says a rabbi* in high repute with Collins, “may be changed on account of [the changes of] the subject,”—and “the scripture merely admonishes us that we should not, at our own pleasure, add to the law or take from it. But what hinders that God may add to it, or take from it, according to his infinite wisdom?” Do

* R. Albo, *Sepher Ikkarim*, in *Ben Mordecai's Apol.* i. 472.

we not even see, in the institutions of men, that positive laws are constantly falling into disuse, and that to legislate on matters of ceremony and circumstance for posterity is an idle vision? Nothing but moral laws can be eternal; and though there be some positive institutions so adapted to our nature, and so simple in themselves, that their value continues unchanged in the changes of the world, it will not be pretended that the ceremonies of the Jewish worship are of this kind. To imagine that they were meant to be perpetual, is to doom mankind to a hopeless and endless childhood of the conscience, understanding, and heart. But this is also a question of authority, and it may therefore next be observed, that these institutions are not asserted in the Old Testament to be of *perpetual* obligation. The limit of their obligation was to be that of the existence of the people as a nation, and this may rest upon the concession of Mr. English already quoted.*

Here then is a tangible fact, which one might hope would serve as a certain era. I maintain that it is more than seventeen hundred years since the Jews ceased to be a nation; Mr. English declares, "that the Jews are now as much a distinct people as they ever were." But if the Jewish nation exists, we can be told whereabouts on earth they dwell, how numerous and powerful they are, what are the names of their chief cities, what is their form of government, and who is their

* Page 346.

ruler? But no, it is absurd to say that the Jewish nation exists, in any other sense than the Chaldean, the Grecian, the Roman exists. No whole nation has been utterly exterminated, and the descendants of these and all ancient nations survive yet in the world, as much as the descendants of the Jews. All that can be said is, that individual Jews, that have survived, have been discriminated by their peculiar customs from the rest of the world. And this is what is intended by the words of Jeremiah, "I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but will not make a full end of thee." The descendants of other nations have been confounded by the lapse of years, but the descendants of the Jews are still discriminated. But the Jewish nation itself, as a nation, has not preserved even this individual existence. Ten tribes were long since lost, and have been mingled and obliterated, among the inhabitants of the earth; and all that Jew or Christian has done to trace them has been, as I conceive, quite unsuccessful. Of the two other tribes comparatively few remain, that is, few compared with that vast number which must have descended, in the course of nature, from the Jewish nation, as it existed in the time of our Lord. And these few have, as was just said, an individual and not a national existence; and no more the former in reality, than the descendants of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Goths, of which of course there are hundreds of millions in

the world. Above all, the Jews have no national existence in respect of their religion; which is really the principal point to be urged. Their tribe of Levi which was separated to the service of the temple, and the family of Aaron consecrated to the priesthood, and ordained, to ‘a perpetual duration,’ have both been long extinct, at least have long since ceased to be traced:—The temple, so indispensable to the appointed worship, for ages levelled in the dust; and every thing requisite to the due observance of the most solemn parts of the law destroyed, abolished, and lost. Hence it is a matter of actual fact that the Passover, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of Pentecost, the levitical priesthood, and the daily sacrifice, ordained by an everlasting statute, and among the most important institutions of the law, have ceased to exist. All reasoning is superfluous upon that which all see; and no ingenuity can prove that to be a perpetual law, to the observance of which the essential conditions have so long been wanting.

But, argues Mr. English, the Jews will return to their land, and then renew the observation of their ancient law with greater splendour than ever. That the Jews will return to their native land is a point which I do not here agitate; but that the predictions which are usually understood of this event are mostly so interwoven with names of persons, and other fixed marks, which limit their application to the return from the Babylonian captivity is

undeniable; and we have only to attribute to the poetick and prophetick style, whatever difference there may be between the magnificence of the prophecy, and the narrowness of the event. However, it does not appear, and is not probable, I had almost said not possible, that when the Jews return to their original country, in the accumulated improvement of so many ages of cultivation, and of other ages of cultivation yet to come, they should return to the observance of a laborious and burdensome ritual, adapted to the lowest stage of national improvement. Especially when we find that even in the time of the kings and prophets of Israel, such language as this, is employed upon the ritual law: "Hear, oh my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goat out of thy fold. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? *Offer unto God* THANKSGIVING, and *pay* THY VOWS *unto the Most High.*"* Again, "Thou DESIREST NOT SACRIFICE, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. The *sacrifices of God are A BROKEN SPIRIT.*"† "Sacrifice and an *offering* thou didst not desire."‡ "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of

* Ps. l. 7, 8, 9, 13, 14.

† Ps. li. 11, 17.

‡ Ps. xl. 6.

the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? *Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to hear them.*"* "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."† Mr. English retreats from passages like these, with the remark, that "the other arguments adduced by Christian divines of the abolishment of the law, from Isaiah i. and some of the Psalms, are nothing to the purpose; they being merely declarations of God, that he preferred obedience in the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and holiness, to ceremonial observances; and that repentance was of more avail with him than offering thousands of rams and fed beasts."‡

When Mr. Cary justly called the fable that St. Paul embraced Christianity in revenge for being refused the daughter of the high priest, a "despicable *Jewish* slander," Mr. English fiercely replied, "Despicable *Jewish* slander! Pray Sir, is it possible that in the passage of

* Is. i. 11—14. † Amos vi. 6.

‡ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 94.

mine you refer to, you could have overlooked the words italicised in my book, ‘but by the Jews and the *Nazarene Christians*,* he is represented as having been converted to Christianity from that cause.” Now Mr. English speaks of these texts of Isaiah and the psalmist as being quoted by “Christian divines.” Christian divines, Sir! is it possible you could have overlooked the fact that they are adduced to the same end, by Anthony Collins, in his discourse of free thinking, and that he quotes them to prove that the psalmist and prophets *opposed the established religion*, and were FREE THINKERS?† However, as it is only of the passages from the Psalms and Isaiah that Mr. English makes his remark, the two following from Jeremiah and Micah are commended to his serious and candid attention. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat the flesh thereof. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day I brought them out of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people, and

* The Nazarene Christians were Jews, and made this absurd charge under the influence of Jewish prejudices; if indeed they made it at all, as it is possible they did not, the whole account resting upon the authority of Epiphanius, who lived too late (in the middle of the fourth century,) to be a competent witness.

† Discourse of free thinking, p. 154, &c,

walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.”* “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, and calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, oh man, what is good; *and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*”† Now I maintain, that these and the associated passages do show such an estimation of the ceremonial law, by the supreme Being, as is absolutely incompatible with the thought, that this law was to be revived after the oblivion of ages, and reimposed upon the Jews, upon their expected return to Palestine. The labour of Mr. English, therefore, in asserting the reality of this predicted return, has no bearing upon the question.

Besides all these considerations, the abrogation of the ritual law seems to be implied in the very idea of the Messiah, and the glorious change in the spiritual world, which he was to effect. The tradition already quoted, that of the six thousand years which the world was to continue, two thousand were before the law, two thousand under the law, and two

* Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.

† Micah vi. 6, 7, 8.

thousand under the Messiah, expresses to us the sense of the ancient Jews upon this question. While the positive declaration of God, which I now repeat, puts the matter beyond doubt.—

*“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. NOT ACCORDING TO THE COVENANT THAT I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS, in the day that I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt: BUT THIS SHALL BE MY COVENANT, that I will make with the house of Israel: after those days, I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR INWARD PARTS, AND WRITE IT IN THEIR HEARTS, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”**

Nothing is secure from perversion, and Mr. English tells us here, that “though the prophet speaks of a *new covenant*, he says nothing of a *new law*.” We must first, therefore,—so reasonable a disputant do we deal with,—we must first prove, that the covenant which God made with the Jews, when he ‘took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,’ was the Mosaick law. A text or two will suffice. From the fifth to the twenty-eighth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy is employed by Moses in recapitulating the whole law, and the promises and threatenings by which it was sanctioned; and when he has

* Jeremiah xxxi. 31, &c.

finished these, he says, "These are the words of the *covenant*, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel, in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which he made with them in the land of Horeb." The covenant in the land of Horeb, was but a fuller utterance of the Mosaick law. For Moses begins the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy by saying, "Hear, oh Israel, the statutes and judgments, which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God *made a covenant* with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us." Now upon turning to the nineteenth of Exodus, we find that this covenant, proclaimed by God at mount Horeb, [or Sinai,] is the Mosaick law, commencing with the decalogue, and proceeding through to the appointment of the sacrifices, the construction of the tabernacle, and in short all the details of the ritual. When the temple was repaired under king Josiah, we are told that Hilkiah, the priest, said unto Shaphan, the scribe, "*I have found* THE BOOK OF THE LAW, *in the house of the Lord.*" This lost treasure was submitted to the king, and "when he had heard the words *of the book of the law*, he rent his clothes."* In the next chapter we read, that "the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with

* 2 Kings xxii. 8, 11.

him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great, and he read in their ears all the words OF THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT, which was found in the house of the Lord."† The covenant, therefore, which God made with the Israelites when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, was the law of Moses; and when he says that he will make a new covenant with them, *not according to the covenant which he made with their fathers*, nothing else can be meant but that he would set up a new dispensation, different from the Mosaick. But Mr. English insists that this is not so, for that when God adds that he will put *his law* in their inward parts, he means the Mosaick law. So that, after all, the new covenant is nothing but the reimposition of the old. But the very expression of the prophet, that God would put his law *in their inward parts*, and write it *in their hearts*, ought to have taught Mr. English that this law could not be the ritual law, which has no concern with the affections; but that moral, natural, and universal law, that 'law of the Lord which is perfect, *converting the soul.*'

Having thus established our first proposition, we proceed to the second, "that the Mosaick institutions were superseded by the Christian dispensation, and authoritatively abrogated by its founders."

Mr. English remarks, that "it appears a strange notion to him, that the elaborate and noble law given from mount Sinai should van-

ish, perish, and be annihilated by the mere dictum of twelve fishermen." If they were appointed by God to abolish this law, I suppose that it is no more objection to their authority to do it, that they were fishermen, than it was to Moses' authority to make it, that he was a shepherd.

This notion, however, does not appear strange to those whose cause Mr. English espouses; for it is a maxim of the Jews, as we have seen before, that "at the command of a prophet working miracles, any precept may be lawfully violated; and every prophet working miracles shall be believed, in whatever he teaches, whether by explication, addition, enlargement, or *repeal* of any part of the law, except in the case of idolatry.*

'But,' says Mr. English, 'the fact is otherwise, for Jesus Christ was far from abrogating the law.' I wonder, therefore, that Mr. English should write a book against him and his religion, and that too upon the alleged ground, that they are in opposition to the Old Testament law. However, his proof that Jesus did not teach the abrogation of the law is, as might have been expected, very meagre; consisting of *two detached sayings* of our Lord. "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall

* Vid. sup. p. 19.

in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." I agree with Mr. English in rejecting the opinion of those, who think it is the moral law here spoken of, for the expression, 'law and prophets,' implies the whole Jewish dispensation. But when he proceeds 'to silence,' as he courteously calls it, another explanation, he goes too far. He says, "it has also been urged, that by fulfilling, may be meant such an accomplishment of it as would imply the superseding of it, when the purposes for which it was instituted were answered." This he says he shall silence, by some examples of 'fulfil,' used in connexion with 'law.' "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Gal. v. 14. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Rom. xiii. 8. But certainly, notwithstanding this fulfilment of the moral law, it remains in as full force as ever."* If there must be a weak argument, it is fortunate to have in on our side, to the end that it may gain from our prejudice, what it wants from our reason. Mr. English spoke of such an accomplishment as superseded a law, by answering the purposes for which it was instituted. And what reference have his examples to such an accomplishment as this? surely none. He that loves his neighbour, indeed, fulfils the law, but are all the purposes for which it was instituted answered, *by one*

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 92.

instance of brotherly love? The import of fulfilling a law depends entirely upon the object and design of the law. Some laws are fulfilled and accomplished by *one act*, others are perpetually binding, and must be successively fulfilled, as the duty they enjoin recurs. Now we have only to ask, what was the design of the law and the prophets, (for it is of these the text speaks,) of the whole Jewish economy? It was to prepare for and introduce the Messiah. This the Christian will believe on the authority of St. Paul, who says that "Christ was the end of the law," and the Jews teach, in their Talmud, that all the oracles of the prophets relate to the Messiah.* The law and prophets then are fulfilled in the Messiah, and when he has come, are to pass away. For as there is but one Messiah, the Jewish institution is accomplished in this one event. The nature of the Mosaic and prophetick institutions confirms this idea, and being, if we have argued rightly, preparatory and temporary, would naturally pass away, when the object of the preparation was attained. But without seeking light from external considerations, the text itself demands this interpretation. "One jot nor one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, *till* all things have been done, *εως παντα γενηται.*" Is not the implication direct, that when all things have been done, the law would pass away? And how then could it be perpetual?

* Basnage Hist. des Juifs, l. iv. c. xxvi. § 2.

The other saying of our Lord, which Mr. English quotes in this connexion, is the following: "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not." Our Lord had no reference here to the obligation of the ritual of Moses, either to abolish or confirm it. He counselled the multitude to respect the decisions of the lawful authorities of the land, of the authorized expounders of the law, as upon another occasion he bid them "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." But if Mr. English would know what the instruction of Christ upon the duration of the ceremonial law was, he may look at Luke xi. 41. "Rather give alms of such things as ye have, *and behold, all things are clean to you.*" Or at John iv. 21. "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, *nor yet in Jerusalem,* worship the Father."

The truth of this matter is, that Jesus Christ having come in the fulness of time, the ancient and preparatory law had lost its obligation. Our Lord had erected a moral and a spiritual system, which paid no regard to rites or forms, any farther than they had a practical value. Still, however, as there was nothing sinful in the obedience of the Mosaick law, and as the obedience to it was a part of the national manners, which it was not necessary nor wise to violate, our Lord and his disciples, who were

Jews, uniformly observed its ceremonies. They knew that the time was coming, when the influence of the new doctrine on the minds of those who should be born and brought up in it, would counteract the national partiality for the law ; and especially when the destruction of the state and the temple would render its observance impossible. Hence they taught, not that the law was obligatory on the Jews, but that it was indifferent, and might be innocently observed. That some of the first believers indeed thought that the law continued to be obligatory, is true ; but that this was not the doctrine of the apostles, is, notwithstanding all that Mr. English has urged, manifest from the speech of Peter, Acts xv. “Men and brethren, ye know how, that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should have the word of the Gospel and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us : and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, WHICH NEITHER OUR FATHERS NOR WE WERE ABLE TO BEAR. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *we* shall be saved, *even as they.*” Here Peter directly teaches that the burden of the law is no more obligatory on Jews or Gentiles, and that it is through the grace of Christ that *the Jews, even as the Gen-*

Men, are to be saved, if they believe. The same is the doctrine of the Epistles of Paul; not that the law was sinful, but that it was not binding. It is admirably expressed in the following words. "Is any man called circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision, let him not become circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God."* Now this decision is not only the doctrine of Christ and the other apostles, but is most reasonable itself. But as it was natural, it gave offence to the prejudiced and bigotted, and they charged him with something different, viz. that he had taught, wherever he had been, "that the Jews ought not to circumcise their children." That is, that it was sinful and unlawful for them to do so.† This Paul had never done, and to show the injustice of the charge he complied with the advice of the apostles, to observe the vow of the Nazarites. As he also, from the same motive, circumcised Timothy.

But, says Mr. English, "did not Paul expressly teach the abrogation of the law in his epistles, especially in that to the Galatians? I answer, undoubtedly he did, and in so doing he contradicted the Old Testament, his master Jesus, the twelve apostles, and himself too." Mr. English has twice quoted in his work the words of bishop Beveridge, "downright ar-

* 1 Cor. vii. 18, 19.

† See Lardner's Works, viii. 218.

guments advantage a cause ;” and he abundantly regards them in his practice. How correct this last ‘argument’ is, as it respects the “Old Testament, Jesus Christ, and the twelve apostles,” we have already seen ; and that Paul did not ‘contradict himself,’ on the subject of the obligation of the law is equally certain. The doctrine of the epistles, as well to the Galatians as to others, is precisely that of Peter in the speech already quoted, and is well expressed, Gal. v. 6. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” However, Mr. English having stated that Paul did contradict himself, starts off into a smart declamation about ‘double dealing, dissimulation, and equivocation,’ and talks more about Surenhusius, the book he has never seen ; and the traditionary rules which he copied, with their typographical errors, from the discourse on the Grounds and Reasons.

Lastly, says he, “it has been said, that there was no occasion for Jesus or his apostles to be very explicit with respect to the abolition of the laws of Moses, since the temple was soon to be destroyed, and the Jewish worship would cease of course. This argument, flimsy as it is, is nevertheless the instar omnium of the Christian divines, to prove the abolishment of this law ; and this argument, like so many others, when weighed in the balance, will be found wanting.” Mr. English’s balance is much like that used by some of our first settlers in purchasing furs

of the Indians ; a trader's hand was a weight of one pound, and his foot of two. All arguments for Christianity, in his opinion, are weak ; and if they happen to be unanswerable, they are flimsy. To the argument in question he replies, that "as the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar certainly did not abolish the law, so neither did the destruction of Titus do it." Besides, a very considerable part of the law can be, and has been for these seventeen hundred years, kept without the temple, as circumcision, distinction of meats, and many others." Mr. English first misrepresent the argument, which is not that the law ceased to be binding merely because the temple was destroyed, but because, beside that, the tribes were confounded, and the nation, as a nation, destroyed. And these additional circumstances take it out of the analogy of the destruction of the temple, by Nebuchadnezzar. Besides, this argument is confirmed by the actual fact, that whereas the Jewish worship did not cease in consequence of this last named destruction, the subversion of the temple by Titus has been followed by the oblivion of all that pomp, and strictness, and extent of observation, which was kept within its walls. Mr. English indeed dignifies the circumcision and distinction of meats with the name of a considerable part of the Mosaick law, and thinks it a small thing that the daily sacrifice, the solemn feasts, the jubilees with their attendant ceremonies,

are no longer known ; that the sacred family of Aaron is lost ; that the tribe of Levi, which alone could lawfully minister, is obliterated. If circumcision and distinction of meats make an observance of the ritual, then we must account many nations of the east to be Juifs malgre lui. Since both these customs prevail among several of them.

Before we bid adieu to the Mosaick law, let us consider what else is urged upon the subject, in the nineteenth chapter of Mr. English's work. Having first given his own description of the morality of the New Testament, which we shall find occasion to consider presently, he declares that "the Mosaick law with all its numerous rites, and ceremonial observances, nay, with all the (ridiculous) traditions of the elders superadded, is much more *bare-able* to human nature :"[•] quoting as specimens of the New Testament morality these precepts : 'sell all thou hast and give to the poor ;' 'if a man ask thy cloak, give him thy coat also ;' 'resist not the injurious person, but if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also ;' 'take no thought of the morrow.' The design of precepts like these will be a subject of future reflection ; in the mean time, Mr. English deserts the authority of most who have attacked revealed religion, who have conspired in declaring the Jewish institution to be as oppressive an imposition as was ever devised.* He tells us, in a note, that

[•] Morgan's Moral Philosopher, vol. i. p. 25 et seq.

he had prepared for this part of his work an examination of the Mosaick code, and a development of its principles, which would have satisfied the reader of his correctness in preferring it to the Christian morality. But he omits it on account of its length. I submit it to the reader, whether it be not probable, that Mr. English's having changed his opinion on the subject of the divinity of the Old Testament, after he prepared this examination, might not have been another reason for omitting it? He tells us, that Christians, in order to magnify the importance of the New Testament over the Old, reproach the latter with representing God as the tutelary deity of the Israelites, and not so much concerned for the rest of mankind. Christians often reproach the Jews with this narrow view of the deity, but the Jews are one thing, and the Old Testament is another. Nor was it at least for a thousand years that the pure conceptions of God, contained in the law of Moses, were generally embraced by the people.

Mr. English proceeds to show that "it is asserted in the Old Testament, (whether truly or not is not the question, it is sufficient for my purpose that it asserts it,) that the religion contained in it will one day be the religion of of all mankind." The parenthesis was added after Mr. English ceased to be a believer in the Old Testament, and of course after he had written his work, which was originally called "Israel's appeal to the candid and intelli-

gent." Still, however, he thinks that the morality of the Old Testament is good, and that there is nothing in its precepts extravagant or impracticable!* Is it possible, then, that he can affect to think, that this book, which contains no extravagant or impracticable precept, can teach that the time is coming, when ALL NATIONS, FROM ALL THE CORNERS OF THE EARTH, SHALL GO THRICE IN THE YEAR TO JERUSALEM, TO SACRIFICE?

Mr. English next would prove, that the sanctions of the Mosaick law were not merely temporal, but eternal, for this is the question; and he does it by quotations from Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, who lived a thousand years after Moses. The passages he quotes, at least that from Isaiah, and the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel, have no reference whatever to the resurrection of the dead, and are only a poetical representation of the restoration of captivity. It is expressly said in the latter, "son of man, these bones *are the whole house of Israel*: behold, *they say*, our bones are dried, *and our hope is lost*, we are cut off from our parts. Therefore prophecy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, behold, oh my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, *and bring you into the land of Israel.*" Now that it could not be a resurrection from the dead which is here intended is, I apprehend,

* Letter to Mr. Channing, p. 26.

pretty plain from the subjects of this revival being able themselves to say, 'our bones are dried,' which is explained by 'our hope is lost;' and we learn the real intent of the vision by the last words quoted, "*I will bring you again to the land of Israel.*" I do not deny, that detached passages may be found in the Old Testament, particularly in the prophets, which imply the knowledge of the doctrine of immortality. And it is certain that these passages, and others from the law, were applied, by the Jews of our Saviour's time, to the proof of that doctrine. Hence our Lord reasons with them upon those passages. But that the Mosaick law was sanctioned by future rewards and punishments, is a proposition which Mr. English will not assert; and to compare the infrequent and incidental allusions to this retribution, which the Old Testament contains, with that perpetual and formal resort, which is made to it in the New Testament, is a lamentable want of discernment or fairness. The doctrine of life and immortality is, therefore, the peculiar doctrine of Christianity, and it is delivered too in a purity and spiritual dignity, which, considering the age and country in which the gospel was taught, are powerful proofs of its divine original.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. ENGLISH remarks, in the commencement of his sixteenth chapter, that he has hitherto taken the New Testament as he found it; and has argued upon the supposition, “that Jesus and the apostles really said and reasoned, as has been stated. But he endeavours to show, by an examination of the authenticity of the four gospels, that it is not certain, that they were really guilty of such mistakes as are related of them in those books.”* This is the grand key by which he reconciles the two schemes, the Jewish and the deistick, which his work contains. We have already shown, that if it were true that the books of the New Testament were not authentick, it would leave most of his objections without the pretence of foundation, without weakening the evidence of the principal facts of Christianity. These points, however, I shall presently discuss. I have alluded to them now, to point out a contradiction of Mr. English’s, which cannot be reconciled by alleging the difference between the evangelical and the pretended real history of the founders of Christianity.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 152.

Page 95.

The Jews and Nazarene Christians [also Jews] say, “ that Paul, being a man of tried abilities, and of some note, demanded the high priest’s daughter in marriage ; and being refused, his rash and rageful temper, and a desire of revenge, drove him to join the sect of the Nazarenes, *at that time beginning to become troublesome to the Sanhedrim.*

Now the absurd tale related in the first of these passages, which rests upon the authority of Epiphanius,* is spoken of, by Mr. English, as the opinion of the Jews. It implies, not only that Paul had excited their notice, but that the sect of Christians, of course its leaders the other apostles, had given trouble to the Sanhedrim. It would be, doubtless, gratifying to the reader to know, how the writer that sneers so much at the dissonance of the evangelists, will reconcile these facts with his subsequent assertion, that “ the Jews, nearest the

Page 151, n.

As for the Jews, the origin and early propagation of Christianity *was* so very obscure, that those who lived nearest the times of the apostles, DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE KNOWN ANY THING *about them or their doctrines.*

* I do not mean to insinuate that Mr. English went so far for this account, as to a father of the fourth century. He took it, as he afterwards acknowledges in his letter to Mr. Cary, from the work of an English Infidel. See Toland’s Nazarenes, p. 35.

time of the apostles, do not seem *to have known any thing of them or their doctrines.*" Mr. English, in his twelfth chapter, gives what he calls a character of Paul and his writings. There is an air of rabbinism in this absurd espousal of obsolete Jewish calumnies, which has appeared to me less becoming of a liberal mind, than almost any thing else, which his work contains. That any one can read the writings of St. Paul, nay, only the twelfth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, or the twelfth and thirteenth of the first to the Corinthians, and found upon these writings such heinous charges as Mr. English does, is a deplorable want of moral taste. However, let us examine what is urged by Mr. English in justification of his opinions. It is the fate of some false assertions to be repeated till they are believed, and to gain from prescription what they want in truth. Such has been the case with the fancy of an opposition between the first teachers of Christianity, with which Mr. English begins his character of St. Paul. When the gospel was first taught, it was taught to two very different classes of men, viz. the Jews and the Gentiles. That each should have been disposed to carry their former prejudices into Christianity, and make their new opinions as much as possible a mere modification of the old, is agreeable to the universal operation of human passions. It is equally natural that this zeal among the converts respectively to confound and to oppose Christianity and Judaism, must have imposed upon

the apostles a delicate and difficult task of reconciliation. The rule, however, which they maintained, was chosen in perfect prudence, as it was in fact the only one which truth and reason sanctioned. They taught that Christianity could exist, notwithstanding any innocent forms, with which it might be associated; that in the words of Paul, 'circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision nothing,' but a new creature. This, however, did not satisfy the zealous adherents of the law, and under the influence of their own offended feelings, or more probably instigated by their unbelieving brethren, they made this wise principle the foundation of a charge against Paul, of teaching that the observance of the Mosaick ritual was unlawful. This he had never done, and to show that he held this observance an indifferent matter, he publicly complied with several of its specifick requisitions. It is plain that it was a subject upon which the Jewish converts were very easily excited, and that no small pains were necessary to soothe their fears. In one instance it appears that Peter, naturally timid, was unable to bear up against the force of the prejudice, and made an unworthy compliance with the exclusive spirit of his orthodox brethren. This was in withdrawing himself from the communion of the Gentile converts at Antioch, with whom he had before associated, upon the arrival there of some of the Jewish brethren. For this he was justly rebuked by St. Paul.* On all

* Galat. ii, 12, 14.

other occasions he manifests that courage, which was his prevailing character after the ascension of our Lord; and when some of the Jewish converts were zealous for the imposition of the law upon the Gentiles, he decisively spoke of it as a burden, which neither “we nor our fathers were able to bear.”* Nor did the just reproof of Paul alienate the mind of Peter, who speaks, in his second epistle, of “our beloved brother Paul,” and classes his writings among the Scriptures.†

However, from the fact that this unreasonable partiality for the Mosaick law existed among the Jewish converts, and this solitary instance of Peter’s timidity, has grown up, as I apprehend, the whole notion that there was a schism between the founders of Christianity, and that Peter and Paul were at the head of the two parties. After the Nazarenes, by some of whom the calumny was invented, it was asserted by Porphyry, and from him adopted by Julian, though they do not appear to have taken a large view of the subject; and seem rather to have insisted upon the personal quarrel of Peter and Paul, than upon a diversity in their mode of teaching Christianity. Toland, in his *Nazarenus*, claims to himself the credit of systematizing the opinions, which some of the fathers ascribed to the Nazarene Christians, and the opinions of Porphyry, and of forming them into one “original plan of Christianity.”‡ His princi-

* Acts xv. 10.

† 2 Peter iii. 15.

‡ Toland’s *Nazarenus*, p. 69, &c

ple is, that the Mosaick law was really binding on the Jewish converts, and that the gospel of the Jews, entrusted to the other apostles, was therefore different from the gospel of the Gentiles, entrusted to Paul. He does not assert that this was the result of schism, but holds it up as the original institution of Jesus: this, however, of course was ironical. From Toland, Semler appears to have taken much of his scheme of the two schools of Christianity,* which Mr. English fancifully says, he unanswerably proved. Why does not Mr. English produce these unanswerable proofs? The opinion itself is to my mind, I own, absurd. That any one can impartially read the writings of the New Testament, and say that they teach a different series of facts or doctrines, is to me quite inconceivable. It has been often observed, and is a thing of notorious truth, that allowing any one of the historical or epistolary books of the New Testament to be authentick, the whole of Christianity may be proved from it.

To the charge against Paul of an unworthy artifice in escaping from the Sanhedrim, which

* The most distinct statement of Semler's opinion is in his *Paraphrasis epistolæ ad Galatas: prolegom.* § 6. et seq. He there says, "divisam et sejunctam fuisse societatem sacram illorum qui Pauli discipuli essent, et illorum qui Petrum, Jacobum et alios e Palæstinensibus doctores sequerentur, quasi satis certam rem et historica omni auctoritate confirmatam occupare audemus." Yet I do not find that this historical evidence amounts to any thing more than the doubtful tradition of the Nazarenes, or that any proof is added by Semler to this, beyond some slender deductions of internal evidence.

Mr. English repeats here, without seeming to remember that he had already transcribed it in another place from Orobio, it is not necessary to make any other reply, than is contained in the extract from Limborch already given, and which was the original answer to the charge, as stated by his Jewish opponent. Mr. English proceeds to "the consideration of some of the arguments deduced by Paul from the passages of the Old Testament in support of his opinions." He uses the personal style, and says, "*I shall now go into the consideration,*" but out of the six pages which embrace this consideration, four are copied, without acknowledgment, from R. Isaac.* After transcribing from this Jewish author the objections to the other epistles of Paul, Mr. English adds, "*I intended to have concluded this subject by bringing under examination some of the arguments and quotations in the epistle to the Hebrews. But upon looking over that epistle, and contemplating my task, I confess I shrink from it.*" Was the translation of four pages from the Latin version of Isaac so very wearisome, that Mr. English's strength would not suffice to translate as many more, upon the epistle to the Hebrews? What means this insinuation, that he collected these objections from his own examination; and if he is willing to be indebted to another, why is he not willing to own it? As for the objections themselves, which are found-

* Viz. from Wagenseil's edition, pp. 463, 464, 465, 466, 468, 469.

ed upon the quotations of Paul from the Old Testament, I had intended particularly to examine them all. But this would lead me to a repetition of what I have already advanced upon the subject of quotations in chapter vi. and to which I beg leave to refer the reader, for the principles which will satisfactorily account for the manner in which St. Paul quotes. Of one of the examples only I would say, that when Paul gives the number of those destroyed in the wilderness at twenty-three thousand, whereas it stands "twenty-four thousand" in the Old Testament, I suppose that either his manuscript of the Old Testament had that reading, or else that his memory failed him; nor do I discern in either supposition any objection to the Messiahship of Jesus. Mr. English having waved the examination of the quotations from the epistle to the Hebrews, and limited himself to a discussion of one of them, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, in which I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah," &c.—a passage which we have already considered, proceeds to trace the systematick Christianity of the New Testament to the cabbalism of the Jews, the religion of the magi of Persia, and the philosophy of the bramins of Hindostan. That the sacred writers, as Jews, should be acquainted with the Cabbala, and should use a language tinged with its technical terms, is quite natural and probable. If, however, they were, as Mr. English will have them, Gentile impostors of

the second century, it is not easy to conceive how they could have gained this familiarity with the Jewish Cabbala. That something of the Oriental philosophy may be traced in the New Testament may also be true; but not in a way which will be satisfactory to Mr. English, the assertor of the Old Testament against the New. Sir Thomas Hyde, who knew quite as much upon this subject as the doctor whom Mr. English quotes, speaks thus upon the subject, in one passage, out of many which I might translate: “Concerning the primitive opinions of the Persians, I will say no more here, because I shall treat the subject at large hereafter. In general I would intimate that their prophet Zoroaster suggested most of these opinions to them, *from the Mosaic law*, with which it is sufficiently apparent, that he was well acquainted. This appears from the doctrines of the creation, the flood, Abraham, and the perpetual altar of sacrifice; as also from their paying tithes to their priests, in imitation of Abraham and Melchisedek. So too, after the Jews, they have their high priest, their frequent ablutions, their distinction of animals, their caution against defilement by touching the dead, and their attention to all matters of purification, external and internal. The names most familiar to the Jews, as Abraham, Moses, and Joseph, are also familiar to the Persians. From the intercourse of the Jews with the Persians, this communication arose to such a degree that Artaxerxes [Darius Hystaspes]

gave his firman, as Cyrus had done before, for the restoration of the temple, the restitution of sacred vessels, and supplied means of purchasing victims, as we read in Ezra and Nehemiah. So that it is not wonderful that all the customs of the Jews should be known, and many retained by the Persians, WHENCE THERE IS A GREAT RESEMBLANCE OF THE RELIGIONS OF THE TWO NATIONS.”* Instead, therefore, of charging the New Testament with being framed upon the Persian philosophy, we should be far more rational in saying, that whatever they had in common, they both derived from the Old Testament. This is obviously true of the instance which Mr. English has chosen. “Many of my readers,” says Mr. English, “have no doubt frequently puzzled themselves over the words of Paul, Eph. v. 29. ‘For we are members of Christ’s body, of his flesh, and his bones. Because of this, a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.’” This, says Mr. English, is an allusion to the cabalistical notions, and *with uncommon and unaccountable liberality of reference*, sets down a specimen of these notions, which he lets us know that he quotes from Dr. Whitby, and Dr. Whitby from Dr. Allix, and Dr. Allix from those luminous theorists, “the profoundest of the Jewish divines.” Having thus established the connexion between this expressive

* Hyde de Relig. Veterum Persarum, c. 10. p. 147

text and the Jewish Cabbala, he surprises us with saying, "Thus far Dr. Whitby: and the intelligent reader who is acquainted with the dogmas and philosophy of Indostan, will not fail to see through this cloud of words, the origin of this analogy of Paul's." What then! are the Jewish Cabbala and the philosophy of Indostan the same thing! or did Mr. English rather forget what it was that he was to illustrate by this example. As for the connexion between the text of St. Paul and the symbol of creative power, to which Mr. English alludes,* I protest that I do not discern it. I rather discern in this allusion a specimen of that sickening relish for indecency, of which there is more than one instance in Mr. English's work. If one might hazard the rusticity of a simple reference to the Bible, among these high appeals to the Cabbala, and the philosophy of Indostan, I would presume to think that a little light might be derived to the text in question from that source. Paul is inculcating conjugal affection and duty. "Wives," saith he, "submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it. Husbands ought so to love their wives as their own bodies; as Christ also loveth the church, for we are members of his body, *we are* of his flesh, and his bones. Because of this, a man shall leave his father

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 88

and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This mystery is great: but I speak concerning Christ and concerning the church.”* Now here I feel no puzzle, as Mr. English will have it, at all, but an intelligible comparison of the affection and duty of a wife toward a husband, with that of the church to Christ. However too, this comparison may vary from the modern style of illustration, I cannot but think it sufficiently apt, and also recommended by its interesting and tender associations. It is not so far fetched, that I would bring it up from Dr. Allix’s profound of cabbalism, or from the philosophy of Indostan; least of all does it suggest to me the odious allusion of Mr. English. If, however, it must be traced to an external source, why not to the Old Testament, which repeatedly employs the same comparison to illustrate the relation of the Jewish church to God. Isaiah hails the church of Israel thus, “thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. *For THY MAKER is thy husband*, the Lord of hosts is his name.† And Jeremiah says, “which my covenant they break, though I was *an husband unto them*, SAITH THE LORD.”‡

Mr. English proceeds, “it may be asked, what could Paul mean by the strong language, *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones?*” Why, my reader, he meant

* Eph. v. 22 et seq.

† Isaiah liv. 4, 5.

‡ Jeremiah xxxi. 32.

that Christians were really part of the body of Christ."—"What poor mortals we are!" says Sir Hugh. Is not Paul comparing the relation of wife and husband with that of Christ and the church, and does he not say, "Husbands ought *so* to love their wives, as their own bodies? For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, as Christ *also* doth the church, *for* we are members of his body?" Now does Mr. English think that Paul meant to teach that the wife was *really part* of the *husband's* body? If not, why should it be fancied, that he meant that Christians were really part of the body of Christ?

To the affectation of espousing the argument of the papists upon the subject of transubstantiation, and the assertion that the primitive Christians believed in this doctrine, I suppose the reader will not ask me to reply. Mr. English tells us that "in the dispute with Latimer about transubstantiation, it is acknowledged by the most candid writers, that the Roman Catholicks had much the advantage, and it must have been so, where quotations from the fathers were allowed as arguments." It was not to quotations from the fathers that the Papists owed their victory, but to more efficacious arguments, the decrepitude and loss of memory of the venerable Latimer, the confinement of the prison, without books or pen and ink, out of which he was taken to dispute with doctors fresh from their

studies, the interference of the moderator, who stopped him as often as he thought he would say any thing prejudicial to the papistick side, and the insolent clamours of the Roman Catholick audience, which were continually drowning his voice. There is a fatality in Mr. English's alleged defence of the Jews; and it is a bad omen for any cause, that it leads its champion to a word, which favours the Catholicks against Latimer. "Loe! you look for learning at my hands," said this martyr to his persecutors, "who have gone so long to the schoole of oblivion, making the bare wals my librarie; keeping me so long in prison without booke or pen and inke; and now you let me loose to come and answer to articles. You deale with me, as though two were appointed to fight for life and death; and over night, the one through friends and favour, is cherished and hath good counsel given him how to encounter with his enemy. The other, for envy or lacke of friends, all the whole night is set in the stocks. In the morning, when they shall meete, the one is in strength and lustie, the other is starke of his limbs, and almost dead for feeblenesse. *Think you that to run through this man, with a spear, is not a goodly victorie?*"* Mr. English has forgotten, in his haste, that he refutes by implication his own argument. If, as he says, this "goodly victorie" of the Roman Catholicks over Latimer was owing to the admission of quotations from

* Fox's Book of Martyrs, vol. iii. p. 494

the fathers, the implication is, that it could not have been gained upon pure scripture ground, though he had just asserted that our Saviour and St. Paul taught the doctrine. However, the authority of the fathers, whatever were the case with the controvertists on one side, was not admitted on the other. Latimer entered the hall of disputation with his staff in one hand, and his New Testament in the other; and declared that he would argue from the latter alone.

“Another doctrine,” says Mr. English, “which Paul derived from the oriental philosophy, and which makes a great figure in his writings is, that moral corruption originates in the influence of the body upon the mind.” And he has one passage to this effect, which I will contrast with an observation made only a page onward.

Page 109.

The New Testament, though it does not recognize this principle of the oriental philosophy, that evil originates from matter, yet coincides with it, in strenuously asserting that the corruption of the human mind, is derived from its connexion with the human body.

Page 110.

The whole of the New Testament scheme is built upon the hypothesis, that there is a powerful and malignant being called Satan and the devil, the chief of unknown myriads of other evil spirits, that he is, by the sufferance of God, the prince of this world,
AND IS THE AUTHOR

Page 109.

Page 110.

OF SIN, woe and death.
The tempter, &c.

Now if, as Mr. English asserts in the last passage, it is the scheme of the New Testament that *sin proceeds from the temptations of an external malignant being*, it is not easily seen how the same New Testament can assert, that it arises from the philosophical fact of the connexion of body and mind. Temptation is in the mind; and the two systems are directly opposite. It would have been politick in Mr. English to have been careful, while he was accumulating his objections against Christianity, that he did not lay together those, which neutralize each other. But this doctrine of the influence of matter on mind, whencesoever derived, is no doubt, in the present constitution of things, to all practical purposes, true. The frailties and the vices to which men are liable, may generally be traced to the direct influence of their material frames, or to the circumstances which attend their nature, as mixed beings. Could I recal to mind and set down all the arguments in support of this doctrine, and all the illustrations of its truth, which I remember to have heard in a publick performance of Mr. English, I might lead the reader to doubt his present opinion, that these notions are "sufficiently strange." Of the texts, which he has accumulated to prove that Paul held the doctrine, some have no allusion whatever to it. For instance, "Those that

are Christ's have crucified the flesh *with its passions and desires.*" Gal. v. 24. Now the flesh, in distinction from the spirit, can of course have neither passions nor desires, which are emotions of the mind; and the word must be understood to be used in that sense familiar to the Old Testament, in which it is synonymous with the natural man. So too, whatever sanction is given in the New Testament to the general doctrine of the origin of sin in the flesh may be traced to the Old Testament, a far more obvious source than the philosophy of the Persians. "Suffer not," says Solomon, "thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin." And again, "Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh."* These are the doctrines of the New Testament, though by no means delivered, as Mr. English would imply, in the form of a systematick theology. It is not the fact that Paul universally ascribes sin to the flesh, but he often speaks of the body and mind as equal sources of it. Thus: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of *flesh* AND of *spirit*."†

Finally, Mr. English maintains, that the fundamental scheme of Christianity is derived from the religion of the ancient Persians, inasmuch as "it is built upon the hypothesis, that there is a powerful and malignant being, called the devil or Satan, the chief of unknown

* Ecclesiastes v. 6. Ib. xi. 10

† 2 Cor. vii. 1.

myriads of other evil spirits." That he is, by the sufferance of God, the prince of this world, and is the author of sin, woe, and death: the tempter, the tormentor of men, and the tyrant of the earth; that the Son of God, to deliver mankind from the vassalage of this monster descended from heaven, and purchased their ransom of the tyrant at the price of his blood; for observe, my reader, *that the idea of the death of Christ being an atonement to God for the sins of men is a modern notion; for the primitive Christians, ALL OF THEM, considered the death of Christ as a ransom paid to the devil, as may be proved from Origen and other fathers.*" Notwithstanding the deliberation with which this assertion is made, *it is not true.* Mr. English, though he does not acknowledge the debt, saw in Dr. Priestley's history of the corruptions of Christianity these words: "But this system was so far from being completed, that these writers [those of the period of which he was treating] could not determine to whom this price was paid, and in general it was agreed that it was paid to the devil, to whom mankind had been given over in consequence of the sin of Adam." He then shows this of Origen, Gregory Nazianzen, (who speaks of it as a new opinion,) of Ambrose, Optatus, Austin, and Proclus. The period of which Dr. Priestley is treating, is *the third and fourth centuries*, and this is Mr. English's foundation for asserting, "that the *primitive Christians, ALL OF THEM*, held this

doctrine;” whereàs no one author of the times usually called primitive, the first and second centuries, can be quoted for it. And Origen, the first who is known to have holden it, flourished almost in the middle of the third.*

In all the account Mr. English gives of what he calls the New Testament scheme, he has made the great mistake, of ascribing to the author and apostles of our religion, those popular opinions of the Jews, of which we discern the traces in the evangelick writings. That the Jews of our Saviour’s time entertained much of the theory of the devil, which Mr. English sets down, is probably true; but that it was authorized by Christ or his apostles, is so questionable, that Mr. English knows that men, inferior to none in piety and learning, have doubted whether the personality of the evil principle were taught in the New Testament.† Whence the prevailing opinions among the Jews were derived, is therefore a matter extremely irrelevant to Christianity. The foundation of them, indeed, is unquestionably in the Old Testament, in which, particularly in the book of Job, Satan, whatever be the true doctrine concerning him, is certainly represented in such a light, as

* Priestley’s history of Corruptions, vol. i. p. 137, 142, Boston Ed.

† Had Farmer lived to complete his plan, which he commenced with as much learning, as candour and ingenuity, in his works upon the temptation, the demoniacks, miracles, and the worship of human spirits, he would probably have inferred, as the result of his inquiries, that the New Testament did not teach the personality of an evil spirit.

would give natural occasion to the hypothesis of an evil spirit. From the Old Testament and the Jews, says Hyde, the Persians derived their doctrine of the two principles, light and darkness, God and the devil.* Should Mr. English, therefore, insist that the Jews of our Saviour's time derived their notions of the existence and agency of Satan from the philosophy of the Persians, it would only be a cancelling of the debt which Zoroaster owed to their fathers, to Moses and the prophets.

Mr. English proceeds to the account of the spiritual gifts, as related by St. Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians. He says, that the argument of Dr. Paley, that St. Paul would not have directed the converts as to the use of these gifts, if they had not really possessed them, 'puzzled him.'† He, however, happily found relief from Brown's history of the Shakers. The incidental mention Mr. English makes of this matter, betrays the temper and intention with which he pursued this inquiry; and shows that it was not his object to reach the truth, but to assail Christianity. He meets with an argument, proposed by a man not commonly betrayed into weakness, or detected in sophistry. He examines the argument itself, and finds it plausible. Does he receive it like a lover of truth? Does he rejoice at this prospect, however faint, of returning to his former faith,

* De religione veterum Persarum, c. 22. p. 292.

† Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 115.

and doing justice to the Christian cause, which he had been on the verge of denouncing? No. 'He is *puzzled*,' he is confounded with the thought that Paul, poorly as he appreciated him, could have been so presuming as to give directions for the management of miraculous powers, which did not exist; and it was not till he met with some extracts from Brown's history of the Shakers, that his puzzle ceased; he was restored from his painful dilemma, and the pleasing vision that Paul was an impostor, and Christianity a fraud, opens again upon his mind.

It is no new art of controversy to turn the argument upon topicks which are ridiculous, odious, and outraging, so that the respondent must either submit to the task of refuting sarcasms, and matching insults with reasons, or else leave them untouched. The comparison of the primitive Christians with the Shakers was made by one who understands this art, and a high gratification he doubtless anticipated, in seeing what he meant for insult answered as an argument. But I am resolved that if this were his feeling, it shall not be gratified. I grant that though it was the doctrine of the primitive Christians, that God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth, they agree with those who worship him by gross, sensual, and inflammatory bodily exercises: that though the primitive Christians maintained that 'marriage is honourable to all, and the bed unde-

filed,' they agree with those who maintain celibacy : that though it was the command of the primitive Christians, ' children, obey your parents ; fathers, provoke not your children,' they agree with those who stimulate such parents and children as come within their reach, to acts of mutual indifference and barbarity : that though the great apostle of the primitive Christians, with his own hands ministered to his necessities, he agrees precisely with the chief of one of the kindred sects of fanaticks, who extorts from her followers the means of supporting a regal establishment, in our western country : that though the primitive Christians were charged to ' give a reason to every one that asked of the hope that was in them,' they agree with those who utterly discourage reason ; and finally, that though the apostles of the primitive church " were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, and the multitude of devout men from every nation under heaven was confounded, *because that every man heard them speak in his own language,*" they still agree with those who pretend to speak in tongues, of which no man knows the meaning. All this and much more I will grant, for the sake of meeting Mr. English on his own ground. For after indulging in his comparison of the Shakers and Christians, he says, " I would ask the venerable Paley, if it were now possible, whether an apostolical epistle of Ann Lee, W. Lee, or Whitaker. the spiritual

mother and fathers of the Shakers, addressed to them, and seriously giving directions about the use of the gifts of working miracles, and speaking with tongues, would be sufficient to prove that they really had those gifts?" To which question I answer, *conditionally*, in the affirmative. If this apostolical epistle were filled with a pure, affectionate, and generous morality, and inculcated the noblest and most rational principles, like those contained in the first epistle to the Corinthians; if its authors were the founders of a system of sublime doctrines, and unexampled rules of virtue, in a dark and corrupt age; if they spent their lives and shed their blood to diffuse and confirm this doctrine, and rendered the most solemn testimony to miracles wrought in its defence; if multitudes of their contemporaries were persuaded by these miracles; if they uttered before they died a prophecy that every knee would bow in the name of the master they taught; if this prophecy immediately began to receive its fulfilment, and their faith was propagated from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom, against every conceivable prejudice, obstacle, and discouragement, till it was embraced by the whole civilized world; if the laborious and learned inquiries of the wisest and best, united with the popular opinion in maintaining the cause; and if all this took place in completion of the predictions of the whole system, acknowledged by the hostile repositories of these predictions to be given before the

events : I know not how Mr. English might be moved, but for myself, I should not hesitate to believe in those miracles, which would furnish the only rational account of these moral phenomena.

Mr. English infers from his comparison of the primitive Christians and Shakers, "that all proofs of doctrines pretended to be from God, derived from miracles, said to have been wrought in proof of their divine authority, are extremely fallacious." This inference he strengthens by adding, that miracles have been alleged in support of all religions, without exception, even the Mahometan, *though they were expressly disclaimed by its founder.* This last circumstance, one would think, might have spared us the note, in which we are informed that the Mahometan doctors maintain the miracles of their prophet ; since, if their arguments were conclusive, they would only prove that he was a deceiver, in doing the works he disclaimed. As to what Mr. English adds, in his note, in the way of preferring Mahometanism to Christianity, we suppose he will not have many followers. He first confounds popery with Christianity. He may be assured, that they are regarded by the majority of his readers as very different systems. He tells us that Mahometanism was embraced by the noble, the great, and the wise, almost as soon as it appeared ; whereas Christianity was skulking and creeping among the mob of the Roman empire, for some hundred years,

before it dared to raise its head to publick view. Tacitus then, though commonly thought a credible historian, was doubtless mistaken when he tells us, “that in the thirty-fourth year after the crucifixion, Christianity had spread throughout Judea, and the city of Rome, that it was embraced by a vast multitude there, who, instead of being so fortunate as to hide their heads from the publick view, were honoured with the presence of the Roman populace, as they were covered with pitch, and burnt alive to illuminate the gardens of Nero.* Since it was “among the *mob* that Christianity skulked,” Pliny must of course be in an error, however unintentional as favouring the Christians, when he tells his master, about forty years after this, that MANY of every age, OF EVERY RANK, and of each sex, are accused of Christianity, and that it prevailed not only in the cities, but in the villages and open country.† And since it was “some hundred years,” that Christianity was thus confined to the mob, all ancient history, sacred and profane, is notoriously fabulous, since it tells us, that in about 270 years from the time of our Saviour’s death, there was a Christian emperor on the Roman throne, surrounded by a Christian senate, court, and nation.

Mr. English enlarges upon the subject of the miracles pretended to be wrought by the Heathens ; and quotes, I am very happy to add, *with acknowledgment*, a page or two

* Tacit. An. l. xv.

† See p. 299.

from Dr. Middleton's free inquiry. But in applying Dr. Middleton's principles and facts to a different object from that to which they were applied by the doctor, he leaves the argument inconclusive. It was the design of Dr. Middleton to prove, that miracles ceased with the age of the apostles, and thereby to confute the pretences of the church of Rome, that there had been an unbroken succession of miraculous powers. He accordingly pointed out the resemblance of the accounts of the heathen miracles, with those of the alleged miracles of *the primitive Christians*, and fairly argued from the falsity of the former to the falsity of the latter. In like manner Mr. English should have shown, that the accounts of the *evangelical* miracles were as suspicious, as those of the heathen. This he does not attempt to do, nor can it be done. Mr. English tells us, from Dr. Middleton, that the record of the cures, which were wrought in the temple of Esculapius, was publickly made on brazen tables, hung up therein: and adds, that therefore "they are as well, if not far better authenticated, than those of the New Testament; for books may be forged, but publick monuments of brass and marble are not so capable of being so." And this is true; but there is that which is less capable of being forged, than either the record of books, or monuments of brass and marble; I mean such civil and moral changes, in whole nations, as the Christian miracles produced. Brass and

marble may speak false, but when a *miraculous* religion, which opposes all the previous prejudices of men, and is offered to their reception under every possible discouragement, is still received; there is a great presumption that the miracles, on which it rests, are true. There has been more than one monument of brass and marble, which “lifts its tall head and lies,” but a series of historical testimonies, a system of publick institutions, and a moral and civil change, such as Christianity has wrought, can never rest on a fiction. There must be some adequate cause for them; and since this cause did not exist in the popularity of the religion, or the human power and influence of those who first preached it, nor in any thing else, which would naturally command the confidence of men, there is no rational account to be given of it, but that it existed in the miracles. It is not, therefore, the New Testament which authenticates the Christian miracles, however powerful the presumption which it excites in their favour, by its simple and artless narrative of these wonderful events. It is the labours, sufferings, and blood of the primitive Christians, attesting to them, and the conspiring evidence of all society, in the great revolution of manners, morals, and sentiment, which nothing but a conviction of these miracles could have brought about. With respect to the miracles of the orthodox bishops, who preached after their tongues were cut out, or those of the abbe

Paris, I need say nothing of the facts, after what has been remarked of the former by Dr. Middleton,* and of the latter by Dr. Paley.† One observation only I would add. It has long been a favourite sophism with unbelievers, to urge the most plausible cases of false miraculous and prophetic accounts, as a satisfactory refutation of the true. Now this, instead of being a fair argument, leads directly to universal skepticism. It leads, in the first place, to the rejection of all history, since it is very well known that every kind of historical testimony may be found lavished upon things which no one believes. It equally leads to the discredit of all speculative reasonings, upon moral or metaphysical points, for who is ignorant that theories on each of these subjects have been believed and defended by the most ingenious men in one age, and exploded in the next. Nay, in the science of demonstration itself, it is one of the most common exploits of the mathematician, to prove that to be false, which his predecessors thought they had proved to be true.‡ But to reason from these facts against the credit of all mathematical, philosophical, or historical truth, would be an absurdity of pyrrhonism. Yet not more absurd than to turn the records of fanat-

* Middleton's free inquiry, p. 148.

† Paley's Evidences, p. 155.

‡ "Therefore it comes to pass," says Locke, "that this is more imperfect than intuitive knowledge, and men embrace often falsehood for demonstration." Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, ii. p. 76.

icism, enthusiasm, and imposture into an objection to the truth of those miraculous accounts, which, beside the external evidence in their favour, are really necessary to be supposed, as the only possible causes of great and notorious effects.

CHAPTER X.

THE next subject which Mr. English treats, viz. the doctrine of the Old Testament concerning the tests of a true prophet, has been already sufficiently discussed, in the first chapter of this essay. I attempted in that to reply to all that he has advanced upon it, in his fifteenth chapter, and to that, therefore, I beg leave to refer the reader.—In applying his principles to the character and claims of Jesus, Mr. English asks, “whether his prophecies were fulfilled, and whether he taught the worship of any other being besides Jehovah?” The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is the only one which he examines, and he tells us of this, that “what Jesus foretells of Jerusalem, did in fact come to pass, but that it was not a fulfilment of his prophecy, but of Daniel’s.” Now that part of Daniel’s prophecy which relates to the destruction of Jerusalem,* contains but three principal events; first, that Jerusalem should be invaded by a foreign prince;

* For most which I advance upon this subject, I am indebted to Dr. Lardner. See in Watson’s Tracts, vol. v. p. 110 et seq. I have accordingly forborne in general to make particular references.

second, that the sacrifice and oblation should cease; and third, that an utter desolation of the Jews should ensue. These predictions were doubtless fulfilled; but it cannot but be remarked, that the first of them does not suggest that variety and complication of hostilities, which fell upon the Jews, and which our Lord foretold. The second is not mentioned by our Lord. And the third, so far from being imitated by him, suggests, *in its literal signification*, an event, which did not take place. We are enabled, indeed, after the event, to interpret Daniel's prophecy conformably to it. But before the event, a prophecy that "*an utter and speedy end* would be poured upon the desolate,"* would certainly suggest the idea of such a total annihilation, as did not take place. Therefore, among the predictions of our Lord relative to the destruction of Jerusalem, which he did not, and could not have taken from Daniel, are these,

1. The extraordinary distresses and afflictions of the Jews previous to the final destruction of the city;
2. The preaching of the gospel throughout the Roman empire, before this event, with the persecution of his followers;
3. The famines, earthquakes, and pestilences in divers places;
4. Wars and rumours of wars;
5. The appearance of false Christs, false prophets, and impostors;

* See the version of this prophecy, given by Dr. Blayney, and adopted, p. 173 of this essay.

6. The arrival of these events, before the end of that generation ;

7. The prophetick warning to believers to flee out of Judea and Jerusalem, when they perceived the near approach of these calamities ;

8. The dispersion of the Jews that should survive the war.

1. Our Lord's predictions of the extraordinary distresses of the Jews are too well known to be repeated,* and the history of Josephus informs us of their lingering, intolerable severity. But the words of Daniel are, "the prince shall come and destroy the people, and the cutting off thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of a war, carried on with rapidity, shall be desolations." We learn from the event to understand the 'cutting off with a flood,' to be the overwhelming extent, rather than the acceleration of the destruction, and to apply the "*rapidity*" to the *final* expedition, with which, after previous delay, the measures of the Romans were urged. Before the event, I think it will be allowed that the words of Daniel would not have suggested the true nature of the disasters. Our Lord, therefore, could not have borrowed this from him.

2. The preaching of the gospel was thus foretold, "And this gospel of the kingdom must first be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations."† However unlikely,

* Luke xix. 41—44. xxiii. 25—31, &c.

† Matt. xxiv. 14. Mark xiii. 10.

says Lardner, this might seem, when these words were spoken by our Lord, they were verified. The epistles of the New Testament still extant, and written to Christians in divers cities and countries, are a standing monument of it. For they were sent to believers at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, and the Hebrews; all written by St. Paul: and the epistles of the apostle Peter are directed to Christians residing in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. And the four gospels and acts of the apostles afford evidence, that there were numerous converts to the faith of Jesus. For they were written for the use of such. St. Paul says, "from Jerusalem and round about Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ." And he reminds the Romans that their faith was spoken of throughout the world. While to the Colossians he observes, "that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven."* Tacitus [as we have already seen,] bears witness that "the Christian religion, which had its rise in Judea, had spread into many parts, and had reached Rome itself, where the professors of it were numerous, (*ingens multitudo*,) and that many of them underwent grievous torments in the reign of Nero, about the year of our Lord 62 and afterwards." This prediction was not derived from Daniel.

3. Our Lord foretold famines, earthquakes,

* Rom. xv. 19. i. 18. Colos. i. 23. v. 6.

and pestilences, in divers places.* There is an account of a famine in the time of Claudius, in the acts of the apostles, and also in Josephus. It is described, by the latter author, as very severe. It began in the fourth year of Claudius, not long before the war, and lasted several years. Dion Cassius mentions another, three years before this; and Tacitus another, six years after. Of pestilences, we learn from Josephus, that there was one at Babylon, about ten years after the crucifixion, in which the Jews suffered. Soon after the commencement of the Jewish war, there was a mortal pestilence at Rome, and Tacitus gives an account of similar calamities in the empire, commencing with the remark, that "this year, which was signalized by such flagrant crimes, was equally so by the vengeance of the gods."† Finally, there was an earthquake at Rome in the reign of Claudius, and another at Apamæa in the same reign. Three cities of Asia were overturned by an earthquake in the time of Nero, and another in the same reign at Campania is mentioned by Tacitus and Seneca. This prediction could not have been derived from Daniel.

4. The prediction of wars and rumours was fulfilled, according to Josephus, whose testimony to this point is collected by Dr. Lardner, with dreadful and distressing exact-

* Mark xiii. 8. Matt. xxiv. 7. Luke xxi. 11.

† "Tot facinoribus fœdum annum etiam Dii tempestatibus et morbis insinivere."

ness. "The Syrians," says he in one place, "destroyed not a less number than the Jews, so that the disorders all over Syria were terrible. For every city was divided into parties, armed against each other, and the safety of the one depended on the destruction of the other. The days were spent in slaughter, and the nights in terrours, which were the worst of the two." This prediction had not its origin in Daniel.

5. The fifth prediction, of the appearance of false Christs, false prophets, and impostors, equally underived from Daniel, was notoriously fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem. But of this we have already spoken.*

6. The arrival of these events was predicted before the end of that present generation: this also was not taken by our Lord from Daniel. The prophecy of Daniel we have already had occasion to consider; and to show how illustriously it came to pass. The designations of time also are, for prophecy, uncommonly clear, and we have before stated, that they were the source of that unanimous expectation, which was pointing to this period, as the era of some great and momentous events. Still, however, it is not probable that the public estimation was so precisely defined as to settle the very generation, in which the events were to transpire. The date of the prophetick calculation was the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Of these there were three differ-

* See above, chapter v. p. 214.

ent ones—not indeed very distant in time from each other, but so much as to affect the calculation by more than one generation.

7. Next, the prophetick warning to his disciples to flee from the city, was original in our Lord. I call it the *prophetick* warning, because, as afterwards appeared, it was admirably adapted to an opportunity of obeying it, which was unaccountably given by the Roman generals. Owing to some dissention or corruption of his officers, Cestius, the Roman general, neglected to storm the city at a time, when the attempt would have been successful. “If at that time,” says Josephus, “he had attempted to enter the walls by force, he would have won the city presently, and put an end to the war, at once. But Priscus, a general in the army, and many officers of the horse, who had been corrupted by Florus, diverted him from that design: which was the occasion that this war lasted so long, and the Jews were involved in such grievous calamities.” Cestius accordingly retreated, and was pursued with considerable loss. “And after this calamity had befallen him,” says Josephus, “MANY OF THE MOST CONSIDERABLE JEWISH PEOPLE FORSOOK THE CITY, AS MEN DO A SINKING SHIP.”

8. Finally, Daniel foretold that “the prince that should come should destroy the people,” and that “an utter end should be poured upon the desolate.” These words, before the event, must needs have suggested nothing less than

an absolute extermination. Since the event, we learn to understand them of national, political, and civil destruction. But our Saviour foretold "there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people; and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, *and shall be led away captive into all nations.*" This was precisely fulfilled. After the capture of the city, those who escaped the unexampled carnage of the day, were sent, if above seventeen years of age, to work in the mines of Egypt, and if under seventeen, were sold as private slaves. In so many circumstances, in which our Lord's prophecy was more explicit than Daniel's, was it illustriously fulfilled!

But Mr. English takes no notice of many of these particulars, in which our Lord's prediction, as distinct from Daniel's, was fulfilled, and even says, with equal unhappiness as to the style and the fact, "That it would have been better for his (our Lord's) reputation as a prophet, if he had stopped short where Daniel stopped." He also makes some objections, which we will examine. He graciously tells us, that "*he knows and has smiled over the contrivances,** by which learned Christians have endeavoured to save the credit of this prophecy. They say, that it is a figurative prophecy, relating entirely to the destruction

* This language is caught from Evanson, letters to Dr. Priestley, p. 63. "Evil communications corrupt *good manners*," as St Paul quotes from Menander.

of Jerusalem, which did in fact take place in that generation; that the expressions about the distress of nations, and the sea and waves roaring, the signs in heaven, &c. are merely poetical, and that the shaking of the powers of heaven, was merely the shaking and pulling down the stones of the temple; and that the glorious coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, meant merely that he sent Titus and the Romans to destroy Jerusalem; or, perhaps, might have been an invisible spectator himself. The reader will easily see, that this is all *nonsense*; and the commentator, Grotius, after meddling a great while in this troublesome business, at length ventures to insinuate that God might have suffered Jesus to be in a mistake, about the time of his second coming, and to tell the apostles what he did to keep up their spirits."* Now there is a rustick simplicity in this piece of impudence, with which we have not the heart to quarrel: and to hear Mr. English talking about the nonsense of Grotius, excites any emotion rather than anger. If Mr. English thinks it nonsensical to suppose, that the destruction of Jerusalem would be spoken of in language like this, what name of contempt will he find for the prophet Isaiah, who thus foretels the subversion of Babylon; an event of far less horror and desolation? "*The burden of BABYLON, which Isaiah, the son of Amos, did see. Howl ye, for the DAY*

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 132.

OF THE LORD *is at hand*: it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. Behold, *the day of the Lord cometh*, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. *For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: and the sun shall be darkened, in his going forth; and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. Therefore, I WILL SHAKE THE HEAVENS, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as the sheep which no man taketh up, and they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one to his own land. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them: and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the excellency of the Chaldeans, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*"* There are four designations which limit this vision to the destruction of Babylon, viz. 'The burden of Babylon,' 'The day of the Lord is at hand,' 'I will stir up the Medes against them,' and 'Babylon shall be as Sodom and Gomorrah.' The subversion of this city, therefore, is predicted in almost the language, in which that of Jerusalem is foretold by our Lord; for the intimation of Mr. English, that the language of the latter is borrowed from the second chapter of Joel, is, as every one will

* Isaiah xiii. 16—19.

see, who will compare the passages, quite groundless ! What a miserable littleness then is there, in the affected sneer with which Mr. English recounts the Christian interpretation of the “distress of nations,” the “roaring of the sea and waves,” the “signs of heaven, and the shaking of the powers of heaven ;” when the writers of the Old Testament, upon whose style that of the founders of the gospel and their contemporaries was formed, use the same language in describing the subversion of Babylon ; and under circumstances which demand the same interpretation ! What would Mr. English, or those whom he espouses, say to Voltaire or any one else, that should object to this prediction of the ruin of Babylon, “that in truth the stars and constellations of heaven did not withhold their light, nor were the sun and moon darkened in their going forth. The *world* was not punished for evil, only in Babylon. The heavens were not shaken, nor the earth moved out of its place. The day of the Lord did not come, and so far from its being at hand, it has not arrived to this day ; and as to the Lord’s mustering the host of the battle, and the Lord and the weapons of his indignation coming from a far country, it seems that nothing is meant but that Cyrus mustered an army of Medes, and marched up from Persia against Babylon.”

I have not found the passage, in which, according to Mr. English, “Grotius ventures to insinuate, that God might have suffered Jesus

to be in a mistake about the time of his second coming." But as I have elsewhere seen the same intimation, I am not disposed to question it. Grotius, indeed, not ventures to insinuate, but plainly says, on Mark xiii. 32. "That it was not necessary for Christ, in the season of his mission, to know the day of universal judgment, which God his father would have concealed." For my own part, when I reflect on the language of Isaiah already quoted, in which the destruction of Babylon is foretold, and on numberless other passages of the Old Testament, in which God is represented as gloriously apparent with the insignia of omnipotence, when no more is meant but that great revolutions are effected, *in the course of his providence*, I find no difficulty in referring all that our Lord says to the subversion of the city, the temple, and the Jewish state, and the unexampled horrors with which this judgment was attended. But if it be thought necessary also to interpret the latter members of his prediction to the last day, and it should then seem that this day is represented as following close upon the destruction of Jerusalem, no objection can therefore arise to Christianity or its author. For after our Lord has expressly said, that "of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the *Father*," it seems a gratuitous captiousness to insist upon an error in the time assigned for this day, in his prophecy.

But when I read over the writings of the New Testament, and see them filled with moral rules of conduct, calculated to operate upon the conduct of successive generations, instructions to fathers and sons, precepts to train up children to the observance of the common duties of life,—I cannot think that those who gave these instructions imagined, that the present generation would bring about a consummation, which would make them all unnecessary. There is a composure and collection of thought too, throughout the New Testament, utterly inconsistent with the idea, that the minds of its authors were filled with the vision of the approaching desolation of the world; and to suppose that a man could give moral instruction, such as is contained in the latter portion of each of St. Paul's epistles, and give it so calmly and deliberately, and with such calculation of the human nature, relations, and duties, if he supposed that a few years would dissolve the present state of things, and destroy the nature, relations, and duties which depended on it, is to attribute to him something as supernatural, as inspiration on whatever theory. But the question seems settled by one more consideration, that the New Testament actually contains prophecies of events, which have been fulfilling for a long series of years, from the time they were uttered to the present day. This is expressly and repeatedly allowed by Evanson, whom Mr. English will grant to be an unsuspecting

voucher for any fact, that tends to establish the credit of the sacred writers. "The obvious purport," says he, "of almost all the prophecies of the gospel, as they are dispersed in different scriptures of the New Testament, is to predict the circumstances of a most unhappy corruption of the genuine religion of Jesus, which began to operate in the days of the apostles themselves, and was to end in an entire apostacy from the truths of the gospel, and the establishment of a false, fabulous, irrational, idolatrous, blasphemous superstition; first, by the civil power of the Roman empire, under some signal change in its circumstances, and afterwards by the civil power of all those separate western kingdoms, into which the empire at its dissolution was to be divided."*

It is not necessary for me to inquire into the inferences which this author makes from this assertion, which is in part unquestionably true. My own inference is, that if the writers of the New Testament, and Paul in particular, who abounds in these predictions, really looked forward to a series of events, which was to come to pass in a succession of ages, they could not have thought, that the next generation would witness the destruction of the world, and the advent of the last day.

I have thus vindicated the only prophecy in the New Testament, which Mr. English thinks fit to examine. I cannot but express my surprise that he who considers 'prophecy

* Evanson's dissonance, p. 25.

fulfilled,' not only as the sole evidence of a revelation, but as a *sufficient* evidence, should not have felt himself bound to go over the numerous prophecies of the New Testament, and inquire whether they have been fulfilled. This it was my intention, when I commenced this essay, to do. But I am swelling it already beyond its proper bounds, and I will, therefore, only ask the reader's attention to two prophecies, the one of our Saviour, and the other of St. Paul. In Matt. xvi. 18. it is written, "but I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now only let us go back to the circumstances, under which this prediction was made, and consider that it was uttered by the despised master of twelve fishermen, that the doctrine he taught was confined to a few villages of an obscure province of the Roman empire, and then let us think of the absolute impossibility that such a glorious prospect as the text expresses, should have entered the mind of any but an inspired personage; especially the mind of a melancholy enthusiast, which Mr. English will have our Lord to be, who would be prone to despair, rather than to hope well of his cause. But when we add, that this prospect, so unlikely, so all but impossible to be fulfilled, should have received a completion, continually becoming more absolute, through a series of eighteen centuries, and in defiance of all the principles of

calculation, of probability, I had almost said of chance; the inspiration of God is clear. When this prediction was made, the whole of Christianity, with its author and his disciples, abode in the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, and now to see how well it has been fulfilled, we must cast our eyes over the innumerable millions by which it has been embraced, and think on the mighty obstacles, over which it has prevailed.

The prophecy of St. Paul, with which I will dismiss the subject, is thus expressed, in Phillip. ii. 9, 10, 11. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Upon Mr. English's principles this prophecy was made by the unprincipled leader of a despised and odious sect; and it is recorded in a letter, written by him, to a small community of his brethren, seated in an obscure Roman colony, at the bottom of the Egean gulf. Now, in the first place, Mr. English has to account for the most remarkable moral phenomenon, that a factious and corrupt ringleader of such a contemptible rabble, as he will have St. Paul and the primitive Christians to be, should have entertained the remarkable fancy, that the master, whom he had imposed on the credulity of his simple converts, should become an object of future universal homage. And if he will say

that Paul himself did not believe the truth of his own prophecy of the diffusion of Christianity, but uttered it only to cheer the disciples ; then by what unexampled coincidence is it, that this trick of a low impostor has been ratified by a series of political and moral changes, which has been taking place for more than seventeen centuries and a half? The persecuted religion, of which Paul predicted the universal diffusion to the little church of Philippi, has become the religion of the civilized globe. All that was refined in the world at the time the prediction was made, sooner or later professed Christianity ; empires sprung up from barbarism, and embraced it ; and this vast world in the west, unknown when the prophecy was uttered, has been discovered, and settled, and reared in the name of Jesus. Did it not strike Mr. English's mind, when he was asserting that ' prophecy fulfilled ' was an infallible proof of revelation, that it was but a few months since he had been preaching in the name of Christ, in a land of which Paul never heard, in that name in which this apostle, at the distance of two thousand years, and twice two thousand miles, had foretold that every knee would bow ?

The other test which Mr. English proposes of the truth of our Lord's claims is, ' whether he taught the worship of any other being, beside Jehovah.' I confess that the remark, which is in the mouth of every one who knew Mr. English, appears to me entirely just,

While he was a Christian, he did not believe that the Christian system taught the worship of any other being beside Jehovah. He particularly approved the doctrine of H. Taylor, who strenuously asserts the same, and he compiled himself, as I think, a manuscript of some eight hundred pages, partly to assert the Arian scheme. But now that he is gathering objections to Christianity, he thinks fit to number among them, that it teaches the worship of other beings beside Jehovah. For myself, I see as little warrant in the scriptures, as Mr. English once did, for the worship of any being beside God the father; and in the express instruction which our Lord gives his disciples, concerning a form of prayer, the object of worship is, "our Father which art in heaven." But this I shall also say, that those Christians, who hold that Christ taught the worship of himself, do hold that, as the object of worship, he is the same being as Jehovah. They do not believe, no Christian believes, that any other being besides Jehovah is to be worshipped; and most of the texts that are brought to prove that Christ is to be worshipped, equally prove that he is Jehovah. If Mr. English therefore asserts that the former is the doctrine of the New Testament, he must also allow that the latter is, and hence his objection falls.

CHAPTER XI.

As I wish to conclude this essay with the consideration of the authenticity of the New Testament, I shall devote the present chapter to such remarks as it may be necessary to make, in reply to what Mr. English has urged against the Christian morality. His seventeenth and eighteenth chapters are devoted to this subject, and contain his objections to the Christian morality, first, in respect to its individual, and second, to its publick influence. The reader will allow me to recal to his mind the remark of Orobio's, which Mr. English has incorporated into a former part of his work. "*That the New Testament inculcates an excellent morality cannot be denied, for its best moral precepts were taken from the Old Testament. And if the apostles had not preached good morals, how could they have expected to be considered by the Gentiles as messengers from God?*"* Now if it be true, as Mr. English here asserts, that upon the whole the New Testament inculcates an excellent morality from whencesoever derived, it cannot be that it breathes a spirit, as Mr.

* Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 88.

English elsewhere maintains, fatal to private improvement and happiness, and to social order. The influence of some pernicious maxims, even to grant that they exist, could not counteract the operation of an excellent morality. As to the absurdity of supposing that Christ and his apostles, after borrowing one excellent system of morals from the Old Testament, should have added or interwoven another contradictory thereto ; it is too manifest to admit discussion.

I pass over what Mr. English states, in explanation of his views of the moral character of our Lord, as I have expressed myself fully upon this point. The objections which he makes to the morality of the New Testament are founded, in the first place, upon the literal interpretation of such maxims as these,—resist not the injurious person, but if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If a man ask thy cloak, give him thy coat also. If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me ; unless a man hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and possessions, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Take no thought for the morrow. “These precepts,” says Mr. English, “are hyperbolical. Who does not see in these commands, the language of enthusiasm or hyperbole ?” Now here, I apprehend, he has given a truer account of these detached sentences than he designed. They are indeed hyperbolical, that

is, figurative expressions of principles, allowed by all good moralists, to be the foundation of virtue.* “Resist not the injurious person; but if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also; if a man ask thy cloak, give thy coat also.” To Mr. English’s objection to this, it must be a sufficient answer, that it is one of those excellent moral precepts, which are taken from the Old Testament: “Say not I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.”† “The Lord God hath opened my ear, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame, and from spitting.*”‡ “It is good for a man, that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. *He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him.*§ The import of this injunction, whencesoever derived, is that we should not encourage a spirit of revenge. The words “if thou wouldst be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, *and come and follow me,*” were addressed to an individual who made application to our Lord. That they were not intended as a standing moral maxim for succeeding ages, is evident from the last words, ‘come and fol-

* Upon these sentences see Grotius de jure belli ac pacis, l. ii. c. ii. § 6.

† Prov. xxiv. 29.

‡ Isaiah i. 6.

§ Lament. iii. 27—30.

low me.' Nor do I well see how Mr. English could think, that when our Lord bade the young man sell all he had, and give to the poor, he was giving a precept of literal universal obligation; since if all sold, there would be none to buy. The next alleged precept of the Christian morality is, "if any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." The objection, which Mr. English makes here, is unphilosophically founded upon the *word*, and not upon the *meaning*. It seems, indeed, an oppressive precept, that a man should be obliged to hate the dearest objects, in order to approve his love to Christ. But when we consider that our Lord meant only that his cause must be loved the most, and, if need be, preferred to all other attachments, the precept is just. And that this is all that is meant by loving Christ, and hating father, and mother, and wife, and children, and possessions, yea, and his own life, is clear from the use of similar language in the Old Testament. Thus, "if a man have two wives, one beloved and another hated,"* it cannot be doubted that the meaning is, 'if a man have two wives, the one loved more than the other:' and this explanation of "hate" is expressly given by Moses, in another instance. "Jacob loved Rachel *more* than Leah, and the Lord saw that Leah was *hated*."† Here

* Deut. xxi. 15.

† Gen. xxix. 30.

there can be no question that the signification of 'hate' is limited, according to the remark made above. That it should be thus limited in the text all good principles of criticism require; especially when we add that the parallel passage in Matthew* stands thus: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."† The only other precept mentioned here by Mr. English, is this, "take no thought for the morrow." I wonder that Mr. English's acquaintance with the New Testament, while he was in the habit of venerating and studying it, did not extend to the note of Campbell, who proves that both in ver. 25. 'take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat,' &c. and in the present verse, our translators have given a rendering not sanctioned by the original, or any other interpreters. The meaning is 'be not anxious for the morrow :' a precept not only unexceptionable, but admirable.

* *ving*

• Matt. x. 37.

† As it is probable Mr. English's objection to these principles is founded quite as much upon the source, from which they are derived, as any thing in their own nature exceptionable, I would submit to him the following sentiment of Hierocles, a heathen philosopher: "But if it happen that the will of parents be incompatible with the divine law, what must be done when different duties clash? Where greater and less duties are proposed, if we cannot perform both, we must choose the greater. Thus, it is proper to obey God, and proper also to obey parents; and if each obedience calls upon us to do the same act, no difficulty follows. But if the divine law require one thing, and parents another, you must disobey your parents, when they disobey the divine laws." Apud Grotium ad Matt. x. 37.

The reader will thus observe, that it needs only that manliness of interpretation, which it is thought illiberal to withhold from any other system, to vindicate the precepts which Mr. English quotes, as the peculiar morality of the gospel. But it ought further to be observed, that he misrepresents the spirit of these precepts by tacitly supposing them to be obeyed only by a small community or a single person. "Thus, if it were only a few individuals, or one man, that obeyed the precept, 'resist not the injurious person,' living in the society of others, who paid no regard to principles like these, I do not say that they still would do unwisely, (the primitive Christians sometimes did it in such circumstances, and have their reward,) but the operation of the precept would be certainly more mortifying and burdensome. But if we suppose that all men obeyed this injunction, as it is equally binding on all, there would be no occasion for exercising a literal compliance with it, for there would be no injurious person, and all the law would be fulfilled by checking every emotion of the angry temper. Now this qualification of the Christian morality is virtually made in the case of all civil law. No one, in civil society, has a right to do himself immediate justice on an injurious person; he must await the course of law. It is only upon the supposition that the members of the community in general submit to this arrangement, that it is reconcileable with individual rights and liberty. A loyal subject,

among outlaws, would be miserably oppressed, by his obedience to the law.

Again, these precepts are more oppressive when singly regarded, than when regarded together. To a man who obeyed them all, each would be easy. Thus, if a man obeyed all the other Christian laws, loved his neighbour as himself, was just and charitable to all, and fulfilled the whole of personal and social duty, it would be no oppression to him that he was enjoined to turn the other cheek, when one was smitten. For nobody would smite him. Or if some rare profligate should commit such an outrage, who does not see that the greatest possible punishment would be to turn the other cheek.

Upon the whole subject of the Christian morality, I most earnestly refer the reader, who wishes to understand its merits, to the chapter upon it in Paley's Evidences, P. II. ch. ii. I would add myself here that it is not to be concealed that Mr. English, instead of giving a fair view of the Christian morality, has only extracted such maxims, as standing by themselves, may seem to be oppressive and impracticable. He quotes the maxim 'resist not the injurious person;' but he suppresses another, 'whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause*, shall be in danger of the judgment.' Here is space left for the lawful sentiment of anger. He asks whether a man "will become more useful to society, when his mind is perpetually inquieted by imaginary

terrors and mournful thoughts, which prevent him from fulfilling those duties he owes to his family, his country, and those with whom he is connected?" But had Mr. English quoted these words of our Lord, "When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance," he would have seen that Christianity was not meant for a gloomy religion. Mr. English has much declamation, through which I do not care to follow him, about our "wanting human virtues in this world," and "virtues which enable us to attain lawful pleasures." Doubtless these are very good. But after all, the object of life is not this world, but the other; and our ultimate business is not to be useful to society, nor to build up the glory of the community or the nation. All this indeed follows from the laws of unbending justice, purity, and charity, which the gospel enjoins:—and Montesquieu exclaims, as justly as eloquently, "Chose admirable! la religion chrétienne, qui ne semble avoir d'objet que la félicité de l'autre vie, fait encore notre bonheur dans celle-ci."* But it enjoins with these laws a care for higher things. Mr. English writes, he will smile to hear me say it, like an unpractised man. He talks in a fervid strain about "the happiness and duties of life." But there are those who would think themselves derided by being addressed on topicks like these, and in the spirit which animates Mr. English. There is some-

* *Esprit des lois*, iv. p. 4.

thing in the burden of heavy care, in bitter repeated disappointment, in lingering disease, to subdue the feelings which we cherish in the hours of youth, prosperity, and health. Mr. English was drawing from the fountains of science, and was writing a book in which he was to display his talents to the world, and to pull down the prejudices which eighteen centuries had reared. He felt himself the undaunted advocate of truth, the generous champion of an injured nation, and his heart was swelled with the thought, that society was waiting with impatience to thank him for breaking her fetters, and asserting her rights. But all this vision is as fleeting as air. He sees already that nothing can be done, and to this change in his feelings, which is a personal matter, will succeed the common operation of the lapse of time, and the vicissitudes of the world. Thirty years hence, should he live so long, and experience a common share of what there is in the world to offend, perplex, and grieve him, he will look upon his "human virtues" as bitter mockeries. When the tide of generous feeling, which now rises in his bosom, is forced backward to freeze there, and he finds that to pass through life, is to row against a tide, and to face the storm, he will think better of the solitary and contemplative virtues. He has already found occasion to call it a world "of fraud and falsehood,"* and the affecting allusion he has made to his prospects therein,

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 117.

has many a time restrained me, when I ought to have used the language of indignation. It is not only a world of fraud and falsehood, but a world of trial, sickness, or death. I do not think one sentence in Mr. English's book will prepare him to meet either, with coolness and fortitude; and the cautious testimony he bears to the purity of Jesus, will soon, I doubt not, be a subject of happier recollection than all the merriment he has indulged, the arguments he has urged, the learning he has arrayed against the gospel. Least of all will this fancy of human virtues do aught to sustain him, in a dark and difficult hour. The first feeling that faints under the pressure of distress is the social: and the fault of Mr. English's notions of morals is, that they are adapted only to personal and publick success. How unthrifty a calculation this is, who does not know? Mr. English has already exerted himself in what he thinks a publick cause, and looks forward perhaps to a life of publick efforts and usefulness. Does he not know that in the service of the publick, talents, patriotism, and worth are not sure of their reward, sometimes not sure of common gratitude and respect: that well meant exertions are very often unsuccessful, honest services undervalued and rejected, worthy names bandied about with disrespectful license, and that good reputation, which a man prizes as the apple of his eye, thoughtlessly, or wantonly, or maliciously assailed? Will he trust his happiness to the multitude, and forget that

the multitude is naturally insensible, and sometimes cruel? Or does he think rather to move in a smaller sphere? He may find that his associates mistake him, that his friends fail him. At least he will soon learn, that the communion of friends is constantly broken off by death, and the richest gifts of fortune embittered with the remembrance 'of hearts divided and of hopes destroyed.' He will soon see that the trials which attend us abroad go with us to our homes. For the goods of life are transient, and we lose them: the feelings, habits, and tastes to which we have formed our whole conduct, may be broken in upon by a change of fortune, the knowledge we had gained become useless, and the hopes we had formed be blasted. I give not this for a picture of the trials of life, it is but a very faint glimpse of some of them. And Mr. English will one day see that the despised morality of the gospel, is the only resource from their severity. It is this only that can tranquillize the passions, compose the thoughts, and sooth the wounded feelings. It is this only too, which can give a temperate animation to the spirits, and a likeness of sunshine to the countenance, which can relieve affliction, and dignify neglect. Should it ever be Mr. English's fortune, as it has been mine, to see a man walking with erect aspect in the path of unsuccessful exertion, pursuing with steady cheerfulness a course of disastrous duty, following with chastised and submissive sorrow his dear

friends one after another to the grave, to see him not perplexed with difficulty, irritated by opposition, chilled with disappointment, nor subdued by distress; should it be his fortune to meet with such a man, let him not think for a moment it is native insensibility, far less his own skeptical philosophy, that sustains him. I would stake my life he finds him to be a Christian. And if he should see one labouring with some long and loathsome disease, one who feels his vital substance within him wasting away, who languishes on a bed from which he knows he shall never rise, who sees that a few weary hours are all that separates him from eternity; if he should see such an one, and converse with him, he will learn what the publick, gallant, heroick virtues are worth at the dying hour. To multiply authorities against the facts of Christianity, or honestly to speculate against its doctrines, is not, perhaps, the ground of a just reproach; but to attempt to lower the standard of its morality, to inveigh in gaudy sentences against the spirituality of its temper, to think of investing with new recommendations the allurements of life, is a mark of sad perversity.

Shall I follow Mr. English through the slender calumnies he utters against faith, and hope, and charity, or again enter into the vulgar comparison he has affected to draw between the morality of the gospel, and that of a class of modern fanaticks and impostors: or shall I refute that most potent argumentation

which is couched in the following terms? “It is to no purpose to *deny* that Christianity recommends all this; I ‘say it *substantially does!*’” It seems, then, that Mr. English thinks himself, that it is the *substance* only of his statement which is corrected; and how much or how little he may understand by this, he does not tell us. But he appeals, he says, “not to a few Protestant divines, but to the New Testament; to the homilies of the fathers of the church; to the history and practice of the primitive Christians; to the innumerable monasteries of Europe and Asia; to the immense multitude which have lived and died hermits; and finally, because he knows very well that the Protestant divines attribute these follies to the influence of Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and several other isms, upon pure Christianity, he appeals to living evidence now in the world, to the only thorough going Christians in it, viz. to the Shakers,” &c. Now as to the authority of the New Testament, that is the very thing in dispute; and as to all the rest, it is altogether irrelevant. However, Mr. English in his heat here, which appears to be extreme, has made a considerable mistake, viz. that of a few fathers of the church for the primitive Christians. It is well known that some of the fathers complain that the common people differed from them in doctrine, and the same appears as to discipline.* The epistles of St. Paul give us an insight into the

* Tertullian ad Prax. c. iii. Origen Comment in Johan. ii. § 3.

manners of the primitive Christians. I could wish this sentence of one of his epistles were written with a pen of diamond on Mr. English's conscience, "*If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*" Does this look like "preventing a man from fulfilling the duties he owes to his family?"

On one point, however, I would make a particular observation. Mr. English says, that the New Testament discourages marriage; that it not only encourages men to refrain from that state, but to incapacitate themselves for it. Now it is a remarkable vicissitude of opinions, that this absurd and unnatural mortification, which was peculiar to some obsolete and forgotten heresies, should now be charged upon Christianity itself. Allowing, for a moment, that there were a text or two, which appeared to countenance that idea, it ought to be concluded by a liberal inquirer that a system like Christianity, addressed to all ages of the world, containing rules of duty appropriate to all the relations of life, parents as well as children, and especially comprehending prophecies, which refer to the continuance of the church, and its situation at far distant periods, that such a system could not really enjoin an institution, which, if it were complied with, would cut off the church even in the first generation. However, a quotation from **Evanson*** will place

* *Evanson's Dissonance*, p. 208.

this matter in its true light. “These were the *peculiar* doctrines of the Encratites, a sect which appeared very early in the second century, and amongst whom it is not improbable that the same madness of superstitious enthusiasm, which soon after led men into hermitages and monasteries, and even to stand for a great length of time on the top of a pillar, might have produced some instances of the unnatural self violence, the author [of the gospel of Matthew] speaks of, not long after the rise of that sect, the very allusion to which convicts him of being a writer later than those instances, that is, not earlier than the middle of the second century; but it is absolutely impossible, that in our Saviour’s time, almost as soon as the new covenant of the kingdom of God was preached, and even before his disciples comprehended its nature and intent, any men could have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of it.” As far as this affects the authenticity of the gospel of Matthew, it will be presently considered. I only remark here, that **Evanson** allows it to be impossible that Christianity, *as taught by our Saviour*, could have recommended the practice to which he alludes, and asserts, what indeed is well known, that it was the *peculiar* doctrine of an obscure and soon forgotten sect. As to the authority of the apostle Paul, which **Mr. English** claims, why did he not give some account of this fact: viz. that this apostle, in foretelling the character

of the great apostasy* mentions, as one part of the false doctrines of its teachers, ‘forbidding to marry?’†

Instead, therefore, of its being “to no purpose to deny that Christianity recommends all this,” on account of Mr. English’s “I say substantially it does,” the truth appears to be, that not only the *substance* (which is all he maintains to be correct) of his assertion is incorrect, but the circumstance also; and that he charges the morality of the gospel with a doctrine peculiar to a small and forgotten heresy.

There is little in the chapter, which Mr. English has devoted to the political tendency of the Christian morality, that requires particular notice. To one paragraph, in which he inadvertently confesses that the troubles and miseries which have distracted the church, and the world, sprung from the obstinacy and vanity of men, we have already given attention.‡ This is a refutation, by himself, of all that he proceeds to advance; since so far

* 1 Tim. iv. 3.

† I owe, perhaps, an apology for engaging in these odious topics. It is a peculiarity of the skeptical writers, that they delight to dwell on indelicate and indecent themes. The reader will see some more traces of this in Mr. English’s work. In other places his good genius prevailed even after his book was stricken off, and he blotted out with his pen some allusions, which ought not to have come so near to being exposed to the world. Porson, in the preface to his unanswerable letters to Travis, justly censures Gibbon for this vulgar vice, and there needs no confirmation to the remark at the beginning of this note to one who has read the works of Woolston, of Mandeville, or Voltaire.

‡ Page 67, 68, 69.

from saying that Christianity encourages obstinacy and vanity, he makes it even a matter of reproach, that “its peculiar moral principles and maxims teach the mind to grovel; and *humble and break down* the energies of man.”

I need not, therefore, stop to compliment Mr. English upon his taste and discernment in thinking Gibbon's history a cool and impartial narrative, as respects Christian affairs. Some others have thought it, in this respect, uniformly sarcastick, partial, and insincere; and will be glad to be set right by so generous and unbiassed a critick as Mr. English. I cannot, however, forbear thanking him for ascribing to Christianity a principal instrumentality in the subversion of the Roman empire. Montesquieu had indeed placed the matter in a different light, and said something about “a decaying republick, a general anarchy, a military government, an oppressive empire, a proud despotism, a feeble monarchy, a stupid, senseless, and superstitious court, as the successive causes of the destruction of the Roman state.”* The same enlightened philosopher

* Mais bientôt les lois les plus sages ne purent rétablir, ce qu'une république mourante, ce qu'une anarchie générale, ce qu'une gouvernement militaire, ce qu'une empir dur, ce qu'une despotisme superbe, ce qu'une monarchie foible, ce qu'une cour stupide, idiote, et superstitieuse avoient successivement abattu: on eut dit qu'ils n'avoient conquis le monde, que pour l'affoiblir et le livrer sans défense au barbares.” Montesq. de l'Esprit des lois. t. iii. p. 231. Ed. Didot. The reader will here observe that most of these causes of decline had their full operation before Christianity could have begun to affect the Roman state, and that the epithet ‘superstitieuse’ is all that can apply even to the corruptions of Christianity which might have been one among these causes.

had also uttered a sentence which I propose to Mr. English's solemn consideration. "M. Bayle,* having insulted all religions, reproaches the Christian: and dares to advance that genuine Christians could never form a state which could subsist.—Why not? Genuine Christians would be men perfectly enlightened with respect to their duties, and would have the greatest zeal to fulfil them; they would discern full well the natural rights of defence; and the more they thought they owed to religion, the more they would think they owed to their country. *The principles of Christianity, well impressed upon the heart, would be infinitely more efficacious than the false honour of monarchies, THE HUMAN VIRTUES OF REPUBLICKS, and the servile fear of despotick states.*"† However, let us grant to Mr. English that these reflections of Montesquieu are the declamations of an old and exploded school; and assent to him that "Christianity was the principal cause of the decline and fall of the Roman empire." It has conferred many publick blessings on the world, but this would be greater than all, and to have

* I believe that it is to Bayle's *Pensees diverses sur la Comete*, the work to which Montesquieu here refers, that Mr. English is indebted substantially for his chapters on the Christian morality; though I do not find that they amount to a transcription of that author. As Bayle himself has not so much advanced any thing original as gathered and illustrated the objections of the ancient infidels, it may be that the resemblance between him and Mr. English is only a coincidence. See Bayle *Pensees diverses sur la comete de 1680*, tom. i. 276 and iv. 596 et seq.

† *Esprit des lois*, t. iv. p. 12, 13.

been the instrument of putting an end to that bloody oppression, beneath which mankind had groaned so long, were among the most illustrious vindications of its divine origin. For any illustration of this opinion by myself, I would substitute the following wholesome sentiments of a liberal critick. "We must protest against the substance of the statement, which alleges Rome to have been instrumental in promoting the happiness of the human race. A more signal curse was never surely inflicted upon humanity, than in the long duration of this savage empire, whose aim was universal conquest, and whose boast was, that fraud and murder were its trade. The admiration of Rome is one of the worst heresies, which we bring with us from school; and it cannot admit of a doubt, that the elegance acquired from an early intercourse with ancient authors, is dearly purchased by the perverted notions of glory and greatness so generally imbibed at the same time. A wise teacher of youth will always endeavour to counteract impressions favourable to the character of the Romans, by representing them in their true colours, as a selfish, perfidious, cruel, superstitious race of barbarians, endued with the scanty and doubtful virtues of savage life, but deformed by more than its ordinary excesses; and whose original purity of manners, and good faith among themselves did not endure a moment longer than it enabled them to subdue

the rest of the world.”* Mr. English gives a number of quotations from the fathers, which I could have examined in their context, if he had been as liberal in his references, as he is in those he makes to the Talmud, a book which he cannot read in the original, and of which there is no translation.† To the quotation from Origen alone he makes a reference. “Celsus accuses the Christians of abandoning the empire, under whose laws they lived, to its enemies. And what is the answer of Origen to this accusation? *Look at his pitiful reply!* He endeavours to palliate this undutiful refusal, by representing, that ‘the Christians had their peculiar camps, in which they incessantly combatted for the safety of the emperour and the empire, by lifting up their right hands—IN PRAYER!!’ [See Origen contra Celsum, lib. 8. p. 427. This is a SNEAKING piece of business truly.”‡ First for the opinion, which Mr. English has of such gentle discourse as this: “The reader is assured that he will find nothing in this volume, [the grounds of Christianity examined,] but what is considered by the author to be *fair and liberal argument*: he has endeavoured to discuss the important subject of the book in the *most inoffensive manner*.”§ If the way in which Origen, as learned and as good a man as ever

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xxi. 378. 296.

† Grounds of Christianity, p. 164. The references which Mr. English here gives, are taken from Lightfoot, and are made to the Gemara, which has never been translated.

‡ Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 164.

§ Preface, p. xvii.

lived, is treated in the extract given above, 'be liberal argument and an inoffensive manner,' what would Mr. English's unfairness and scurrility be, upon the very impossible supposition that he should choose to employ them? If Mr. English had consulted the context of Origen,* he would have found that this father only claimed indulgence from war for the Christian priests, and that he allows the justice of some wars, as he elsewhere says, "perhaps the wars which bees wage among themselves, are meant as a model, how just wars should, when necessary, be carried on among men."† Neither do I think that in representing the opinions of the fathers upon the subject, Mr. English did well to omit the eloquent words of Tertullian: "We are of yesterday, but have filled your empire, your cities, your islands, *your castles*, your towns, your councils, YOUR CAMPS, your wards, your capitol, and senate; and we have left you nothing but your temples:"‡ Or those other words in the same noble defence, "We are charged also that we are an unthrifty people. But how can this be? We who live among you, men of the same dress, *the same habits*, *the same education*, and the same wants. We are no brachmans or Indian gymnosophists, *tenants of the woods and exiles from life*. We remember our obligations to God our Master

* Origen contr. Cels. l. viii. § 73.

† Contr. Cels. lib. iv. § 82.

‡ Apol. c. xxxvi.

and Creator, *and reject no fruit of his works*; though we are moderate, and do not use them to excess. Therefore we do not pretend to pass our lives, in an abstinence from your forum, your market, your baths, your inns, your offices, your stables, your fairs, or any of your intercourse. With you we navigate, WITH YOU WE MAKE WAR, with you we labour in the country, and trade in the city, uniting our arts and devoting our works to the publick good. Why then we are called unthrifty, I do not know.”* This whole subject is abundantly discussed by Grotius, in the second chapter of the first book de jure belli ac pacis. We may conclude from his reasonings and authorities, that though the original founders and fathers of Christianity may, in common with all virtuous and wise men, have expressed their sense of the wickedness of war, yet that neither the precepts of the gospel, nor the practice of the primitive Christians, will authorize us in saying, that Christianity forbids us to engage in just defensive wars.

I spare myself and reader the time it would take to go over the other citations, which Mr. English makes from the fathers. I doubt not that in the case of each of them, he has represented their full spirit *at least as faithfully* as in the quotation from Origen. The opinion of the fathers, or their practice, whatever it were, is not the question in controversy. We know very well, that in every system, and theory, and discipline, and institution, it is not

* Apol. c. xlii.

long before the ardent spirits will pass far beyond the original foundation, and far also beyond the standard of the mass of their contemporaries. We know also that the common Christians make no gratuitous departure from the manners and customs of those around them. We know that whole legions were enrolled from their number; though it is not to be wondered at, if while they were compelled to take the military oath to the heathen gods, they refused to give in their names.* Whatever may be disputed upon this point, and any others, one thing is certain, that though paganism has had its instances of rare, heroick deeds, they have been equalled in number and splendour by the disciples of Christ; while it is among the latter alone we are to look for efforts of painful devoted virtue, the very name of which would have made an epicurean turn pale, and sounded to a stoick like a fable or a dream.*

* "*Militiam Christiani sæpe aut improbarunt aut evitarunt, ob temporum circumstantias, quæ vix ferebant militiam exerceri, sine actibus quibusdam cum Christianâ lege pugnantibus. Hæc pericula Tertullianus militiæ suorum temporum objicit; ut libro de idololatriâ, 'Non convenit sacramento divino et humano, signo Christi et signo diaboli.'*" Grotius de jure belli ac pacis. l. ii. c. ii. § ix.

† "The whole life of the apostles was a continual perigrination, wherein they were as so many Jobs in pilgrimage, encountered with perils and dangers on every side; of which one of the most painful and successful, St. Paul, hath given in such a large inventory of his perils, that the very reading of them were enough to undo a poor Epicurean philosopher; and at once spoil him of the two pillars of his happiness, the quietness of his mind, and ease of his body." Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacræ*, p. 175.

CHAPTER XII.

IN treating the authenticity of the New Testament, it would have been my natural course, first to refute Mr. English's objections, and second to establish the truth by positive arguments. But he has done the first to my hands, and as his objections to the New Testament refute themselves, I will first ask the reader's attention to the manner, in which this appears. On page 139 of the *Grounds of Christianity examined* he thus observes, "That the pretended gospel of Matthew was not written by Matthew, or by an inhabitant of Palestine, may be also inferred, I think, from the blundering attempts of the author of it to give the meaning of some expressions uttered by Jesus, and used by the Jews, in the language of the country, which was the Syro-Chaldaick, and which the real Matthew could hardly be ignorant of. For instance, he says that *Golgotha* signifies 'the place of a skull,' Matt. xxvii. 33. Now this is not true, for *Golgotha*, or as it should have been written, *Golgoltha*, does not signify 'the place of a skull,' but simply 'a skull.'* "The gospels

* I would just observe, that the evangelist does not say that "*Golgotha* signifies the place of a skull." His words are,

according to Mark AND JOHN, are guilty of the same mistake, and thus betray the same marks of GENTILISM." This is repeated distinctly of John in the letter to Mr. Cary.* Now Mr. English refutes these assertions directly in the following terms: "Mr. Evanson considers this work, [the gospel according to John,] as the composition of a converted Platonist, or of a *Platonizing Jew*; the latter we think to be the most correct opinion."† It cannot be said here that this was not so much a refutation as a forgetfulness of his former assertion; since it occurs only half a dozen pages from the last cited instance, in which he maintains the gospel of John to have been a Gentile production.‡ Mr. English states

και ελθοντες εις τοπον λεγομενον Γολγοθα, ος εστι λεγομενος κρηνις τοπος. "They came to the place called Golgotha, which is called the place of a skull." He does not say *ο εστι μεθερμηνευομενον*, 'which is being interpreted.' The place was called *Golgotha*, in Syro-Chaldaick; and *τοπος κρηνις* in Hellenistick. I follow the received, in preference to Griesbach's text, as the latter is clearly ungrammatical. As to the *mistake* of *Γολγοθα* for *Γολγολθα*, did Mr. English never hear of an elision; or of what Josephus says, "Such names [proper names] are pronounced here (in his history) after the manner of the Greeks, to please my readers, *for our own country language does not so pronounce them.*" Antiq. Jud. i. vi. 1?

* Page 65. † Grounds of Christianity examined, p. 145.

‡ I suspect Mr. English had discovered this self-refutation when he wrote the letter to Mr. Cary, without however having the frankness to own it. He says, in his 'postscript to the publick,' "In p. 145 I represented that Mr. Evanson considers the gospel ascribed to John, *as the composition of a converted Platonist, or of a Platonizing Jew.* I have since ascertained that I misconceived him, as he considers it *as the work of a converted Platonist*, and not the work of a Jew. It is however an error, which I conceive has no influence upon the reasoning of the paragraph." But where is the error? Mr. English represents Evanson as say-

another objection thus: "The author [Mr. English] believes, and thinks it is proved in this chapter, that the real authors of these histories [the gospels] were very different persons from the apostles of Jesus, and that in fact these accounts were not written till the *middle* of the *second century*." Nay, he quotes with approbation, what he is pleased to call the opinion of Semler and Evanson, that the greater part of the books of the New Testament were pious frauds of the *latter part* of the second century: their date having come down from the *middle* to the *latter part* of the second century, in the course of a few pages. Had Mr. English written a number of volumes, he might have reduced them as low as the reformation. However, in the very same note in which this pretended opinion is quoted with approbation from Semler and Evanson, Mr. English avers, that "The Jewish Christians, *the disciples of the twelve apostles, never received, but rejected every individual book of* THE PRESENT NEW TESTAMENT. Without pretending to decide upon the opinions of a writer so keen in detecting dissonances as Mr. Eng-

ing, the book was written by a converted Platonist or a Platonizing Jew. Well, he does consider it as the work of a converted Platonist; here is neither misconception nor error. But here is the point. Mr. English really said as follows in his first work, "Mr. Evanson considers this as the composition of a converted Platonist or Platonizing Jew. *The latter we think to be the most correct opinion.*" It is Mr. English that maintains the Judaism of the writer, in express contradiction to his other assertion of his Platonism. Though somewhat disingenuously he attempts to explain away this contradiction into a misconception of Evanson.

lish, I do presume to think that if every individual book of the present New Testament was rejected by the disciples of the twelve apostles, that they must have been in being at the time they were rejected; and therefore not forged a century after that period. I am not conscious of any wish to weaken the force of Mr. English's arguments, by affecting to speak of them in contemptuous terms. I would, as I have, answer them fairly, or not at all. But is it not unwise for a man to be so zealous in a cause, as to muster up an ill assorted host of auxiliaries, that instead of aiding him against his foe, fall together by the ears among themselves? In the first place, the writers of the gospels are Gentiles, that they may be charged more plausibly with ignorance of Jewish customs; in the second they are Jews, that they may be absurdly accused of copying Philo; thirdly, they were written in the apostolick age, that they might be pretended to be rejected by the Jewish Christians; and fourthly, they were forged, at the latter end of the second century, that it may appear they were not written by those, whose names they bear. How refreshing after this to hear Mr. English, "We can deny the fact of the resurrection with perfect sang froid, for the only testimony in favour of it *are* the four evangelists; four witnesses, the like of whose written testimony, (BEING AS CONTRADICTIONARY AS IT IS,) to say no more, certainly would not, we believe, be received in a

modern court of justice, to settle the fact, about a debt of five dollars."

I might content myself with this statement of Mr. English's own refutation of his objections, but for the satisfaction of the reader who may be afraid to trust Mr. English, even when he refutes himself, I will endeavour to answer them myself in detail. He argues, that the gospel of St. Matthew must be the production of a Gentile, because, as he alleges from Evanson, it contains geographical blunders, and Latin words in Greek characters, neither of which, he thinks, we should find in the writings of a Jew. The only instance of a geographical blunder which he quotes in his first work is this, that Matthew relates of Joseph, returning from Egypt, that "hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea, he was afraid to go thither, and therefore turned aside into the parts of Galilee. Now this, as will appear from a map of Palestine, is just like saying, "a man at Philadelphia, intending to go to the state of New York, on his route heard something which made him turn aside into Boston." But Mr. English ought to have known better than to copy the mistake or imitate the unfairness of Evanson here. Why did he not quote the whole passage of the evangelist, in which the pretended blunder consists, "*Joseph arose, and took the young child, and his mother, and came into the land of Israel, but when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father*

Herod, he was afraid to go thither, but being forewarned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee?" *He had gotten into the land of Israel*, of which Judea was a part, before he turned aside into Galilee.

Another instance of ignorance of the geography of Palestine is alleged by Mr. English in his letter to Mr. Cary.* "In Matt. xix. 1. are these words: 'and it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the *coasts of Judea beyond Jordan.*' Coasts of Judea beyond Jordan! Judea was bounded and limited on the east *by* the Jordan, and so was Galilee; it appears to me, therefore, that to suppose that a Jew, an inhabitant of Palestine, could have written this, is as absurd as," &c. We have heard of an undutiful pupil, who presented to his master, as his own composition, an extract from some celebrated writer, which the good man, under the impression that it was the boy's production, abundantly criticised and corrected. St. Matthew here has employed the very expression of Isaiah, and in the same sense; but Mr. English says it is an expression, which no Jew, especially no inhabitant of Palestine, would use. Was Isaiah no Jew, no inhabitant of Palestine; was he too an impostor of the second century?†

* Letter to Mr. Cary, p. 63.

† "The Hebrew word כַּעֲרֵב, rendered by the LXX *περαυ*, signifies indifferently *on this side* or *on the other side*. In Numbers xxxii. 19. [we read, For we will not inherit with them, on yonder

The first ignorance of Jewish customs is, that Matthew speaks of the cock's crowing "whereas," says Mr. English, "it is well known that in conformity with Jewish customs, at that time subsisting, no cocks were allowed to be in Jerusalem, where Jesus was apprehended. This is known and acknowledged by learned Christians." I forbear to transcribe Mr. English's joke, because it is a poor one; but I will answer his objection by a quotation from Michaelis, a learned Christian as there is. "It is therefore a *poor objection* and *unworthy of a reply*, in order to invalidate the relation of Peter's denial of Christ, which is recorded by all the evangelists, to contend, that according to the Bava kama,* cocks were not permitted in Jerusalem. For this is to confute an historian, who relates an event that happened in the city where he lived, and in the circle of his own experience, by means of a tradition heard a century after it was destroyed. To this it must be added, that what the Jews relate [in the Talmud] of certain privileges belonging to Jerusalem, is not only contradictory to Josephus, but mani-

side Jordan or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us, on this side Jordan, eastward, where] the word is used *in both meanings in the same sentence*. Unless, therefore, some word or phrase is added, as *κατ' ανατολας*, or *κατα θαλατσαν*, to ascertain the sense, it ought to be rendered *on the Jordan*. In Is. ix. 1. *Zebulon and Nupthali were on the same side of the Jordan with Jerusalem and Judea, where Isaiah exercised his prophetick office.*" Campbell ad Matt. iv. 15.

* One of the tracts of the Mishna. Mishna Surenhus. iv. 61.

festly false.* It is, therefore, a matter of surprise that this objection, from the Talmud, should have appeared so important to many learned and sensible writers."† The two next instances of ignorance of Jewish customs are, that the author of the gospel has represented Joseph as preparing the body of Jesus for burial, on the evening after the Sabbath had commenced, and the Jews as meeting in council, on the Sabbath day: neither of which, says Mr. English, they could have done, because of the Jewish law. But will Mr. English undertake to prove that in these disastrous and irregular days, the institutions of the law of Moses were so inviolably observed, that Joseph would not perform the last mournful offices to our Lord, nor the Scribes and Pharisees take their measures to suppress the Christian cause, for fear of violating the ritual law? At any rate, has Mr. English a right to argue that because they ought so to have done, they actually did so; and contradict positive affirmative testimony, by a negative hypothesis? The next alleged piece of ignorance consists in the evangelist's saying, "In the end of the Sabbath it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." Whereas the Sabbath ended not at dawn, but the preceding evening. If Mr. English had been aware that this objection rested on a mistranslation, and that *οψε σαββατων*,

* Michaelis refers here to a dissertation of E. A. Schulze, *De factis Hierosolymis privilegiis.*

† Marsh's Michaelis, vol. i. p. 69.

to say the least *may* mean “the Sabbath being over” the difficulty would have vanished.* Mr. English finally brings it as a part of ignorance of Jewish customs, that the evangelist represents that the guard, which had been stationed at the sepulchre, accepted a bribe to say they were asleep; and talks about the “Roman Proconsul’s submitting to the indelible infamy of neglecting the discipline of the army under his command, to such a degree, as to suffer an entire guard of soldiers avowedly to sleep at their station, without any notice being taken of it.”† As to the soldiers being willing to take the bribe, Mr. English may depend upon it, that unless the soldiers in question were different from modern ones, it is of all things the most probable. Also that sleeping upon this occasion would not be considered a very heinous crime, will appear probable when we reflect that the Roman officer, who granted the guard, must have thought it a mere whim of the Jews, in which he was willing to indulge them, to wish as Mr. English says, a watch kept round a tomb, for fear it should be thought a dead man came to life; and that he cared little whether the soldiers slept on such a post or not.

In the letter to Mr. Cary, it is stated, as another proof that the author of the gospel of Matthew could not be a Jew, that he quotes an

* See Campbell’s note in loc.

† Ground’s of Christianity examined, p. 142.

apocryphal book ascribed to Jeremiah.* I shall not enter into the question of this text, though the opinion that the quotation was made from such a book rests on doubtful grounds. But grant that it was so made, it is rather a proof of the Judaism of the author. There were apocryphal books, held in respect by the Jews, as we are informed by Josephus; † though not considered as of canonical authority. It would be natural for a Jew accordingly to quote these. But a gentile would not have quoted them, for he would have been less likely to be acquainted with the estimation, in which these apocryphal books were held; especially if he were as ignorant of Jewish affairs as Mr. English represents the author of Matthew to be, he would suppose that books avowedly apocryphal could be of no repute. Mr. English refers us to Grabe's spicilegium, sect. i. p. 135, for proof of the fact, that Jerom asserts that he saw the apocryphal book from whence this quotation was taken. Unhappy for Mr. English, that the advice of Lord Mansfield had not then appeared! "Trust," said he, "to your good sense in forming your opinions, but beware of attempting to state the grounds of your judgement. The judgment will probably be right; the argument will infallibly be wrong." ‡ *Trust to*

* Matt. xxvii. 9.

† "Απο δε Αρταξερξου μεχρι του μεθ' ημας χρονου γεγραπται μεν εκαστα, πιστεως δε ουχ' ομοιας ηξιωται τοις προ εαυτων, δια το μη γενεσθαι την των προφητων ακριβη διαδοχην. Josep. Contr. Ap. lib. i. Apud. Grabe Spicileg. Sæc. i. p. 134.

‡ Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the human mind. Vol. ii. p. 83.

chance in making your assertions, but beware of stating authorities therefor: the assertion may POSSIBLY be true, the authority will probably be false. Upon turning to Grabe I find that he quotes Jerom as pronouncing that verse 14 of the epistle of Jude was quoted from the book of Enoch; but says not one word upon the subject, for which Mr. English quotes him.* How then, the reader will ask, could Mr. English, who inveighs against the evangelists for false quotations, how could he have referred us to volume and page, for what was not there? By an exceeding simple process. He took the assertion, which he makes in his letter, from nothing less than Collins' Grounds and Reasons,† and copied the note of Collins—"Grabes' Spicilegium, Sec. i. p. 135, into his margin,‡ that the reader might

* "De quibus singulis [libris apocryphis] agendi hic non est locus sed id solum notandum libris istos si non omnes saltem plurimos ante tempora Novi Testamenti a *Judeis conditos*, atque ab ipsis apostolis *subinde* allegatos esse. *Et de Enochii quidem libro id colligitur*, ex epistola Judæ vers. 14. ubi apocryphum Enochii Scriptum citari jam olim observaverunt Tertullianus de hab. mul. c. 3. et Hieronymus in *Catalogo Scriptor. Ecclesias. in Juda et in Comment. ad Tit. i.*" Grabe's Spicileg. Sæc. i. p. 135. Jerom, I know, makes the assertion, which Mr. English ascribes to him, but Grabe, ubi supra, does not refer to the place. It is in that father's Commentary upon Matthew. Tom. iv. p. 1. p. 134. See Marsh's Michaelis. i. 490.

† Collins' Grounds and Reasons, p. 126.

‡ Mr. English, borrows also from Collins, without acknowledgement, what he says [letter to Mr. Cary, p. 63.] of Whiston, of Origen, Tertullian, &c, and particularly, his splendid reference [Proleg. duar. Hom. in Cantic. Canticor.] Which hard & ominous words he doubtless put into the middle of his page, to alarm the the unlearned reader; who is however assured, that they mean

make the reference ; though he did not choose the trouble of doing it himself. Mr. English will ask, in anger, why I accuse him of setting the authority of Grabe in his margin, without consulting him himself? First, because if he had consulted him, I will not think he would have quoted him for what he does not say : second, because the reference, as it stands, in Collins's, is Sec. i. p. 135. Mr. English, in an evil hour, thought that Sec. stood for Section, and has accordingly printed it SECT. i. p. 136. It really stands for *seculum*, century.

The next objection is brought against the gospel of John, and is this, that " he represents the woman of Samaria, as wondering that Jesus, who was a Jew, should ask drink of her, who was a Samaritan, because the Jews *have no dealings* with the Samaritans ; while at the same time he most inconsistently relates, that the disciples had gone into the Samaritan city to buy meat." But the inconsistency is imaginary. The Jews had no *friendly intercourse* with the Samaritans, and therefore the woman was surprized that our Lord should ask a favour of her ; but there was no law or tradition against their trading together. Mr. English knows that the word *συγγενομαι*, rendered above ' have no dealings ' occurs no where else in the scriptures, and that its meaning of course must appear from the

nothing worse than " Preface to two sermons on Solomon's Song." Why could not he have had the frankness to state the authority he really quoted, and simply said, COLL. GROUNDS and REAS. p. 148.

context.* Now I maintain that this passage is a most striking mark of the genuineness of the gospel, at least that it was written by a Jew. If the author of it had been a Gentile impostor, he would not have been likely to know the distinction between the friendly intercourse, that the Jews did not hold with the Sāmari-tans, and the commercial intercourse, which they did. He would not therefore have exposed his narrative to suspicion by saying, ‘that the disciples went to buy meat into the city.’ Or if he had known this distinction, he would have stated it, and said, ‘the disciples had gone into the city to buy meat, which was permitted among the Jews and Samaritans, though no friendly offices were.’ But his mentioning the fact, without giving the explanation, while at the same time it admits so easy and obvious a one, is a clear characteristick of truth.

The next objection resting on the computation of passovers, in John v, and vi., (which with the exception of two out of the three notes of admiration at the end is taken also from Evanson,) rests upon a gratuitous interpretation of the words “there are four months to harvest,” and upon the genuineness of the word *παρα* in vi. 4. Which is more probable that the whole gospel of John should have been interpolated into the New Testament, or a single word into this gospel?

* Campbell in loc.

As Mr. English has not quoted from Evanson, the instances of Latin names, written in Greek characters, I shall not occupy the time of the reader by considering them. I would remark that they are legal and military terms, which of course must have been familiar among the Jews from the time of the conquest by Pompey; and as for the assertion of Evanson, which Mr. English copies, that they were not engrafted, upon the current language of the Jews, till the time of Adrian, it is an absurd piece of dogmatism, which cannot be proved. There is as much good sense, as good humour, in the following remark of Dr. Priestley. “Who can be authorised to say, at what precise period such a custom as this commenced, or how the custom might vary in different places, and with different persons; when nothing was necessary to introduce it but an acquaintance with latin terms; in consequence of the extension of the Roman Empire, *which had in fact embraced Judea a century before the writing of the Gospels?* To say, with Mr. Evanson, that such a practice as this might be common in the time of Trajan, who came to the Empire A. D. 98, and not be known A. D. 64, is not a little extraordinary. To distinguish with so much accuracy as this, a man must have a more nice discernment in the Chronology of language, than Sancho Panza’s father had in the taste of wine; who perceived a twang of iron, and also of leather, in a cask, at the bottom of which was af-

terwards found a key, with a leathern thong tied to it.”*

The reader will have observed that I have not taken notice of objections to the evangelists, which consist simply in their alleged contradiction of each other. This I have forbore to do, not because I am ignorant that most of these alleged inconsistencies vanish, when examined upon the principles of fair criticism; but because I would as much as is possible contract the limits of this essay, and because I am willing, for the sake of argument, to grant to Mr. English, that as many of these alleged contradictions are real as he pleases. Still I say, that in all material points, their narratives agree, and that no man can read the narrative of the resurrection in each, (I certainly do not choose an example to favour myself,) and say that they relate a different fact, or the same fact in a different manner. Grant that Luke says that Joseph *hasted* to bury our Lord, as soon as he was dead, while according to Matthew, it was ‘when even was come,’ that Matthew relates that Jesus appointed to meet the disciples in Galilee, and the other Evangelists that he meet them at Jerusalem; I still do not find that the substantial accounts of the four evangelists differ more than four independent accounts of a transaction, comprised in so many and some such incidental events, ever will. And such differences

* Priestley’s letter to a Young Man. p. 45.

are no impeachment of the general correctness and uniform veracity of the accounts. I cannot forbear to copy the examples of Dr. Paley. "The embassy of the Jews to deprecate the execution of Claudian's order, to place his statue in their temple, Philo places in harvest, Josephus in seed time: both contemporary writers. No reader is led by this inconsistency to doubt whether such an order was given. Our own history supplies examples of the same kind. In the account of the Marquis of Argyle's death, in the reign of Charles the second, we have a very remarkable contradiction. Lord Clarendon relates that he was condemned to be hanged; which was performed the same day: on the contrary, Burnet, Woodrow, Heath, and Echard agree that he was beheaded, and that he was condemned upon the Saturday and executed upon the Monday. Was any reader of English history ever skeptick enough to raise a doubt whether the Marquis of Argyle was beheaded or not"?* It may be added to this, that the difference of the accounts in these two examples is far greater than any discrepancy of the evangelists. If one evangelist had asserted in terms that Nicodemus came to Jesus in seed time, and another in harvest; or one that he was crucified, and another that he was beheaded, I suppose we could not have persuaded an unbeliever to hear a word of explanation. But

* Paley's Evidences, 271

the authors, who differ from each other in precisely this degree, are, as we see from Dr. Paley's example, among the most respected. I find it thus asked by Lessing, one of the first scholars of his age, "Though Livy, and Polybius, and Dionysius, and Tacitus relate the same events, perhaps the same battle, or the same siege, with such diversity of circumstance, that the circumstances of one seem in direct contradiction to the circumstances of the other; has any one therefore thought of denying the event itself, the battle, or the siege?"* Nay there is not any alleged contradiction between the evangelists so direct, as that of the two assertions of Mr. English; the one that the gospel of John was written by a Jew, the other that it betrays the marks of Gentilism. Would Mr. English think it candid to conclude, on this account, that every assertion which he makes, upon his own authority, is false?

One remark more shall suffice on this topick. Mr. English concluded the author of St. John's gospel to be a Jew, from the single circumstance that in its commencement a few terms occur, which are found also in the writings of Philo Judæus.—As for any similarity of sys-

* Lessing's Sämmtliche Schriften, Th. v. s. 150. The work, from which this is quoted, is a reply to an attack made on Lessing's notes to the celebrated anonymous deistical writer, called the Wolfenbüttele Fragmentist. The remarks of Lessing ought to be translated, and read by every one, who is over fond of Harmonies, a species of work, of which Warburton said, that he read none and consulted few.

tem or sentiment, it is out of the question. The resemblance consists entirely in this common use of the word λογος. Now only let Mr. English reflect that he has said, that ‘the New Testament is *founded* upon the old;’ let him consider how many passages are quoted (even if some are erroneous) how many Jewish customs are mentioned or implied, (even if some are mistaken) and what familiarity of knowledge is discovered with the manners and traditions of the people, what undesigned coincidences with the little events of the times! Is it possible that all this is not enough to prove that the authors were Jews, when a resemblance of few words with a Jewish writer, was sufficient to prove it of one of them? Would it not be more probable that the passages, to which objections are alleged, were corruptions, than that the whole was a forgery? Mr. English says that some of St. Paul’s epistles are deeply tinged with the Cabbalistical notions, and derived from ‘the profoundest of the Jewish divines;’ he says it particularly of the epistle to the Ephesians, which is one of those which, after Evanson, he placed among the Gentile forgeries. How improbable that a Gentile should have been acquainted with the profundities of the Cabbalistical Theology! Again he alleges, from our present gospels, that Christ and the twelve apostles, were of the fancied Jewish party, which was opposed to the party of Paul and

the Gentile Christians. How absurd that these very gospels were forged by a Gentile ! Most of Mr. English's objections from internal evidence are to the gospel of Matthew, a few to Mark and John, and none as I think particularly stated to the gospel of Luke, or the Acts of the Apostles, nor to any of the epistles ; other than to say that Evanson called some of them in question. Now only let Mr. English consider how very little would be lost to Christianity, even as at present understood, so long as the two histories of Luke and several epistles of Paul are retained ! And let him particularly reflect, that what Evanson retains must be well supported. He was indeed no child of faith ; except indeed that skepticism, in all its degrees, is credulity : inasmuch as in order to disbelieve difficulties, you must believe impossibilities. With respect to the system of Evanson, I need not add much to the refutations, I have attempted of what Mr. English has borrowed from him. I would only say, that considering how familiar Mr. English must have been with his writings, he has most intolerably misrepresented him. ' Semler, says he, considered the New Testament as a collection of pious frauds, written for pious purposes, *in the latter part of the second century*, (the very time assigned for this first appearance by Dodwell.) Evanson adopts and gives good reasons *for a similar opinion* with regard to most of the books that go to compose it.' Now these are the words of Evanson " both of them (Mark and

Luke,) were of later date than Josephus' history, most probably not earlier than the latter end of Trajan's reign, or beginning of Adrian's." Adrian began to reign A. D. 117, and when we consider that Evanson hesitates a little about placing the gospels so low, and that Mr. English represents him as reducing them down to the latter end of the second century, we shall be ready to think that he makes an ungrateful return for the abundant materials, with which Evanson supplied him. That the reader may know in what estimation Evanson is held, I will just observe, that Eichhorn, a critick to be sure not easily startled, in a cursory notice taken of the Dissonance of the evangelists, calls him the modern Hardouin; a dreamer, I need not tell my reader, who fancied that most of the scriptures as well as the classicks were the forgeries of monks, in the 13th century.* After quoting the principle, upon which Evanson's objections to the evangelists rest, Eichhorn exclaims, "a sweeping doctrine indeed, which would annihilate, at one blow, the greater part of ancient history! And he closes his notice with this remark: "In objecting to the authenticity of the above named epistles this author goes still more arbitrarily to work. He grounds his rejection of them upon a crude conjecture, of so little weight that it is not worth the trouble of stating,

* Hardouin thought that Lalage, in Horace's *Integer vita* was designed to represent Christ.

in an extract, much less of contradicting."*

Finally, why does Mr. English, in discussing the authenticity of the New Testament, avoid the topick of the internal evidence of the acts of the apostles and the epistles of Paul, and pass in deep silence the unanswerable arguments of Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*; to which work, because the argument is partly a cumulative one, and not to be fully stated in my limits, I refer the reader, just observing that, whoever denies the authenticity of the scriptures just named, before he has read, and weighed, and refuted the argument of Dr. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, trifles with his own understanding.

In Mr. English's argument against the authenticity of the New Testament from external evidence, the facts which he alleges are meagre, and the liberties, in which he has indulged himself, in stating authorities are, notwithstanding what we have already seen in this way, almost incredible. The account he gives of the opinions of Semler, is upon the whole, the most remarkable attempt upon the good nature of his readers; because the late publication among us of life of this theologian, by the celebrated Eichhorn, seemed to put his opinions beyond the reach of misrepresentation.† He thus represents his opinions

* Eichhorn's All. Bib. Band. v. p. 481—5—498.

† The reviewer of Mr. English's work in the Cambridge repository, Vol. iv. 305, thus speaks upon this subject "The statement of Mr. English is without foundation, and is a specimen of the sort of errors to be found in his book. It is particu-

“The great Semler, after spending his life in ecclesiastical antiquities, which he is allowed to have understood better than any before him, affirmed to his astonished Correligionists, that except the gospel of John and the apocalypse, the whole New Testament was a collection of forgeries, written by the partizans of the Jewish and Gentile parties of the christian church, and entitled *apostolick* [where?] in order the better to answer their purpose.”

“It is a little remarkable that Mr. Evanson has asserted and proved the spuriousness of the gospel of John, which Semler spared in the general wreck, which he made of the authenticity of the other books of the New Testament.

“Semler considered the New Testament as a collection of pious frauds, written for pious purposes, *in the latter part of the second century.*”

In the first assertion Mr. English spares us two books, in the second one, but in the heat of the long note, whence the third is taken, the whole New Testament is a forgery. But let not the reader be alarmed. *These assertions*

larly unfortunate, not only as Semler did not deny the genuineness of those books of the New Testament, which have been universally received, but did question the genuineness of the apocalypse which Mr. English represents him as having maintained. “With no book of the New Testament, says the writer of his life, did Semler proceed so unfairly as with the apocalypse. Since he hastily adopted the opinion, that it was the work of a visionary, fabricated to advance fanatical notions respecting the Messiah.” See also Semler’s *institutio ad doctrinam christianam liberaliter discendam*, pp. 153, 154. In the latter work, Semler makes the following remark in speaking of those spurious gospels, epistles &c. which Mr. English thinks of so much consequence. “But this also we understand, that *prior to these* there were true gospels, Acts, and Epistles, after the likeness of which those writings were forged.”

are not true. I had almost said there is not a word of truth in them. Mr. English has applied that to the whole of the New Testament, which Semler held only of the Catholick epistles, so called, which estimated even by the number of pages, make up scarce a sixteenth part. “With the same view,” says Eichhorn, expressing the opinions of Semler, “of allaying the party spirit of the two christian schools, and of forming them into a single catholick church, the catholick epistles, as their name imports, were composed.” These Semler did therefore unquestionably consider as pious frauds, but the learned reader well knows that as long ago as Eusebius, they were many of them numbered among the *αντιλεγομενα*, or books rejected by some, that four of them, viz. the second of Peter, the second and third of John, and the epistle of Jude are not found in the Syriack version; and according to Lardner should not be quoted in proof of doctrine, as scripture. Semler therefore rejected the Catholick epistles, as he did also the apocalypse, which Mr. English, by a singular illfortune has mentioned as one of the only two books, which he admitted. With these exceptions he believed the authenticity of the whole New Testament, the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and all the epistles of Paul, not excepting the epistle to the Hebrews. His opinion of the origin and composition of the three first Gospels, was the same as that of Le Clerc, Michaelis, Lessing, and Eich-

horn, and which has been illustrated and maintained by professor Marsh. This opinion is, that they were compiled from documents of our Lords preaching and life, which had been committed to writing, during his life or immediately after, and which became, after different additions, revisions and translations, the basis of our present gospels. He supposes they were brought into their present state by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70.* The gospel of John he thinks, contrary to the ancient opinion, was written earlier; and some confused notion of this probably gave Mr. English the impression that he held this alone to be authentick. The reader, who is yet unsatisfied, may consult Semler's *Commentarii Historici de Statu Christiano*, pp. 14 et seq. his *Institutio ad doctrinam liberaliter descendam*, pp. 132 et seq. any of his paraphrases, and particularly that portion of his life contained in the first volume of the *Cambridge Repository*, for which it was translated from the German of Eichhorn's universal library. The reader may therefore smile at the unhesitating positiveness, with which Mr. English errs on this point.

* "From such separate materials, which had gone through different hands, and which had acquired a variety of text and context, from the different transcripts and translations, in which they circulated, though for the most part they were copied verbatim from one another, several gospels, among which were our three first, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, were composed after the destruction of Jerusalem, and designated *some by the names of the readers*, for whom they were designed, and *others by the names of their authors and compilers*"

Not equally unjust, but perhaps equally deceptive, is the statement he gives of the opinions of Dodwell. "The very learned and pious Dodwell in his dissertations on Irenæus, avows that he cannot find in ecclesiastical antiquities (which he understood better than any man of his age,) any evidence at all, that the four gospels were known or heard of before the time of Trajan *and* Adrian; i. e. before the middle of the second century, i. e. nearly a hundred years after the apostles were dead." Again, "Semler considered the New Testament as a collection of pious frauds, written for pious purposes *in the latter part* of the second century, THE VERY TIME assigned for their first appearance by Dodwell." I am apprehensive lest these two sentences, brief as they are, should destroy Mr. English's claim to the succession of the title he so liberally confers on Dodwell, that of the best ecclesiastical antiquarian of his age. In the first place, as we have already stated, if *the latter part* of the second century be the '*very time*' assigned by Dodwell, as he assures us it was, for the first appearance of the gospels, it is not quite obvious how they could have appeared '*in the middle*' of that century, as he also assures us they did. If the French revolution took place in the latter part of the eighteenth century, it does not appear how it could have burst out in the year 1750. Again, one does not well know the meaning of the expression the '*time of Trajan AND Adrian.*' Trajan

became emperor A. D. 94, and Adrian succeeded him A. D. 117, and to say that ‘there is no evidence that the gospels appeared before the time of Trajan *and* Adrian,’ is like saying, there is no evidence that the letters of Junius were written before the time of George the second *and* George the third. The words of Dodwell, for which Mr. English thought fit to provide accommodation in an appendix, at a distance of thirty pages from the place where he makes a report of them, are these, “The canonical writings lay concealed in the coffers of private churches or persons till the latter times of Trajan, *or rather perhaps* of Adrian.” That is, till sometime between the years 110 and 120; for considering that Dodwell places the *formation of the canon* in the latter times of Trajan, who died A. D. 117, and then hesitates whether it ought not perhaps to be extended to those of Adrian, who acceded the same year; it cannot be supposed that the period of this formation ranged in his mind, within greater limits than a few years on each side of the year 117. But Mr. English did not know so common a thing as the time when Adrian reigned. We will grant that it was from pure inadvertence, that he placed him in the latter part of the second century: but when he places him in the middle of that century, he cannot plead the same excuse. Now the middle of the second century, instead of being the times or even the latter times of Adrian, was the latter times of

Antoninus Pius, his successor, who came to the empire at the death of Adrian, A.D. 138.

Thus incorrectly has Mr. English stated the opinions of Dodwell, whom he calls, by a silly flourish, the best ecclesiastical antiquarian of the day. We recommend to him to read what Dr. Middleton, an author of illustrious repute in the Grounds of Christianity examined, says of this Dr. Dodwell, in a reply to his son, under the title of “Vindication of the Free Enquiry.” I would only observe in conclusion, that Mr. English has taken the extract from Dodwell, which he gives in his appendix B, with all else contained in that appendix, to the amount of three pages, from Toland’s *Amyntor*, pp. 193—199. Toland, after giving the extract from Dodwell, thus makes the reference,—*Dissert.* 1. in *Iren.* § 38, 39.” This is correct. It is from the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth sections of that author. But Mr. English, alas! must needs translate this reference into English, and thus renders it; ‘Extract from Dodwell’s *Dissertations on Irenæus*, diss. i. p. 38, 39. Whereas it is pages 66 and 67. I do not mention this error, as of the smallest consequence to the argument, but to show with what freedom Mr. English appropriates to himself the property of others, and also that he had not the curiosity to turn to Dodwell’s dissertations, which stood by him on the shelf in the College library, to see whether the extract was fairly made by Toland:—Which it is not, for Toland begins

his extract (which as it stands would lead the reader to think that Dodwell questioned the authenticity of the New Testament,) in the middle of a section, the first part of which unhesitatingly asserts that the books of the New Testament are genuine, and written by those whose names they bear, the eye witnesses of the facts they record. For a full refutation however of the *conjectures* which Dodwell advances in this famous extract, and there is little but conjectures in it, I would refer the reader to the third dissertation subjoined to Le Clerc's Harmony.* In that dissertation Le Clerc examines this extract, sentence by sentence, and shows how groundless and imaginary are the assertions it contains. One thing is obvious in itself; if, as Dodwell, and Evanson, and Mr. English allow, the gospels were generally received at the latter end of Trajan's or beginning of Adrian's reign, that is, not later than A. D. 120, they must have been written at least by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. For no man, who has the least notion of the state of literary communication, the remoteness of the various Christian societies, by which the scriptures were preserved if at all, and the peculiar difficul-

* A certain friend of Evanson's seems to have played him false in this matter. Evanson tells us [reply to Priestley, p. 42.] That his friend had sent him some extracts from Le Clerc's dissertation, and they seem to have pleased him so much, that he recommends to his reader to peruse the whole dissertation: by which he makes it probable that he had not taken the trouble to do it himself, since that dissertation overthrows the fair fabrick he had built on the authority of Dodwell.

ties which must have obstructed the intercourse of Christians, can think that a less interval than this would have been sufficient, for the collection and *general reception* of so many books as the New Testament comprises.

✓ With respect to the apocryphal gospels and epistles, I cannot blame Mr. English for saying so much, because he has not read the work of Jones, in which those that are extant are collected and compared with our genuine gospels. There is not a stronger proof of the genuineness of the latter, than that which this comparison affords. The apocryphal gospels are so miserably insipid, such barefaced, undisguised impositions, that I am sure that Mr. English himself will own that, allowing our sacred books to be authentick, there could be no danger of confounding them with these. Mr. English in reply to Mr. Cary's hint, that the works of Jones and Lardner would be to an infidel what the file was to the viper, excuses himself from making the experiment, under the impression that these works amounted to thirty volumes, and would overload his stomach. We would relieve him from the first apprehension, as the work of Jones and that part of Lardner,* which refers to the subject, amount altogether to ten volumes, less by *two thirds* than he had feared. His second apprehension we must own to be better found-

* The last edition of Lardner, in eleven volumes, embraces the *credibility* and the *Jewish and heathen testimonies* in the eight first.

ed : he would probably find the contents of these volumes highly indigestible. The potage of Evanson and Toland will prove much more innocent.

In treating of the external evidence for the authenticity of the scriptures, Mr. English first relates some well known anecdotes to show that Papias was a weak and credulous man, and he afterwards asserts the same of Irenæus and Tertullian, with the intimation, that the two latter were certainly liars. All this may be true, but the question is this : how came it that these men, who were so dishonest as to have no restraint of principles, should select from a number of forged gospels four, which, as Mr. English says, contradict each other so often? Why did they not procure such to be forged, as would hang together, and tell a plausible tale. Tertullian is a very shrewd writer, and Irenæus less fool than knave ; why did they not see that instead of favouring their cause, by asserting these four gospels, they were in reality, by so doing, burdening it with a mass of contradictions? Papias too was a weak man, but weak men do not see books which do not exist. Papias wrote A. D. 116, and speaks of the Hebrew gospel of Matthew : now I apprehend if that gospel was forged, as Mr. English says, thirty-four years afterwards, that Papias, be he ever so weak, could not have spoken of it. The Acta Eruditorum for 1713 speaks of the work of Surenhusius. Now if any one

should say that that work, instead of being authentick, was forged in 1750, I apprehend he would be thought a great trifler, if he said, "Why, the *Acta Eruditorum* speaks of it indeed forty years before, but the conductors of that journal were exceeding weak men." The truth, is that mere weakness does not impart the gift of prophecy, and though Papias was convicted of utter fatuity, it would not be at all more probable that he could mention a book that was forged at a period later by thirty-four years. But, says Mr. English, Papias speaks of a Hebrew gospel of Matthew, and ours is in Greek, and moreover, ours has not the air of a translation, and is acknowledged by most of the learned not to be one. But Mr. English is aware that Michaelis, the highest authority on these subjects, pronounces that it is a translation, and maintains his proposition not less from the unanimous testimony of the ancients, than from internal evidence. Moreover, this objection to the testimony which Papias bears to Matthew will not apply to the testimony which he bears to Mark. He says that Mark, "being the interpreter of Peter, wrote what he remembered: but not in the order in which things were spoken and done by Christ. For he was not a hearer of the Lord, but afterwards a follower of Peter." Papias also, as we are informed by Eusebius, who devotes a whole chapter of his ecclesiastical history to the subject, quotes the first epistles of Peter and of John.*

* See the chapter of Lardner upon Papias, Works, vol. i.

In stating the evidence of Justin Martyr, Mr. English has taken a heinous liberty with the authority of Dr. Marsh, which he professes to quote. "It is," says he, "substantially acknowledged by Dr. Marsh, that the quotations of Justin Martyr are so unlike the words *and circumstances* in the received evangelists, with which they appear to correspond, that one of two things must be true: either that Justin, who lived one hundred and forty years *after* Jesus, had never seen any of the present gospels, or else that they were in his time in a very different state from what they now are." [N. B. for 140 read 110.] Now the truth is, that in all Justin's works, with a single exception,* *there is not a circumstance* mentioned which does not appear in the present books of the New Testament. From the writings of Justin alone, you might gather a consistent epitome of what Jesus did and taught. Neither does Dr. Marsh say one word about a difference between the *circumstances* quoted by Justin Martyr, and those of our present gospels. The difference is altogether *verbal*, and this is so slight that in the translation of Justin, compared with that of the New Testament, it generally disappears. By what ar-

* Justin says, that when our Lord was baptized "a fire shone out of the river Jordan." But it is to be carefully noted, that he does not profess to take this from the "Memoirs of the Apostles called Gospels," which he elsewhere quotes, but makes a distinction between this fact, and another which he immediately subjoins with *εγραψαν οι Αποστολοι*. Justini Dial. p. 330. Grabe's Spicileg. Sæc. i. p. 20.

gument, says the ‘learned and pious Dodwell, the first ecclesiastical antiquarian of his age,’ does it appear that our gospels are the books so called by Justin? First, from the testimony of Irenæus, his contemporary, who without doubt received ours. Second, from Justin himself, who quotes from our gospels very many places, and that most faithfully, very rarely [in a single instance,] admitting any thing apocryphal. Nor do *his words, when carefully examined*, lead to a different conclusion.* Le Clerc and Lardner think the same; and in fact the modern German divines appear to have been the first who thought the verbal diversity of Justin’s quotations from the present text of the evangelists to be of any consequence. As a question of criticism, I own it is a difficult one, and did I think that Justin had not quoted our present books, I should not hesitate a moment to avow it. But when we reflect that there is no difference in the *facts* mentioned; that the verbal coincidence is sometimes exact, and sometimes so great as to appear exact, in a translation; that Justin calls his books by the name of gospels, and says that they were written by apostles and apostolick men, which precisely corresponds with ours, two of which are by apos-

* Quo tamen (inquies) argumento constabit nostra esse illa, quæ a Justino designantur, Evangelia? Imprimis ex Irenæo cœvo testi, quem illa proculdubio non latuerant. Tum et ex ipso Justino, qui e nostris Evangeliiis loca plurima adduxit, *et quidem id castissime, raro admodum immistis apocryphis.* NEC SANE ALIUD VERBA EJUS IPSA SUADENT PENITIVS INSPECTA. *Dissert.* in *Iren.* i. § xl.

bles, and two by apostolick men ; and that Irenæus makes no mention of any other books so similar to ours, as those of Justin were, if they be not the same : when we reflect on these things, we shall find it hard to believe that Justin quoted any other gospels than ours. If however it be thought necessary, notwithstanding all this, to grant that he did not quote our books, then it will be an inference scarcely less favourable to Christianity, that a set of sacred writings, different from ours, did yet testify to the truth of the same facts.

The proofs of the authenticity of the scriptures are multifarious and abundant.* In the first place, there is a series of authors who quote them from the age succeeding that in which they are alleged to be written, to the present. We have considered the testimony of Papias A. D. 116, Justin 140, Irenæus 170, and Tertullian 200. These four, says Mr. English, are “*all the witnesses that can be produced, as speaking of the gospels, who lived within two hundred years after Jesus !!*” If he will venture upon the works of Lardner however, he will find cause to add to the number the author of the epistle to Diognetus, Dionysius of Corinth, Tatian, Hegesippus, Melito, the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, ATHENAGORAS, Miltiades, Theophilus, Pantenus, CLEMENT of Alexandria, Polycrates, Heraclitus, Hermias, and Serapion, (all of whom are mentioned by Lardner, before Tertullian,)

* I abstract this short sketch from Michaelis, vol. i. ch. ii.

and **MINUTIUS FELIX** and **ORIGEN**, who also lived within two hundred years after our Lord.

Next, there is the testimony of the Hereticks, so called, who, instead of accusing the orthodox church of having adopted forged Scriptures, adopted the same themselves, with the alteration or omission of such passages as contradicted their heretical tenets; or else rejected the whole books as without authority. Thus the Nazarenes are said, instead of denying the epistles ascribed to Paul, who contradicted their doctrines, to have been written by that apostle, are said to have denied the apostleship of Paul himself upon the very ground that he wrote those epistles; and Mr. English, in an unlucky passage which we have already quoted, avers that the disciples of the twelve apostles rejected every individual book of the present New Testament. But they could not have rejected what was not in existence. The case of Marcion is the fairest specimen of this heretical testimony. He taught that the gospel of Matthew, the epistle to the Hebrews, with those of Peter and James, and all the Old Testament, were scriptures for the Jews, not for Christians; while he adopted the Gospel according to Luke, with ten epistles of Paul, and altered them to accommodate his purposes. Marcion flourished in the former part of the second century.

Next to the heretical is the heathen authority. Celsus, who flourished in the latter half

of the second century, wrote a book against Christianity, from which Mr. English has given some extracts, and from which I had promised some more. But my limits will admit nothing like a fair specimen of the amount and variety of references, which Celsus makes to our gospels and other scriptures. I would therefore refer to the third section of Lardner's chapter upon Celsus,* and set down here the conclusion which the former draws. "In the passages cited under the third section, we have seen many plain references to the gospels, and to several of St. Paul's epistles, if not also to St. Peter's and St. John's. We are assured by Celsus that there were histories of Jesus written by his disciples, meaning his apostles and companions, and that these books were well known and in high repute among Christians. We have seen, in his fragments, plain references to the gospel of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, and it appears also highly probable, or even certain, that he was not unacquainted with the gospel according to St. Mark; but he has not expressly mentioned the books themselves, nor the names of the writers; nor is there so much as an insinuation, that the later Christians of Celsus' own time, or thereabout, had forged these histories, to do honour to Jesus. He only says, that they had altered some things; but of that he produced no proof, nor did he allege any particular instances; he only

* Lardner's Works, vol. vii.

says in the place referred to, if Origen has taken the words of Celsus exactly, that some of the believers had taken the liberty to alter the gospel from the first writing." Now Mr. English would fain have us believe that it was in the very time of Celsus that the books of the New Testament were forged. Is it credible, that Celsus, whom he commends for his observation, should have omitted any mention or insinuation of a fact, which would have afforded him so much triumph? Or does Mr. English prefer the solution of Eyanson, that Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian did not really think the books of the New Testament genuine, but thought it would be advantageous to argue upon the supposition, that they were, that the Christians might have to answer for all their alleged contradictions and absurdities? * This would be really too much to ask us to believe; that Celsus, Julian, and Porphyry should have had the proofs of the spuriousness of the New Testament in their hands, and of course of the fraud of their adversaries, and yet never mentioned and hinted at them. They would have said, 'it is true your books are forged, but since you hold them to be authority, we will argue from them as such.' For the testimony of Porphyry and Julian I must also refer to Lardner.

Finally, there is the testimony of the versions, many of which were very early made. Michaelis places the Syriack in the first cen-

* Eyanson's dissonance, p. 18

ture, and the circumstance that it does not contain those books, which are generally supposed to be last written, as the second epistle of Peter, the third of John, and that of Jude, with the Revelation, is a probable argument for the opinion. If it be a correct opinion, the books of the New Testament must of course have been discriminated, as scriptures, in the first century; while the fact that a work, professing to be a sacred one, is translated into a different language, is a very strong proof that it must have been previously well known and highly diffused.

The reader will do the subject and the writer an injustice, not to see that much more is omitted in this sketch, than is set down.* The truth is, it is not worth the trouble to prove at this day the authenticity of the New Testament. It is undoubted. It is received as authentick, by the modern German divines, nay, a good part of it by Evanson himself; inquirers all of them more ready to doubt than to believe, to reject than to retain. And as Mr. English seems, except in the case of the gospels of Matthew and John, to have relied much on the authority of Dodwell, which he misrepresents, and that of Semler, which he feigns, I do not think it necessary to add any thing to what I have said of the opinions of these two divines.

* The phraseology is borrowed from the conclusion of "TEN HINTS"

It is constantly urged by Christian divines, that there is more evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament than for most of the classical authors, that are yet unquestionably received. Michaelis gives a forcible illustration of this, as respects internal evidence, in the case of Cæsar's Commentaries. I would mention the works of Horace as another example, which I select, not as peculiarly favourable to my argument, but as the only classick with ancient testimonies, that I have at hand.

Thus might I argue upon Mr. English's principles, and in his style, against the works of Horace: "Horace is pretended to have lived under Cæsar and Octavius, and to have died eight years before our Lord. But the first notice I find of him is in Quintillian, who flourished at least a hundred years after the alleged dates of his works. Thirty years after this, that is, a *hundred and eighty years* from the pretended birth of Horace, we have indeed a circumstantial life of him by Suetonius, but it is quite obvious that he wrote too long after the event, to be a competent witness. Moreover, there is much that looks suspicious in his account. It commonly contains an epistle of Augustus, of which a considerable portion is omitted by the ingenious and elegant madam Dacier, who was better acquainted with classical antiquities than any man of her age, and is pronounced by the great Zeunius, the most celebrated variorum editor of the day, to be 'non solum inhonesta, verum etiam deridicula.'

Moreover, Suetonius himself confesses that his hands were filled with elegies and epistles under the name of Horace, *both of which he rejected as false*. But it was merely from the style; nor does he make it appear that the received works of this pretended poet rest upon any better historical evidence. Moreover, it is well known that antiquity is full of these literary frauds; and when we reflect that no author was so distinguished, but vast numbers of spurious books were ascribed to him, that many pieces were attributed even to Homer, which are universally allowed to be spurious, that Seneca mentions it as a doubtful point, whether he wrote the *Odyssey*, that the genuineness of many of Cicero's epistles has been questioned, that the tragedies of Seneca stand on very slender foundations, that all the epistles ascribed to Heraclitus, to Solon, and Pittacus, by Diogenes Laertius, are pronounced by Scaliger* to be forgeries of modern Greeks, not to mention a thousand other facts of a similar kind,—we shall think it most likely that the commonly received writings of Horace ought to be numbered among those, which were expressly rejected as false by his biographer and panegyrist Suetonius. The amount of internal evidence against these poems is surprisingly great, and will shock the reader, who has hitherto taken their authenticity on the credit of his schoolmaster and tutor. Suetonius, speaking of the

* Jugemens des Scavans. Anti Baillet viii. 44.

obscurity of the pretended works of Horace, which he rejected as false, adds *quo vitio minime tenebatur*, ‘obscurity is a fault from which he was wholly free.’ Now it is well known that, with perhaps the single exception of Persius, the present Horace is as obscure a writer as we have. Again, Horace is said to have been a well-bred elegant man, and to have been domesticated in the polished circles of the Augustan court. Is it probable that such a man, moving in such society, would be guilty of the indecencies which now disgrace his alleged writings? It is vain to plead that the Roman manners permitted this license, for Quintilian, as staunch a Roman as ever lived, affirmed to his astonished pupils, ‘*nolim Horatium quibusdam interpretari.*’ From whence we may infer that these licentious pieces had begun, even in the time of Quintilian, to pass round under Horace’s name. Again, Horace is represented to have been born, and to have lived his youth in the country, and yet in his pretended satires we read that the ant lays up food for winter, and subsists upon it during that season.* Whereas Huber, who is acknowledged to be better acquainted with ants than any of his contemporaries, has demonstrated (what Horace, as a countryman, could

* ———sicut

Parvula (nam exemplo est) magni formica laboris
 Ore trahit, quodcumque potest, atque addidit acervo,
 Quem struit: haud ignara ac non incauta futuri:
 Quæ, simul inversum contristat Aquarius annum,
 Non usquam prorepat, *et illis utitur ante*
Quæsitis sapiens. 1 Sat. i. 32.

not but have known,) that the ant is torpid in winter; as the reader may see in M. Cels' *rapport*, in the *Journal de Physique*, May, 1813. Again, the author of the twelfth ode of the first book speaks of Augustus 'leading in triumph the Parthians, *who had threatened Latium*,'† which shows about as much acquaintance with Roman history as it would with American history to say, that 'president Jefferson had led in triumph the Tripolitans that threatened the district of Columbia!!' These pretended poems are filled with Greek words in Latin characters, a practice which could not have been introduced in Horace's time, since Juvenal censures it as a pedantick novelty, Sat. vi. 186. In one instance the writer betrays himself to be a monk, fresh from his biblical studies, by the use of a Syriack word clumsily latinized, viz. *ambubaiarum*, 1 Sat. ii. 1. It reminds one strongly of the fable of Esop, to see honest אַנְבוּבַא [*Syr. pro tibia*] tricked out in the tail-feathers of the first declension, genitive case. All these considerations, with numberless others that could be stated, will doubtless shake the reader's faith in the poems of Horace. But what was conjecture once is now proof. The opinion of the spuriousness of these poems has been adopted in *France* by a learned and shrewd priest of the name of *Hardouin*, who has demonstrated *that almost all the classical*

† —seu Parthos Latio imminentes
Egerit, justos domitos triumpho. 1 Od. xii. 53.

writings, and especially the poems of Horace, were written in the thirteenth century after the birth of Jesus, by monks. And notwithstanding he poured such a flood of light upon the eyes of his terrified brethren, he was appointed afterwards to superintend an edition of the general councils, in twelve folio volumes, and it was suspected that his coreligionists were half of his mind."

But I have dwelt longer on this subject, than Mr. English's objections deserve, and have extended this essay far beyond its intended limits. As I trust that no reader will do himself so much injustice as to resign Christianity upon the strength of Mr. English's attack, so I hope there will be none, perhaps equally unjust, who will think that its merits are comprised in my defence. It has not been so much my object to set forth the evidences of Christianity, as to reply to the objections urged in his book. In doing this I have endeavoured to be honest and fair. I have not intentionally omitted any argument, but have made in every case, not the best answer possible, but the best which I could.





